



***From isolation to integration: a way ahead for homeopathy  
in the UK post COVID***

*'Out beyond ideas of wrong doing and right doing,  
there is a field, I'll meet you there'; Rumi*

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to explore the perceived viability of homeopathy to leverage emerging opportunities within an integrated healthcare setting in the United Kingdom post COVID-19. With the NHS at 'breaking point' (Professor Carl Heneghan, February 2023) as a consequence of COVID restrictions, increased waiting lists, record levels of staff sickness, partly due to long COVID, and union disputes, some homeopaths argue now is the time for homeopathy to adopt a more robust approach in its efforts to reach a wider audience. To identify the issues concerning those working within the sector, qualitative techniques were employed to gather sources of information to understand perceptions of the way ahead for homeopathy. Particularly, semi-structured interviews were utilised to compare and contrast the views of three membership organisations and five experiential experts. Accounts from all groups and individuals highlight issues within the sector concerning the lack of a unifying voice and a somewhat insular mindset. Despite this, findings indicate that the seeming fragmentation is not insurmountable. This study offers areas for further development, from a communication standpoint, and practical action which could result in greater cooperation between practitioners and a more strategic framework for the membership organisations and 4Homeopathy.

## **Introduction**

In the United Kingdom we are living through unprecedented health challenges.

In March 2020, the National Health Service (NHS) was effectively shut down for two years during COVID-19, and this decision forced, and continues to force, a growing number of people to look elsewhere for healthcare. It has also never been more difficult to get a face-to-face GP appointment (Mail Online Health, 2023), an issue which is only likely to be exacerbated by the predicted 19,000 GPs leaving the profession in the next five years, according to the Royal College of GPs (News, 2022). Additionally, the NHS estimates that over 2.3 million people in the UK have Post-Covid syndrome or long COVID (Press Release, 2021), and are struggling to receive help. Whilst the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) is sponsoring clinical research into the condition, a working

solution is yet to be found, despite the £90 million funding committed by the NHS for long COVID services.

With A&E overrun and social care, with its stretched budget and shrinking workforce, at breaking point, NHS health provision appears to be imploding.

Faced with what feels like a perfect storm, homeopathy arguably has the opportunity of a lifetime in the UK post COVID. Once at the heart of the NHS, it certainly has the potential to play a key role in an integrated approach to health given the scope of its influence on the body's 'organism', and its history, which is evidence it has the knowledge, experience and tools to support a new health revolution.

Alongside the challenges are a number of opportunities, including the latest NHS scheme to deprescribe patients by weaning the health service of a culture of a 'pill for every ill' (Johnston, 2023).

The question to consider is whether homeopathy has what it takes to leverage emerging opportunities or if the membership organisations and grass root homeopaths are too fractured to integrate within the sector itself let alone within the wider healthcare arena.

### **Challenges according to membership organisations**

The challenges facing the sector are many, according to the membership organisations interviewed:

The Society of Homeopaths (SoH), Alliance of Registered Homeopaths (ARH) and Homeopathy International (HINT). In summary these are:

1. Status and validity
2. Acceptance within the current healthcare model
3. Fewer colleges
4. Fewer students training
5. Perception that it is not a full-time profession capable of supporting a lifetime's career

Anecdotally, the feeling among many practising homeopaths is that these issues are no further forward than they were 10 years ago.

SoH and ARH claim 4Homeopathy (4H) is the vehicle to provide the solution. But how 4H intends to go about it is not available for scrutiny.

Status and validity were largely removed by The Science & Technology report in 2010, declaring, at a Parliamentary level, that homeopathy did not work. This removed the ability to present evidence in a way that other complementary therapy disciplines can; when challenged the response is ‘the S&T Committee considered homeopathy and it doesn’t work.’

In order to assess whether homeopathy is in a position to take up these challenges, I issued a questionnaire to the three main professional membership organisations.

From those responses, I set out to assess what the three are putting in place to exploit the opportunities which have opened up by an, unfortunately, blighted NHS.

In addition, I explored whether the challenges facing the sector come not only from the external forces powered by the pharmaceutical sector and its supporters, but also from deep within homeopathy itself.

This exercise exposed a divide with all parties seemingly entrenched – and communication between them is strained at best. Will the opportunities available to a united homeopathy persuade them to work together?

