



THE SURREY INSTITUTE OF
CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY

Report

UK Hypnotherapy Regulation Explained

By Paul White

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Regulations & Qualifications

We find this area is one perhaps with the most confusion.

In common with psychotherapy, counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy and a host of other talking therapies at the moment and arguably in the foreseeable future there is no statutory regulation. This surprises many people, in fact, quite legally anyone can call themselves a counsellor or psychotherapist, or for that matter, a hypnotherapist. These titles are not protected by law, so in practise, if you believe you have the necessary skills, you can put together your website and call yourself a hypnotherapist/psychotherapist/counsellor and get on with treating people!

Is this a scandal?

You may think this is scandalous and that the Government should do something about it. From time to time different Governments think about it. They produced a draft paper, they talk to the various professional associations, but nothing really happens, and you may wonder why nothing happens. It's for two reasons; firstly the different types of therapy had great difficulty in agreeing between themselves what should and should not be included in any legalisation, but we suspect most importantly it's not really a 'top Government priority'.

Is therapy dangerous?

It is not a top priority because if you accept the Governments job is to protect and safeguard its citizens, put simply 'to protect the public', there's not much in 'talking therapies' to protect the public from. I've been Chairman of the biggest hypnotherapy professional association in the UK for 5 years, working with our insurance provider, who insures thousands of hypnotherapists; they tell me there have been no significant claims in the last few years. This lack of risk is of course reflected in the premium our therapists pay for insurance. On an annual basis for multi million pound cover, the premium is in the region of £70 per annum. Compare this premium with the several thousand pounds per annum that GPs have to pay, and you have a better idea of where the risks are concentrated. This observation may seem at odds with your perception, largely I suspect based on the occasional tabloid headline of "Therapist rapes patient while under hypnosis". However, if you review the cases a little closer, you will discover the defence lawyer, almost without exception, will have a long list of expert witnesses prepared to testify that this is not possible. Of course, that doesn't make a very attention grabbing headline does it, so surprise surprise, we don't get to hear about that!

It would also be appropriate to point out that medical doctors are concerned with 'saving lives' and, of course, there are always going to be significant risks involved in the prescribing of medication and intrusive physical interventions, whereas talking therapies, and especially hypnotherapy is simply concerned with 'changing lives'.

Fashion or therapy?

The other 'drag' on the march towards any type of regulation, is the protection of vested interests by various professional groups. However, you find not only a battle of the professional associations, but an increasing attempt by various schools of therapeutic thought and technique to license, copyright and patent different types of therapies. You may be familiar with Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), Eye Movement Desensitisation Routine (EMDR), Hypnotension, Hypnobirthing and many other 'products' that are licensed or copyrighted that sometimes demand a considerable investment from students to undertake specialist training.

Some schools suggest years of study

There will be therapists and training schools that suggest certain types of therapy that are best not practised in isolation, or without further training involving sometimes years of part-time study at considerable expense, which ultimately will not actually give you any additional entry opportunities within the Government sponsored regulatory framework.

The journey towards regulation

Despite everything we have highlighted in this chapter, there are, and have been, considerable efforts made by dedicated members of the hypnotherapy profession over the last few years that have seen a dramatic change in the acceptance of hypnotherapy, by both Healthcare professionals and the general public, as an effective brief therapeutic intervention.

How did it start?

To briefly summarise the recent history towards regulations, we need to go back to when a House of Lords Select Committee concerning Complementary Medicine stated that complementary medicine had a role to play within the NHS, but that it had to reach the same standards as other NHS treatments.

This statement began the slow journey towards regulations. In 2005/2006, The Prince of Wales Foundation for Integrated Health (FIH) began to work with Complementary Medicine professional associations, including hypnotherapy, to develop and maintain statutory or voluntary systems of regulations. Later the FIH published a consultation document which envisaged the establishment of a federal structure for the regulation of complementary health with a Single Council for Complementary Healthcare. This document included hypnotherapy as a complementary therapy. In 2007 it was confirmed by the Department of Health that they had no plans to introduce statutory

regulation. However, they were mindful to encourage voluntary regulation at the same time consultations began to take place with Skills for Health for the Development of National Occupational Standards (NOS).

