

**Bowen Forum Launch Workshop Notes
Group 1**

Q: What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of a federal Style VSR?

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Helps define inter professional boundaries – but concentrates on commonality not just differences	Bowen gets lost – small fish in big pond, dictated to by those with more ‘power’ because they are bigger
Protection of Bowen and increased Credibility	Who decides who is a member of the federation – if includes more ‘fringe’ therapies concern that Bowen may be tarred with same brush and decreased credibility?
Economies of Scale – more clout with Funders for research and other forms of potential income	Increased competition for funds from research – other bigger members of federation ? more power.
Cost implications – less expensive than single register	Cost implications – still concerns about costs spiralling out of control – admin and increased bureaucracy
	Will cost be representative of size of therapy and number of members

Q: Who should be involved in setting up Federal VSR Body?

Bowen practitioners – will the Forum be organising other consulting workshop discussions on an on going basis throughout the process of VSR?

How do we make sure Bowen practitioners who are not members of professional organisation are included – suggested national survey.

Lay and Public members – how do we get appropriate people on board?

Students of Bowen – input of Forum information into training.

Other bodies who have some experience – Julian suggested BCMA (I explained that they are not involved in VSR just umbrella for member organisations) and other similar umbrella organisations.

People with experience in efficient administration to ensure efficient and cost effective procedures in place from the beginning. (Julian suggested we had been inefficient at contacting schools to ensure higher attendance at launch!!)

Q: Key issues to be addressed in VSR process

Need to have good incentive to encourage ownership and motivate people who are not members of prof. Organisations.

Who is going to be on the federal committee –Who writes job descriptions and sets salaries, term of office etc- who decides?

Federation role needs to be transparent – accountable.

Perception and protection of Bowen as a therapy.

Research and evidence base

Education/CPD agreement – standards, frequency and cost.

COSTS – big concerns re affordability, concerns re lack of figures to work with.

(think this is cart before horse but needs to be considered throughout the process).

Also pertinent because if people concerned about cost may opt out of the process at an early stage so we have to find a way of addressing these issues.

Q: What are the challenges for Bowen during the process of VSR?

- Effective and efficient communication channels.
- Political differences between groups/schools/training etc.
- Combating negative attitudes to change
- Identifying non member registered practitioners
- Sustaining motivation through process.
- Costs and financial sustainability.
- Raising Bowen profile in UK.

**Bowen Forum Launch Workshop Notes
Group 2**

Nobody disagreed with the need for VSR. “To stand still is to go backwards”.

Q. What are the challenges for Bowen during the process of VSR?

1. Identifying unregistered therapists

It was thought that these would gradually reduce, in the same way as non-CORGI gas engineers have phased out. As people train, they will be educated about the need to register.

2. Change is hard

3. Getting schools to agree on Core Curriculum/CPD

Can we look at how Bowen is regulated in Australia (State regulation?), to get tips about how to manage this? Izzy Gabriel (née Saunders would be a good contact)

4. Cost

Need to share costs of Federal structure equally between therapists, so that a homeopath is charged the same as a Bowen therapist

5. Communication

- Not everyone is on e-mail or is in a RIG.

- Can we use the training schools to provide us with information?
 - Can we use local RIGs to filter information?
 - Need for focus and consistency
 - Articles in the press should always include a comment about the need to use a registered therapist, and the address of the Forum.
 - Workshops can be used as a way of passing on information
6. Weeding out bad practitioners
- People should be assessed on CPD courses
 - Peer review
 - How much CPD should be done? Standards need to increase, but cannot set standards so high that elitist.

Q. Discuss the Financial implications of VSR. What costs will there be? How should it be funded?

Need a strategy.

Also must think of the costs of doing CPD and first aid courses.

Costs will be more than expected

Are there ways to raise money?

How about a sponsored Bowen day, to raise funds specifically for VSR? (Cathy Vivian suggestion)

Can we join with an interested charity? One with 'health of the nation' aims?

Can we get a Government minister involved?

Before you can raise money, you must have identified a need, which requires a strategy.

How do we sell the need for VSR? What are we selling – Bowen as a treatment, or 'health of the nation'?

Q. What approaches can the Forum adopt to effectively manage the process of VSR?

Better Communication.

Marketing

Tell patients

Standardize words in leaflets to patients. E.g. what to do if there is a problem. For any questions on the therapy, on training etc, give numbers of associations. Comment about using registered therapist, and address of Bowen Forum.

Get insurance companies involved

Tell new students

Get promotion from celebrities. For example, Janie Lee Grace (a DJ) is publishing a book about therapies on 14 January, and Bowen is her favourite therapy.

Need people on sub-committees.