The Society has openly indicated it does ‘not have a working relationship with HINT’. SoH claims HINT is not a register of members, nor ‘do they adhere to the same high standards or follow a rigorous code as SoH does.’

4H, on the *Find a Homeopath* website, acknowledges three registers – SoH, ARH and the Faculty of Homeopathy.

HINT refutes the SoH assertions: 'We meet all requirements to be defined as a profession register, it is difficult to comprehend how it could be construed otherwise. HINT does have a searchable register of members. We have a 24/7 manned online facility to assist and direct those seeking a homeopath. We are also shortly adding an automated online system.'

It would appear that the concept of communicating, working together or moving from isolation to integration, is only achievable if there is a recognition that fragmentation exists.

In the survey to over 1300 homeopaths I hoped to establish whether homeopaths are taking advantage of the opportunities post COVID.

### **How others see the challenges**

This paper does not advocate the creation of one membership organisation or one core college curriculum. What it does hope to highlight is the importance of collaborative working and effective communication, with the ultimate aim of meeting in that field beyond right and wrong.

Critics within the sector suggest that homeopathy lacks tenacity because it is not united and does not have a professional council bringing the disparate membership bodies, and their members, together. If membership groups cannot agree on fundamentals such data, as evidenced on their websites, what hope is there for collaborative activity?

Historical differences between various groups are ongoing. The 4H collaboration of 11 homeopathic organisations and charities excludes HINT (4 Homeopathy, 2022).

Despite 4H's stated purpose, there appears to be no significant sector lobbying and it lacks a cohesive voice.

In a sector which lacks credibility amongst its many detractors, front line homeopaths do not appear to actively support research, an enterprise that could provide the sector with some validity. There are those working within homeopathy who believe research is a significant way to unite homeopaths

and the sector as a whole. The question about homeopathy's veracity to seize upon opportunities to expand has never been more apposite

The question of credibility is also evident in the perception of the sector as being more akin to a 'cottage' industry with many working in an isolated fashion from sitting rooms, kitchen tables and garden huts. This perception is backed up by the survey commissioned of over 1300 homeopaths (page 9) which states that 81% of those questioned work from home.

And yet as 'movies' on Homeopathy Course Providers Forum website advocates, homeopathy can be adapted to every individual's lifestyle (Interviews, n.d.)

Many homeopaths also have limited business knowledge and run the risk of creating a poor impression – do their services feel like a professional endeavour?

Might homeopathy carry more weight if its practitioners set up the equivalent of GP Federations – face to face and/or online? And why does homeopathy not offer a more extensive 24/7 service to reach more people in need in the out of hours period? Is one national homeopathic helpline sufficient? Indeed, is the general public aware of its existence? Helios provides an excellent advice line but it is not available round the clock.

Homeopathy is under attack from potential new legislation and regulation all of which is largely fuelled by ignorance, evidenced by such organisations as *The Good Thinking Society* whose strapline is 'encouraging curious minds and promoting rational enquiry'. And yet their article quite clearly does neither <https://goodthinkingsociety.org/projects/good-thinking-about/good-thinking-about-homeopathy/>.

One could almost be forgiven for thinking homeopathy in the UK, perhaps understandably, does not want to integrate, organise and be noticed. It could be argued, that membership organisations and long-standing homeopaths are battle weary.

However, in trying to escape the ravages of the detractors and regulators to survive, there may be the danger that its silence will restrict its potential to expand post COVID. The time has come for homeopathy to decide: is it a profession ready to take its rightful place within healthcare, or is it a part-time profession, kept safe by membership organisations and existing on the periphery?

Homeopathy also appears reluctant to interact on the world stage, as was evident in its absence from the first 'Better Way Conference' run by the World Council for Health in Bath (May 2022). And nearer to home, how many homeopaths are involved with their local People's Health Alliance - an integrated health initiative that aims to educate, support and empower people to take responsibility for their own health (For the People, by the People, n.d.)?

Despite the challenges and the critics, about 7.4 m people are using homeopathy in the UK, but imagine what could be achieved if the sector worked more collaboratively and dynamically?