The government support for hypnotherapy

In 2008 the Department of Health formally launched its plan to establish the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) as the regulatory body for those therapists practising in the field of complementary medicine.

The old vision of hypnotherapy – swinging watches and sinister intentions

The profession continued to work with Skills for Health to agree National Occupational Standards, and also agreed a minimum number of training hours. The introduction of the Hypnotherapy Practitioner Diploma (HPD) by the National Council for Hypnotherapy (NCH) and the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE), a Government approved National Awarding Body, were all steps on the journey of moving hypnotherapy forward and away from the stereotypical view of the media and the public of a ‘hypnotists’ swinging watches and sinister intentions.

Happily these changes within the profession continued after the Governments having moved away from vague proposals for Statutory Regulation for Complementary Therapies and towards the firm and structured proposals for Voluntary Self Regulation (VSR).

How to participate in regulation

Over the following years, the hypnotherapy professional associations worked with the CNHC to agree criteria for professional associations to become ‘verifying organisations’, enabling members of those professional associations to apply for registration on the CNHC’s register. Effectively the professional associations verify the eligibility of their member to appear on the register.

The professional association needs to satisfy themselves that a member has reached the required level of competence, that they undertake continuing professional development, that they are appropriately supervised, they agree to comply with a Code of Conduct & Ethics, and that there are no outstanding complaints made by clients. Usually there is also a requirement for a Disclosure & Barring Service Disclosure Certificate. This is the new process that replaces the old Criminal Records Bureau Enquiry.

A member on registering a listing on the CNHC Register has to also agree to be bound by the Code of Ethics & Discipline and Complaints procedure of the CNHC.

It is usual for the Code of Ethics and professional associations to refer to the ASA Code of Practise, which monitors all media and website advertising/activity. The CNHC also include such a reference in their Code of Ethics.

You may view the Code of Ethics and the Disciplinary & Complaints Procedure in [here](#).

Which training schools are accredited?

