

**Bowen Forum Launch Meeting**  
**Saturday 26 November 2005, 11.00am**  
**Hatton Village Hall, Warwickshire**

**Present**

Committee:

Angela Power (BPA), Peter Briant (BAUK), Jenny Gordon (Lay Chair), Gillian La Haye (BTER), Jean Nestor (POWFIH)

Other Attendees:

Julian Baker, Pauline Baxter, Tess Boardman, Christine Bowler, Sheila Bryant, Tony Chimes, John Clarke, Ellen Cobb, Mike Collins, Beth Darrall, David Driver, Carol Eden, Paula Esson, Jo Fernandes, Fiona Forster, John Francis, Rosemary Gordon, Martin Grasby, Kathy Greaney, Carole Hough, David Howells, Debbie Kinley, Caroline Lison, Kate Mason, Fiona Meeks, Patrick Mohan, Angela Morris, Janet Newman, Jill Norfolk, Barbara O'Connor, Claire Pickin, Alistair Rattray, Ian Robins, Michael Rouse, Catherine Skelton, Cathy Vivian, Tim Willcocks, Fiona Williams, Margaret Williams.

Apologies:

Richard Baverstock, Karanne Rance, Joss Tennent, John Wilks.

**Agenda**

11.00 - 11.05 am	Introduction, Peter Briant
11.05 – 11.40 am	Presentation - Jean Nestor, POWFIH
11.40 - 12.15 pm	Presentation - Jenny Gordon, Independent Chair
12.15 – 1pm	Lunch
1.00 – 3.00 pm	Workshops
3.00 – 3.30 pm	Coffee/tea
3.30 pm	AGM
4 pm	Close

**Opening Comments**

Attendees were thanked for traveling to the launch. It was explained that the purpose of the day was to talk about the progress being made towards voluntary self-regulation of Bowen, and to allow everyone to ask any questions and to discuss any concerns. The Bowen Forum Committee needs to get feedback from as many therapists as possible.

The Bowen Forum was set up a few years ago, and its main aim is to set up a system of voluntary self-regulation of Bowen therapists in the UK, for the better protection of the public. There will also be benefits for therapists to be on the register.

Three Membership Associations of therapists currently involved. The number of full and associate members are:

Bowen Therapists' European Register	516
Bowen Association (UK)	401
Bowen Practitioners' Association	50

Other associations or groups of Bowen therapists can also have a voice In the Forum, and there will also be lay representation - we already have a lay chair.

The Forum is principally funded by the Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health (POWFIH), which supports the complementary healthcare professions in developing robust systems of voluntary self-regulation. POWFIH is itself funded by the Department of Health.

### **Jean Nestor**

**Presentation:** The work of the Foundation, and the Regulation Programme.

The key points from the presentation were:

- To describe the role of the Foundation within integrated healthcare
- The Foundation's regulation programme for complementary healthcare professions (listing the professions involved)
- What regulation means for complementary healthcare professions
- The difference between a regulatory body and a professional body
- Proposals for the future development of VSR models

### Questions

Ian Robbins

Are the Forum using the old written templates previously produced as a base?

A: Yes these are used as a base for ongoing work.

Julian Baker

Would Forum clarify the structure for regulation programme?

A: There is anticipated to be one Federal body overseeing 11 councils that represent different therapies. The Bowen Forum will represent Bowen practitioners at this level.

Who will fund this work?

A: Using a Federal body to oversee several therapies is expected to be more economical as there are several thousand practitioners all together. The practitioners are expected to fund the body jointly.

Who will be sitting on these bodies and overseeing this process?

A: Regulation is expected to be professionally led. However, in the interest of the public, it is anticipated that lay persons and other professionals, such as doctors, are expected to contribute. Representatives serving the Federal body are expected to be paid.

Paula Esson

How will cost reflect back to the public in terms of clinic prices and practitioners' affordability?

A: Panel agreed that the cost of regulation might reflect in costs of treatments.

Julian Baker

Is cost relevant to numbers of practitioners?

A: Currently there are 800 Bowen practitioners supporting the regulations process, whereas other therapies, such as Reflexology, have several thousand. To join forces with other therapies will make the costs of regulation easier to bear.

Jill Norfolk

What about the costs to practitioners that are multi-modality?

A: It is anticipated that the costs will be easier/cheaper for practitioners that are multi-modality using a federal body.

Tony Crimes

What therapies are currently included in Federal programme and how were they chosen?

A: A diverse group covering eleven therapies, including: Massage, Reflexology, Yoga Therapy, Aromatherapy.

All therapies that were registered as interested in pursuing a regulation programme with POWFIH, were invited to apply for inclusion in the current programme. These eleven therapies were selected because they demonstrated commitment and fairness in procedures with pursuance of a regulation programme.