If homeopathy is not able to take its place at the heart of an emerging model of health, a truly integrated approach to healthcare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will it not remain the medicine of the few rather than the many in the UK? When the next pandemic comes around, which could be 'society-ending' according to Bill Gates, speaking at the Time 100 Summit in New York (June 2022), homeopathy must aspire to be a recognised component of any response, regardless of its detractors.

### **How accessible is homeopathy in 2023?**

A questionnaire sent to 1,343 homeopaths in December 2022/January 2023 revealed interesting findings, evidencing the issues highlighted by critics within the sector.

For the purposes of this project I did not drill into the data at individual responses to each question, but looked at some of the top-level findings as an indication of trends and attitudes.



Sixty homeopaths (4.46%) responded to the 24 questions which were broken down into five headings – hours worked, workplace, collaborative working, research and marketing.

Of those homeopaths who responded to the questions about hours worked:

- 29.8% work full time
- 52.5% work at weekends
- 62.5% work Saturdays only
- Of those who work on the Saturday, 80% said they worked morning and afternoon
- 75.4% offer out of hours/acute appointments

Where do these homeopaths work?

- 81% work from their home
- 79.3% do not rent a clinic

What about collaborative working:

- 52.6% said they would be willing to work longer hours in order to reach more people in their area
- 63.2% said they would be willing to work collaboratively/on a rota with other local homeopaths to offer access to homeopathy out of hours
- 73.7% said they would be willing to run a face to face clinic with other homeopaths
- 77.2% said they discussed challenging cases in a homeopathic forum
- 96.4% attend online CPD
- 70.7% had heard of the PHA

With regards to attitudes towards research:

- 60.3% do not support homeopathic research through donations
- 87.3% do not support homeopathic research by sharing their cases/submitting MYMOP

- 69% had heard of the research into the role of homeopathy in long COVID carried out by St Mary's University, Twickenham, London
- 75.9% have not supported the current research into long COVID
- 87.5% said they would be willing to support the research

Lastly, I asked about marketing:

- 60.3% have a logo
- 63.8% promote themselves online
- 75% do not have a brochure

In addition to the more traditional established modes of operation, it is important to note that telemedicine has provided yet another window of opportunity for homeopathy, particularly since 2020.

In her research carried out in 2022 – entitled *Homeopathy's Digital Revolution* – Julia Challacombe [4<sup>th</sup> year student at The South Downs School of Homeopathy] provided some interesting figures: '90% (n72) of those practising digitally said that they had increased their use of digital tools since the start of the pandemic. 85% (n51) of those practising digitally was using digital tools for more than 50% of their practice management ... and almost one third (29%, n23) of the homeopaths now work solely online.' (Challacombe, 2022)

The ever-expanding digital revolution provides homeopathy with the opportunity to communicate its worth. 'People are expanding their horizons in health and the practice of homeopathy should embrace the paradigm shift. (Challacombe, 2022)

Does history give us any useful pointers as to why homeopathy may not be prepared to exploit the current opportunities?

## The history of UK homeopathy

Extracts below from *A History of Homeopathy in Britain* charts the place homeopathy occupied in 19<sup>th</sup> century society and we might be forgiven for wondering what has changed two centuries later.

(Morrell, n.d.)

Homeopathy was introduced into the 'highest levels of English society' by a GP in the 1830s – Dr Fredrick Hervey Foster Quin (1799-1878). High society's support for homeopathy, 'smoothed the passage and greatly assisted its easy acceptance into the British medical marketplace'. Thanks to Dr Quin, homeopathy was also never censured by Parliament as an 'unacceptable or deviant mode of medical practice'.

In the 1840s there were attempts to popularise homeopathy amongst the working classes in Britain, without much success according to Morrell. Quin distanced himself from these 'radical' homeopaths, regarding them as 'disreputable amateurs bordering on quackery' thus continuing to promote homeopathy as 'the exclusive preserve of the wealthy, privileged and titled'.

As homeopathy sank into decline after the 1880s, many doctors began to despair of its future and began teaching 'some lay persons the rudiments of homeopathy and to publish books directly aimed at the self-taught lay practitioner and home-prescriber'.

This led to a new tradition of lay or professional homeopaths and by the 1920s and '30s homeopathy was enjoying great popularity right into the 50s, and then stagnation returned.

The establishment of the NHS in 1948 was a significant development and changed the way healthcare was delivered. It was also good news for homeopathy with homeopathic hospitals becoming part of this new service.

