

Whitehall review into hypnotherapy now under way

New measures to promote “safe and competent” hypnotherapy in Britain are now under consideration by the government.

Confirmation was given to Parliament by Junior Health Minister Tom Sackville who disclosed that a Whitehall review is under way.

This follows publication of the BMA report – ‘Complementary Medicine - New Approaches to Good Practice’ – recommending central registration and recognised training standards for complementary therapies, including hypnotherapy.

Response

However, doubts remain over whether anything substantial will emerge – as the Department of Health is still sticking to its policy that the profession itself must come forward with an accepted *voluntary* system of registration.

Demands to know whether the government will act on the BMA recommendations came in the Commons from Liberal Democrat MP Ray Michie.

Mrs Michie, MP for Argyll and Bute, asked how the government intended responding to the BMA report and its policy towards hypnotherapy.

In addition she wanted to know what plans the Health Department had for standardising training techniques and registration.

Contribution

In a written reply Mr Sackville said the government supported “the efforts of reputable training institutes in hypnotherapy to develop standards of training, voluntary registration and certification of hypnotherapists.”

He added that the BMA’s report would “make a significant contribution to aiding understanding in the field of complementary medicine.”

And he promised that the government

By EJCH Reporter



Tom Sackville – Junior Health Minister

would consider the report’s recommendations “with interest and care.”

No idle words

Mr Sackville pointed out that: “Hypnotherapy is, in some cases, already provided in the National Health Service as an adjunct to other treatment by doctors, dentists, psychologists and other health care professionals.

The Department of Health, he added, was “currently reviewing these matters to examine whether there is a further role for government in promoting safe and competent practice in this field.”

In Whitehall officials assured the EJCH that these were “not idle words” and that the review had already begun.

However, it was made clear that the DoH sees a voluntary register, agreed upon by the profession as a whole, as the basis of future developments.

Writing their own cheques?

The hunt is on to bring a hypnotist to book – with a £1,000 reward at stake.

That is the prize on offer for the author of the best book on clinical hypnosis published in Britain this year.

It is being offered by the British Council for Hypnotist Examiners which launched the prize four years ago...then discovered that finding UK authors was the hardest part of the whole exercise.

In the first year – 1990 – only four books qualified for consideration with the prize going to the late Brian Inglis for “Trance – A Natural History of Altered States of Mind.”

The following year the prize was won by Joseph O’Connor and John Seymour for “Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming.”

But last year not one new British book in the four qualifying categories – hypnosis, hypnotherapy, self-hypnosis and NLP – was published.

BCHE chairman Wilf Proudfoot believes, however, the Journal’s readers can help identify possible prize winners.

“Our hope is that the Journal will afford an avenue to readers, writers and publishers, so they become aware of the prize,” he explained.

National College goes for accreditation scheme

The National College of Hypnosis and Psychotherapy has now been accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education.

The College’s Principle, Peter Savage, says the aim of the Council is to define, monitor and improve standards in relevant institutions.