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Releases - Why not the PSA?

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The fee to join the list of Professional Standards Authority Accredited Registers (PSA AR) is **£13,798 and then £10,414 per annum (+ 10p per member per annum)**. Before parting with large amounts of our members money Homeopathy International (HINT) looked at some of the confusing perceptions surrounding the PSA pseudo-regulatory Accredited Registers list.

Regulatory function

A quick glance at the PSA website or even a good read of the websites of organisation's which have chosen to sign up with the PSA Accredited Register (AR) process and you can't miss the suggestion that this is in some way a regulatory process. It is not. The AR list **has no regulatory function**. The PSA AR list is just that, a list of registers. It does not even have a process through which a complaint or expression of serious concern against a register or a practitioner may be addressed.

Powers of enforcement

Because it is simply a list of registers the PSA AR process has no powers of enforcement outside those listed on its registers. Aside from the limited numbers on its accredited lists the PSA AR has **no power** to stop bad practitioners working and it cannot restrict employment to those who are part of its completely voluntary process.

What it can do is apply **Conditions of Accreditation**. If an organisation wants to stay on the list of accredited registers it must obey the instruction of the PSA. These conditions of course are only applicable to the members of the accredited organisation and do not restrict members of other bodies. The extent of the applied conditions is almost without limit. **The Society of Homeopaths** was recently instructed that in must **'...not allow registrants, whether acting in a professional or public capacity, to provide advice on vaccination...'** but instead **'Registrants should direct service users to NHS and other public health sources, for example, their GP or public health department'**. In one simple requirement the capacity of the practitioner to practice homeopathy is removed. HINT would view the gagging of homeopaths in this manner as unacceptable and for this reason if no other would not join the PSA's AR list.

No reporting to Government on Accredited Registers

The PSA reports to Government on the nine statutory bodies for which it has an oversight role but does not have ANY reporting function for its list of Accredited Registers.

No requirement for adherence to sector agreed training levels

The PSA AR process grants entry to registers which are evidenced to meet 11 'standards'. These standards include such challenging requirements as 'the organisation holds a voluntary register of people in health and/or social

care occupations' and 'the organisation demonstrates that it has the **capacity** (my bold) to inspire confidence in its ability to manage the register effectively', but when we get to standards for education things get even more woolly. Standard 9 does not require adherence to any national standards or competencies but instead requires the organisation 'Sets **appropriate educational standards** that enable its registrants to **practise competently** the occupation(s) covered by its register'. The PSA's administrative team is making a determination on an educational standard being 'appropriate' for 'competent practice'.

Government-backed?

At inception the PSA believed that the AR process would quickly become self-funding, and on this basis, it received pump-priming funds from the Department of Health (DoH). The 'Government-backed' claim appears to relate only to the fact that in recruiting so few registers the AR scheme has fallen a long way short of its original self-funding target and now must return each year to the DoH to request continued funding.

Does size matter?

There are over 1200 registers in 'health and care' in the UK so the 26 that have paid for their PSA AR listing represent only around 2% of the eligible registers. If we narrow this further and look at the Alternative and Complementary health sector, out of almost 500 eligible registers only 6 or 1.2% have joined the PSA AR list.

Would HINT join?

HINT takes the view that the PSA AR process provides little benefit for homeopaths. Under no circumstance will HINT contemplate joining a process which required homeopaths to be so constrained in their practice that they are prevented from providing homeopathic advice to their clients.