In 1978 a group of lay practitioners established the Society of Homeopaths. This led to the expansion of homeopathy in the UK and during the '80s and '90s colleges were established throughout the

country. In the 1990s there were approximately 1000 registered homeopaths and 1000 medical doctors who practised some form of homeopathy. Morrell claims homeopathy during this period was expanding at roughly 8% to 9% per year.

In 2000, homeopaths in the UK were invited to take part in the establishment of an overarching body under the original auspices of the Princes' Foundation for Integrated Medicine (FIM), together with all other complementary and alternative therapies practising in the UK. This initiative was the response to a House of Lords paper (2000) seeking a solution to some sort of regulation. In the early 1990s the osteopaths (1993) and the chiropractors (1994) had been granted Statutory Regulation, but because of the great number of other therapies abounding it was considered too costly to proceed further with Statutory Regulation for them all.

There had been an unspoken assumption within the therapy sector that the homeopathy profession would be next in line for Statutory Regulation but clearly financial inhibitions had stopped that in its tracks.

A large number of therapies worked together for the best part of the following decade to find a way to establish this complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) 'overarching body' to ensure that each therapy had a satisfactory core syllabus to be followed by all colleges, a sound Code of Ethics and a clear system for self-regulation, for all members. This work, funded initially by FIM and latterly by the Department of Health, was concluded by the establishment in 2008 of the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC).

'Unfortunately, the homeopaths, after some initial interest, declined to take part, possibly because they were unable to form a satisfactorily united group from the various existing bodies, and possibly because they were disappointed and somewhat disgruntled at being grouped together with the other CAM therapies amongst which they did not feel they should be included.' (Interview3, 2022)

For many, the final nail in the coffin came in 2010 with the publication of the 'Science and Technology Committee Evidence Check 2: Homeopathy'.

The report only sought to evaluate the efficacy, not effectiveness, of homeopathic medicines in clinical research under tightly controlled artificial experimental conditions. Thus, no studies testing whether homeopathy works on real patients under real world clinical conditions were allowed to be discussed or accepted as evidence.

In the published document this conclusion was drawn with regard to homeopathy in the UK and sets the scene for continued criticism of homeopathy by the government and the medical profession:

*'157. 'To maintain patient trust, choice and safety, the Government should not endorse the use of placebo treatments, including homeopathy. Homeopathy should not be funded on the NHS and the MHRA should stop licensing homeopathic products.'* (Science and Technology Committee Evidence Check 2 Homeopathy, 2010)

### **Data = fragmentation?**

In attempting to assess the current health of homeopathy, accessing reliable data proved problematic.

Initial research revealed that there are no definitive figures on the number of homeopathic practitioners operating in the UK and there is no definitive figure for the number of people accessing a homeopath or indeed buying homeopathic products.

Unfortunately, the number of practitioners varies depending on the website visited and also seems to depend on the 'guesstimate' of homeopaths who are not registered with any of the membership organisations.

4H does, on its website, appear to acknowledge that the sector is fragmented. 'Homeopathy is not a statutorily regulated profession nor a protected title at this time, which means there is not one

national body responsible for registering, regulating and policing all practitioners. However, the registers recognise the benefit to the public of having one central directory so came together to create 'Find a Homeopath' (Find a Homeopath - Regulation, n.d.).

- The SoH (About your remedy, 2022) claims that in the UK, 12 % of the population (equivalent to nearly 8 million people) 'trust' homeopathy. But their source is not obvious and it is unclear whether this figure has increased or decreased in recent years.

The Society's own Find a Homeopath web page claims there are 1061 (as at 22.2.23) homeopaths registered who have 'satisfied the Society's educational and professional requirements' (SoH Find a Homeopath, 2022). The only way to find this figure is by adding up the numbers displayed on a map.