Fiona Meeks

Concerned about escalating costs over time, like in the NHS where very complex procedures have elevated costs. How can this be avoided?

A: The high costs can't be completely avoided and regulation will incur a cost to practitioners. In many respects there cannot be an estimation of the costs to protect the public. (There was some disagreement to this statement).

A: Costs need to be monitored and a Federal body needs to be accountable.

## **Jenny Gordon**

### **Presentation: The work of The Bowen Forum**

#### Questions

Fiona Williams

Experience of NHS demonstrated how too much consultation can escalate the costs. How can Forum avoid this?

A: Jenny is meeting regularly with other Independent Chairs on the regulation programme. This enables a sharing of experience and help to avoid making similar mistakes. Jenny pointed out that she also has experience of NHS not listening at ground level and is keen to promote transparency in all that the Forum do.

Cathy Vivian

Is the only reason for establishing a Federal body, rather than independent Bowen regulation, down to costs?

A: This is very woolly as no-one knows yet what the actual costs will be. Statutory regulation is very expensive – for some professions which are individually regulated, such as Osteopathy, the cost can be as much as £1,000 per year; other professions are regulated under a federal structure and the cost for a member of the Health Professions Council is only £60. Voluntary self regulation (VSR) is anticipated to be more affordable, especially with a Federal system. Throughout the therapies involved there has been very little animosity towards the concept of a Federal body, and Forum conclude that this is most probably due to costs.

Jenny apologized for not having any figures as a costing model for regulation, but pointed out that the establishment of a federal body is at the beginning stages.

Ian Robins

How will rising membership numbers and longer term membership affect costs – will these begin to increase?

A: Care needs to be taken with the establishment of a Federal system, and due to its early stage in development, our plans can be creative. Radical thinking will play an important role in the establishment.

Fiona Meeks

Do we need to be consulted at this stage – I would prefer strategies and plans to vote for.

A: Strategies can be discussed at this stage, but the Forum's philosophy is more about creating and developing strategies in consultation with practitioners, this is part of the transparency that the Forum values.

Julian Baker

A vast majority of Bowen practitioners are not members of any professional association – when VSR happens, how will these be drawn in?

A: The major carrot is the kite mark, much like the gas Corgi mark, that will demonstrate regulated practitioners to the public. This would mean that the process of VSR is led by public demand.

In the meantime, the Forum is employing as many means as possible to reach out to non-registered practitioners to include these.

It was pointed out that if VSR does not work, then the government will step in and regulate CAM. It is better for practitioners to lead this process.

What about therapists that are content with clients by word of mouth referrals – what is their motivation?

A: The Forum strive to contact these practitioners and want their expertise.

Being a member of a professional organization is not a pre-requisite to being included on this regulation process – the Forum policy is to include and not to discriminate.

## **Workshops**

Smaller groups formed to debate the issues of regulation. All groups were presented with a list of 7 questions, three of these highlighted to give plenty of time for debate. Groups nominated a representative to present the issues raised to everybody once main group had reformed.

Questions debated:

1. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of a 'federal style' VSR?
2. What are the challenges for Bowen during the process of VSR?
3. What approaches can the Forum adopt to effectively manage the process of VSR?
4. What do you think are the key issues that need to be addresses during the VSR process?
5. How would you define the future role of professional associations in CAM (including Bowen)?
6. Discuss the financial implications of VSR, what costs? How should it be funded?
7. Who should be involved in setting up the 'federal VSR body'?

Feed back from each group is attached.

## Questions

Fiona Meeks

Questionnaires have been suggested and are good in theory, but very often bad in practice. Need to get the right questions and encourage returns. Perhaps send out questionnaires with membership renewals.

What if we can't afford VSR?

A: Jean recommends a business plan and each group need to think about how they can sustain themselves. POWFIH have funding until 2008, after this date, each therapy will need to meet the shortfall.

With regard to costs:

The larger membership of some therapies means an annual income of £50,000 per year, but with smaller groups like Bowen, there is only £6,000 per year income.

It is important to take costs into consideration now so that this is part of the sustainability of the plan.

There appears to be two costs:

1. Cost of establishing regulation
2. Cost of sustaining regulation

Need clarity of what costs will be before any realistic costing models can be presented to practitioners. To move forward the Forum will gain different costing models to offer as much choice as possible.

The next stage for the Forum is to produce feasibility models.

In the meantime Professional Associations and the Forum need to find ways of encouraging participation and professional membership from as many **practitioners** as possible.

Ellen Cobb

Raised the issue that costs need not always be considered in terms of money. Practitioners can also view these expenses in terms of treatments, thereby an annual subscription of £30 might be one extra treatment per year.