Bowen Forum Launch Workshop Notes Group 3

Q. What approaches can the Forum adopt to effectively manage the process of VSR?

Group wanted to know more about how the Forum will relate to other bodies – such as government departments, practitioners, public and the Member Associations. Will the Forum answer to any one area in particular?

Group raised the desire to know more about disciplinary procedures, how would the Forum decide what procedures are common in Member Associations; or would the Forum develop their own?

How would the Forum contact and communicate with practitioners that are not members of an Association, and how would this develop with a regulatory federal body.

Concerns over costs.

Suggestion: A questionnaire to be sent out to practitioners to get as much feed-back as possible direct from therapists themselves.

Over-all, the preference was for voluntary self regulation using a federal body

Q. How would you define the future role of professional Associations in CAM (including Bowen)?

After discussing, the conclusion was reached that the Member Associations are already maintaining standards within Bowen, therefore there is already a form of VSR.

Finding the common ground between associations seems like a good beginning, but some concerns were raised that some Associations might want to maintain their own standards above the Federal minimum levels. This would mean that there could be a minimum level set by a Federal body, but professional Associations would have their own aspect or 'flavour'. Not every one in the group favoured this, and some preferred the idea of professional associations offering the same membership requirements.

Group agreed that the main incentives/advantages to professional membership is:

Bulk insurance

Client referral schemes

Opportunity for practitioners to meet with other like-minded therapists

Q. Who should be involved in setting up the 'federal VSR' body?

Group agreed that a mix of practitioners, patients, members of the public and other organisations already experienced in regulation should be involved.

The diversity of this mix was preferred to only a group of practitioners.

It was noted that highly skilled individuals would be needed and that the professional body overseeing the VSR would need to be paid.

Group expressed concern over who were the decision makers. At the moment the Associations are forwarding members to attend to Forum business on behalf of all the other members and this relationship seems adequate.

Research and its importance was mentioned, but for Forum to concentrate on establishing a federal body is the most important at this stage.

Bowen Forum Launch Workshop Notes Group 4

Q. What do you think are the key issues that need to be addressed during the VSR process?

Cost is the major issue to be addressed. Our group felt that there could end up being a fee to practitioners similar to that which Chiropractors pay (£1000 pa) maybe in the range of £400 or £500. This would be a huge fee for some small earning practitioners to pay. Would there be any possibility of a sliding scale? GPs pay 2 rates to GMC depending on full or part-time because lower risk if part-time. This has to be backed up by accountant's testimony. This in itself would cause extra cost for the practitioner and the regulator.

Communication is seen as an important issue. The practitioners need to be kept well informed of any or all likely changes.

Non professional association practitioners are also seen as an important issue. Would they benefit off the backs of association members post regulation? How do non members become involved and is it essential for them to become members to be covered by regulation? How will these non members be contacted and who will pay for it?

Who will control disciplinary matters regulator or association? If the regulator does it they need to understand the nature of Bowen treatment fully. If the association does it they are policing themselves. With Chiropractors as soon as a complaint is made a star appears by persons name on website until resolved. Is this likely to happen with Bowen?

Q. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of a 'federal style' VSR

Obviously again the advantage is in the cost aspect with the economy of scale. This potentially could also be seen as a disadvantage. As Bowen is a small group among the other therapies would we end up subsidising other larger groups?

A disadvantage would be that we might lose control and costs would escalate.

Leading on from this it was felt that if all Bowen associations joined together maybe we could instigate VSR in a non federal way, keeping control, particularly of costs and do the whole thing more cheaply. An advantage of this is that it would bring the associations together which is something everyone seems to want.

An advantage of the federal style is that we would learn from the other groups going through the same process.

Another advantage would be a higher public profile but this is relating to VSR in general rather than the federal style.

Q. Discuss the financial implications of VSR, what costs? How should it be funded?

There are financial implications for those who already have SR in other therapies. Would there be any way for SR VSR to be linked so that practitioners would not have to end up paying twice?

Possible funding could come from Lottery (does this sound mad?) or could we set up charitable status.

Following on from this we discussed that there could be significant financial benefits to VSR. It would be good if practitioners could attract lower insurance premiums or VAT exemption.

GPs would be more likely to refer patients to Bowen practitioners if they were regulated. This on its own is a huge financial bonus of VSR. Together with a higher public profile that would benefit all Bowen practitioners financially.

Member associations coming together could have financial implications in reducing costs.

Q. What are the challenges for Bowen during the process of VSR?

A challenge will be that the Forum, Associations and practitioners don't fall out!

Q. What approaches can the Forum adopt to effectively manage the process of VSR?

Keep things clear and simple to stop costs escalating.

Q. How would you define the future role of professional associations in CAM (including Bowen)?

Raising the profile and moving forward with recognition by NHS. Enabling the public to access CAM safely.

Who will continue to register practitioners, forum verses professional associations?
Who checks up on CPD etc?