*Find a Homeopath* website claims the SoH has '1400 registered members.' There is a discrepancy of over 300 members. The SoH's figures claim that there are 'over 3,000 practitioners across the UK', but again no source is provided. (Seeing a homeopath, 2022)

- The ARH claims they have 437 members (as at 22. 2.23) and breaks the numbers down for England, Scotland, Wales, and NI. (Find a Homeopath results, 2022). Yet the *Find a Homeopath* website claims the ARH has over a thousand registered student and associate members.
- In comparison, the Faculty of Homeopathy claims to have over 500 members worldwide – they are a membership organisation for Statutorily Registered (or Registrable) healthcare and veterinary practitioners who use homeopathy in their practice. (The Registers, n.d.)
- HINT, not acknowledged by the SoH as a registering body, offers no membership numbers on their website but when contacted claimed (20.9.22) to have 'over 100 members'.
- The Homeopathy Research Institute (HRI) does offer more data as evidenced on the link but their figures are more than 10 years out of date. The HRI claims there are 1,500 professional

homeopaths in the UK, regulated by the SoH, the ARH and the Homeopathic Medical Association. (Resources, n.d.)

In Britain, the market for homeopathy is growing at around 20% per year. According to HRI, in 2007 it was estimated to be worth £38m, and was projected to reach £46m in 2012.

Although, the *Good Thinking Society* (a sad endowment that I need to use this organisation's data) claims the UK homeopathic market is estimated at about £213 million annually - no time period is provided and their source is unclear.

The HRI did not reply to my email requesting up to date information.

As evidenced, data on homeopathy is not hard to come by but what is available is either fragmented, is at odds with what has been published on another site, requires the researcher to estimate numbers or is out of date. Above all, the data available requires the researcher to work too hard and could well give the perception of an uncoordinated sector.

For transparency and accountability, the number of homeopathic practitioners should be available if for no other reason than trying to assess whether the sector is growing or shrinking in a bid to make a case for homeopathy.

The theory of communication is clear - perception is everything. Contradictory and fragmented information does little to instil confidence.

### **Five membership organisations = fragmentation?**

According to the SoH there are four membership organisations for professional homeopaths (excluding HINT), including the perhaps lesser known British Homeopathic Medical Association (HMA). It is worth pointing out that HMA was a limited company (No.02051897) and from their most recent filings it appears they have not been functional as an organisation for several years.

(Advanced Company Search, n.d.)

It is puzzling how this organisation, with no website, no income, and no register continues to be regarded as a membership body by the SoH and HRI.

Understandably, all three organisations interviewed (SoH, ARH and HINT) support the concept of choice.

‘Why would anyone working with a system of medicine which is based on individualisation and the ‘bespoke’ prescription, see choice of a membership body in a negative light? If we support the concept of a free society, surely the right to choose with whom to affiliate, is fundamental. Most of our members live in a (so called) democracy, and support the political party which most closely reflects their own personal beliefs/concerns.

‘When our country is under threat from external factors, we expect our elected representatives to work together in order to meet the needs of our country. Why would that be different for homeopathy?’ (Interview5, 2023)

But it could be argued that with the number of homeopaths retiring not being replaced by the number coming into the profession, it would make sense to have an amalgamation of some sort, or a pooling of some resources for those common aims.

An amalgamation is understandably not favoured. ‘All the while that homeopaths want choice, and they clearly do or they would all join SoH, then choice will exist, at least for as long as it is economically viable’.

But what about forming a professional council? Is that the solution to opening clearer channels of communication and more integration between member organisations?

The SoH claims ‘4H currently has this role. A council suggests something less flexible and likely with the same people as represented currently at 4H. Unless a council offered something different, at low cost, with a very clear set of achievable objectives, then currently we don’t see a need for it. ‘



The unique structure of 4H appears to reflect the fact that it does not operate within a regulatory structure and therefore it is not required to legally represent the whole sector, as would be the requirement for a clearly defined council.

HINT does favour a regulatory structure to ensure the sector truly has one voice. It claims, as things stand, 4H can and does make up its own rules given it is no more than a loose community of likeminded sections of the profession.

Given all the membership organisations interviewed agree choice is essential, the stumbling block appears to be the word 'integration' and who it applies to.

Does integration mean closer ties with the NHS?

'Do practitioners really want to be subsumed by our failing NHS? Or are we working to improve public awareness of how homeopathy can make a difference to their overall health and wellbeing, so that homeopathy can be 'judged' according to its own merits? (Interview5, 2023)

Or is integration the preserve of 4H? Certainly, for those invited to sit around the table, it appears to provide a platform for the profession to work together and allegedly pull in the same direction. But what if you are not invited?

