

# **Regulation : Am I bovvered?!**

## **Implications of Regulation for Practitioners, Students and Schools. An outline of what is happening now, and an opportunity to voice dissent/ be involved.**

As SRG representative at the Prince of Wales Foundation for Integrated Health Regulation group (quite a mouthful!) I want to ensure that people in the Shiatsu world are aware of what is happening Regulation wise, to know what the questions are and how it is possible to be involved. My piece here follows on from the regular bulletins Elizabeth Davies has written for the Shiatsu Society Newsletter, and articles in the Spring edition explaining Regulation history and current issues.

Currently the Prince of Wales group is preparing a document to be submitted this October 2007, to the Department of Health, regarding a method for Regulating Complementary and Alternative Therapies.

- **This Regulation will, it is proposed, ensure minimum standards, common codes of ethics and conduct, and an independent body (proposed Federal Council) to hold a Register of Practitioners and deal with Complaints.**
- **The PFIH Regulation group meets monthly (the SRG meets bi-monthly). The PFIH group comprises 12 different Therapy reps, PFIH, Dept Health rep and lay members.**
- **At each meeting we are looking at making decisions on issues such as what will be the criteria for Registration, the relationship between Professional Associations and the Federal Council, Registration Fees, who validates Registration, CPD, and multi disciplinary Practitioners.**
- **Amongst other points for consideration are: What are curriculum topics common to all Complementary Therapies? Who would work on the Federal and Profession Specific Boards? Are they are elected or appointed members, and how they are paid?**

The reason I became involved with Regulation development, was that I saw other therapies moving towards Voluntary Regulation- and as this is a prerequisite for NHS recognition and thus more potential work opportunities for Shiatsu Practitioners- I didn't want us as a Profession to be left out in the cold.

Regulation is not without its risks and challenges, but certainly is the way the wind is blowing in all professions. It is worth bearing in mind that the Regulation structure is for the benefit of the public (Shiatsu users). It is not designed for Shiatsu Professionals. The Professional Associations are there, and will remain, for this purpose. A diagram here gives an overall idea of the proposed Regulation structure.

Some of the 'risks' or challenges with Regulation as I see it are:

- Setting up a system that is designed only for those who aim to work in full time professional practice. I would like to continue to enable people to study Shiatsu for self-development and as an adjunct to other work, or on an informal basis working on friends and family. (In Reflexology and Aromatherapy anyone is welcome to train and graduate, but those wanting to practice and charge money in the 'public domain' must be Registered). The issue here is of transparency- ie that Professional Associations should not carry the dual role of working for Public 'protection', and for the benefit of Practitioners.
- I do not want to see Shiatsu over academicalized.
- Wariness of a 'Nanny State'- of choices and freedoms for both the Public and Practitioners being unnecessarily curtailed.
- I have concerns about Shiatsu being 'crunched' to fit in a system that ignores the fluidity and principles of energy medicine.
- The question of power eg who defines and holds authority in healthcare: the Department of Health/ Government, or Alternative Therapy Associations, or indeed the Public?
- Establishing a Regulation system that is workable, worthwhile and affordable.

To define Shiatsu ourselves, to consolidate Shiatsu as a viable profession, and I hope to steer away from setting up systems requiring endless paperwork and bureaucracy is also why I am involved now. And this is why it is important for Shiatsu people to be aware of the issues, and if interested to get involved now, at this design stage. It is generally harder to change structures and regulations once they are in place. I emphasise again that the work being done at present is important, but certainly not yet set in stone, so please contribute your thoughts and ideas.

### Thoughts on Regulation

From Lisa Ball- Lay Member of PFIH

'I see regulation and the regulatory process in a positive way because I think it brings the following important benefits to the profession and the patient alike:

#### Regulation

-Liberates the practitioner by establishing an independent body that endorses the profession.

- Protects the client and the practitioner by establishing universally recognised codes of practice.

- Introduces objectivity and impartiality to the process of self- assessment and quality control.
- Creates confidence and credibility in the public and in the profession.
- Represents and raises the profile of the profession as a unified industry.
- Provides constructive feedback, guidance, advice and direction to the profession from an independent, objective standpoint.'
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**Some questions you might mull over and give responses on:**

**1. What, in addition to SS Membership, would you consider a fair Registration fee? Is a first time Registration fee with a lesser fee for renewal fair? What about multi- disciplinary Practitioners?**

**2. What number of people should Profession Specific Boards comprise of? Should they be elected or appointed? Who by?**

**3. Do you think the idea of one Complementary Practitioner Register (this can be in addition to Professional Association Register) held by independent Federal Council is a good idea?**

**4. Is more involvement within the NHS attractive to Shiatsu Practitioners?**

**4. What do you perceive as the risks and benefits of Voluntary Regulation?**

**Katharine Hall MRSS(T)**

Further Regulation information is available on the Shiatsu Society website.  
 The next PFIH meetings are: July 25, September 4, September 26.  
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