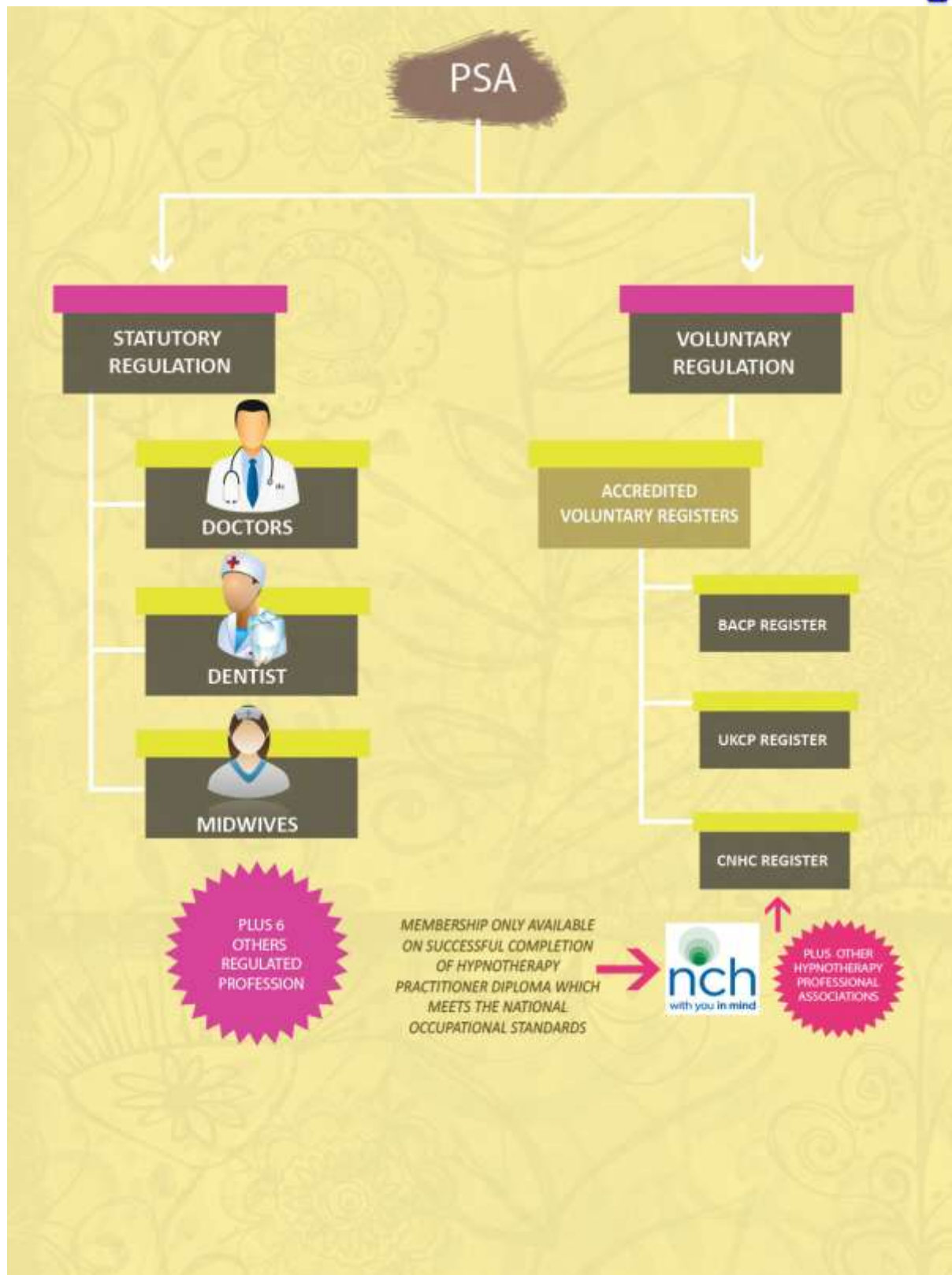
In order for an individual to participate and register in this form of regulation, you firstly need to attend a training course which meets with the National Occupational Standards and Learning Outcomes mandated by Skills for Health and a course which runs over the agreed 450 hours total training hours. You will then be able, on the successful completion of your studies and having satisfied your tutors of your understanding of the subject, to register with a professional association. It is important that the professional association you join is recognised by the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council as a verifying organisation. This means you will be able to apply to join the CNHC Register. This register is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA).

Who regulates doctors and hypnotherapists?

The PSA oversees statutory bodies that regulate health and social care professionals in the UK. They assess their performance, perform audits, scrutinise their decisions and report to Parliament. They also set standards for organisations holding voluntary registers for health and social care occupations and accredit those that meet those standards.

The PSA are responsible for overseeing the UK's nine Health and Care Professional regulatory bodies including, for example, General Dental Council (regulates dentists), the Pharmaceutical Society (regulates pharmacists), General Medical Council (regulates GPs and doctors), as well as the Voluntary Registers including CNHC for hypnotherapy, BACP for counselling and psychotherapy, and UK Council for psychotherapy.

We have set out a diagram which makes it easier for you to follow the relationships between these different regulatory organisations.



If you want to qualify, check and check again

To summarise, if you want to qualify at the appropriate level to enable registration with the CNHC, whose register is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority, you need to complete a course which complies with NOS and the required training hours. The NCH's HPD is an example of such training/qualification. There are other courses available which fulfil the required criteria.

Professional Standards Authority/Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council accreditation and register is the one used by many healthcare professionals for referral and commissioning purposes. However, it is worth noting that you may practise as a hypnotherapist without the accreditations/registration, if you so choose.

Quick start approach for hypnotherapy

Many of these people are successful therapists who practice by specialising in the usually more straightforward areas of smoking cessation and weight control, for example. We would always encourage people to study and qualify at the higher levels and to join professional associations with their Code of Ethics and Complaints procedures. However, it would be misleading to suggest this is the only way to be a successful therapist.