The concept of integration certainly does not appear to incorporate putting organisational and commercial differences aside and working together, with all membership organisations, for the good of the profession.

'What we see in the other modalities is major professional associations speaking out and representing the discipline and they also obtain the support of their council. With that you have numbers and sway and members can be directed not to vote favourably. Homeopathy cannot do that.' (Interview1, 2022)

The 4H collaboration of 11 homeopathic organisations and charities includes representation from across the sector, including three of the four main UK registers, the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons, Homeopathy UK, the Friends of the London Hospital for Integrated Medicine, the British Association of Homeopathic Manufacturers, Homeopathy at Wellie Level, Homeopathy Training and Homeopathy Action Trust (HAT) [whose website, as of February 2023, is populated by Latin text].

Examples of this collaboration include Homeopathy Awareness Week (HAW), celebrated annually in April. But exactly how much awareness of homeopathy is created by this week? It largely depends who you ask. Many claim it is an echo chamber preaching to the converted and actually receives no meaningful coverage or traction. The implication from SoH Chair Selina Hatherley's website OXHOM.com would imply she did one interview during HAW in 2022.

In 2019, 4H commissioned research involving an independent poll of 2000 people which found that the average Brit will spend more than £65,000 over their lifetime looking after their health and wellbeing and would consider homeopathy as part of their healthcare package. (The Cost of Health, 2019). How these findings were acted upon is unclear.

The ARH highlights that they encouraged their members to engage in lobbying activities, 'for various important 'political' events such as retaining ongoing access to our homeopathic medicines (Medicines Act revision 2012), and ongoing access to homeopathy via the NHS (Judicial Review involving NHS England, 2018)'.

Another example of collaboration with 4Homeopathy is the commissioning of a series of Vox Pops in 2022 gathering public opinion on homeopathy. The campaign will be launched shortly on social media.

And yet despite this effort, 4H just does not appear on the radar as a representative body, or indeed any other type of body in government circles.

‘4H does not enable homeopathy to speak with one voice and as a result the profession will never have the ear of government and will never be in a position to play a part in shaping its future’.

(Interview1, 2022)

Both SoH and ARH highlight their work with The Integrated Healthcare Collaborative (IHC) <https://www.theihc.org.uk/>, a group of 24 professional complementary healthcare organisations who claim to be working to increase public access to a range of therapies, improve integration with conventional medicine and improve patient outcomes. The IHC was established in 2020 to continue the work already undertaken by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Integrated Healthcare (APGIH) whose chair, the Rt Hon David Tredinnick (MP), was not seeking re-election to Parliament in 2019.

The ARH says ‘The IHC has written to government on several occasions, most recently in relation to the current cost of living crisis’. The SoH also cites ‘lobbying government during 2020 pandemic lockdown for support of the sector and a call for support for energy bills for the profession and wider CAM community’. Also cited was the establishment of a national Sustainability Awareness Day in April 2022 to generate awareness of application to the CAM sector.

HINT has considered joining IHC but felt that the group has a limited impact and offered no significant benefit.

### **Campaigning, lobbying, influencing = fragmentation?**

A quick and simple way to assess campaigning work and the inherent momentum required for it to be successful, from a communication point of view, is to examine the SoH, ARH and HINT home pages. It is only a snapshot in time but could be indicative of an approach.

Two of the three websites require visitors search beyond the home page for campaigning information despite it being a long-held rule in communications to never make readers work too hard.

The ARH website does have a section, under *Useful Links*, about campaigning and highlights two organisations who are engaged in the business of campaigning ‘to provide access to information and research for homeopaths, patients and others interested in supporting diversity in medical approaches.’

Unfortunately, the website for the charity *Homeopathy: Medicine for the 21st Century* has since last year (and possibly earlier) been under redevelopment and the information available is over 10 years old. The historical content looks robust and the charity was obviously not fearful of engaging with those who seek to undermine homeopathy.

A second organisation also looks promising – described as: a central ‘hub’ which provides accurate information on current campaigns to retain access to homeopathy. Details are highlighted on [www.4homeopathy.org/](http://www.4homeopathy.org/) but the link is to the *Find a Homeopath* website which has little if any campaigning work evidenced.

The SoH has, within the news drop down menu, a lobbying and advocacy area which has not been updated since April 2021. Nevertheless, it has run stories in the past on the IHC calls for more clarity during the lockdowns, a number of stories on HAW including reporting on an interesting seminar in 2018 that explored ways in which homeopathy can be promoted and marketed more effectively.

‘It also provided advice and information to equip practitioners with the knowhow and confidence to speak up individually and collectively.’ (4Homeopathy event focuses on empowering the community, 2018). Although five years old, this sounds like relevant information, yet buried.

Whilst HINT’s website is dated and text heavy, it is clear from the home page what campaign the organisation is focussing on and there is a call to action. The home page also leaves visitors in little doubt about the organisation’s passion and determination to put homeopathy on the map. It does not avoid the thorny issues of the day. (Who Are We?, 2023)

I accept that websites are a challenge to keep up to date, but if homeopathy is to survive and grow in the UK, it is crucial for this sector, which is under continued scrutiny, to keep its shop window refreshed and to make the information compelling and actionable.

With regards to lobbying government more specifically, the responses from three membership organisations highlight substantial differences in approach.

A Society spokesman said: ‘The opportunity for lobbying UK government on behalf of homeopathy is severely limited. Neither do we have the budget. One of the reasons that 4H was formed was to present a united front and deliver a cohesive and collaborative response to attacks on the profession.

‘Through our membership of IHC, we are prepared should that change. Not least, we need our own All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for CAM and not just an adjunct to the beauty industry.

‘We have, however, responded to any enquires from organisations like the MHRA’.

When asked about lobbying particularly during 2020, ARH said it did not have any examples. And added: ‘Post-lockdown our focus has been to support our members, and help them to adapt to the changing, and often challenging times. Also, keeping them ‘safe’ from would-be exploitation from the detractors, has been a major focus’.

The ARH added: ‘The establishment has always been totally opposed to homeopathy ..., so nothing to ‘affect’ there’.

A HINT spokesman said: ‘Homeopathy is fighting on three fronts – we are still living with the legacy of the Science & Technology Committee report. Homeopathy has no meaningful UK published research to counter the criticisms and there is a lack of unity and integration.’

‘There is a kind of illusion of collaboration; but neither SoH or ARH wish to stick their neck above the parapet. They walk a very careful line. If anything, the ARH is a little more adventurous.’ (Interview4, 2022)

The feeling is, because both membership organisations run large operations needing to bring in sufficient funds to stay afloat, they understandably do not seek to disturb the status quo.

But homeopathy is a radical medicine which historically has pushed against the establishment, although critics claim the organisations representing most members are conservative and safe.

There is, however, an active group of homeopaths growing restless. They feel that whilst the NHS is disintegrating, it is a perfect time for homeopathy to step into the space.

‘Homeopaths cannot continue to sit in a small room by themselves any longer; that is not the time we are living in. They need to realise they are political animals by nature of the job they do and need to start behaving like one and get out there and stand up for what they believe in. Whilst the SoH, ARH and HINT do all the obvious things like writing articles, engage in social media etc, we have to engage politically if we want homeopathy to survive. The future is quite precarious.’ (Interview4, 2022)

ARH agrees with the sentiment to a certain extent. ‘The time is long overdue for the homeopathy profession to stop being the victim. We should, and are working collaboratively to forge a new future in which homeopathy is recognised and accepted according to its own merits.

‘That will require some radical re-thinking for those who are firmly wedded to the old regulatory model of healthcare delivery. If we keep on doing things the old way, and fail to adapt to the changing environment in which we operate, homeopathy will remain in victim-mode in perpetuity.’

HINT claims to be active and takes a ‘cross fertilizing approach’; nevertheless, there is no way of verifying this as the website does not report on it. A HINT steering committee member said: ‘We keep banging on in various Parliamentary groups that homeopathy is cheap at a time when NHS

costs are spiralling out of control'. So far, HINT claims to have spoken to 18 All Party Parliamentary Groups and Committees.

'Each parliamentary group meeting we attend is an opportunity to explain the faults of the 2010 decision and why it was wrong. It's a long road but we are going in the right decision.'

HINT adds that its engagement with the regulatory and healthcare processes has served recently to identify an issue which has the potential to change the landscape for the training and practice of homeopathy in the UK.

In the summer of 2021, HINT brought together representatives from SoH and ARH, and education providers to orchestrate a 'single-message, wide representation' response to the Department of Health and Social Care.

HINT claims to have succeeded in bringing together the largest number of responders from the sector to a government consultation in the history of the profession. 'The consultation to which these profession members were responding was related to the possibility of external licensing of homeopaths in the UK. The size of the response and the nature of the consultation challenge the position of the SoH and ARH on the relevance of HINT and its actions in addressing arguably the biggest issue of the day.'

This consultation directly impacts on Government policy in relation to how the powers to introduce and remove professions from regulation might be used in the future. Specific to homeopathy was the question 'whether there are unregulated professions that should be brought into statutory regulation' (Healthcare Regulation: deciding when statutory regulation is appropriate, 2022).

### **The world stage**

Although UK homeopathy organisations were not present at the inaugural 'Better Way Conference' run by the World Council for Health, the WCH appears to offer homeopathy a huge opportunity.

They are a group of established worldwide independent scientists, clinicians and medics [not in the pay of the pharmaceutical sector] working with a variety of international organisations to come up with its vision of modern healthcare: perfectly aligned with homeopathy.

Whilst there may have been a political reason behind this decision, the ARH *Homeopathy in Practice* magazine (Autumn 2022) ran an informative piece highlighting the work carried out by the WCH.

On a national level, the *People's Health Alliance* (PHA) is another route to expanding homeopathy's reach in the UK. But as yet, it is unclear how many homeopaths are involved with their local PHA, although my survey showed that 70.7% those asked are aware of the Alliance.

Critics claim the sector is held back by the attitude adopted by the membership groups: 'The SoH is holding back from encouraging their members to get involved just in case the PHA falls on its face. They are adopting a wait and see cautious approach which over time has always been their modus operandi. The PHA might fall on its face but it might not and they will then miss the opportunity of getting in at the ground level.' (Interview4, 2022)

The Society says they largely leave matters of personal support for other bodies up to the individual members themselves to make that decision. And adds 'We have put our support behind TCIH (Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Healthcare).'

The ARH is also aware of the PHA, and has informed members 'who need to judge for themselves, where they can most usefully provide their support, and how best to deploy their time/energy.'

HINT highlights the work of the PHA during many of its monthly online meetings in the knowledge that the PHA is here to stay as an alternative to getting treatment from the NHS, whatever shape it ultimately takes.

Neither the Society, ARH or HINT are considering becoming coalition partners of the WCH. All appear to have concerns regarding governance and issues around transparency and will keep a watching



brief. The International Homeopaths 4 Autism, nevertheless, are WCH coalition partners – Dr Philippa Fibert is their Research Co-ordinator.

### **Education = fragmentation?**

Homeopathy Training UK (HT), previously called the Homeopathic Course Providers Forum, claims to represent the ‘independent voice of homeopathy training and education in the UK’. The ARH states on the website *Which Homeopathy Course* that HT provides a platform on which UK course providers of all persuasions can share knowledge, expertise and concerns. The SoH, ARH and HINT also sit round the table. (Homeopathy Training Accredited Courses, n.d.)

When asked whether there should be a core curriculum in a bid to provide the perception of unity, the responses again were varied:

‘Of course, courses vary, but students generally find the right course for them, eventually. Given that homeopathy is all about individualisation, it’s hard to see how ‘standardisation’ could bring any benefits’. (Interview5, 2023)

According to the Society, under the Guidelines for Course Accreditation there is a core criteria and this is displayed on their website. SoH claims to follow the statutory regulations and believe they are robust enough to withstand any regulatory changes. (Find an accredited course, 2023). The academic level is equivalent to that of a first degree.

According to the SoH website <https://www.findahomeopath.org/courses>, nine colleges meet their criteria and 4H publishes a list of 20 courses nationwide, of which four colleges are also validated under the Quality Assurance Validation Scheme run by Homeopathy Training <https://www.findahomeopath.org/courses/homeopathy-training-accredited>. The ARH website *Which Homeopathy Course* highlights 13 colleges currently listed (Find A Course, 2023) and The Homeopathic Providers Forum website (now called Homeopathy Training) has 15 courses on its website.

One member who attends the Homeopathy Training meetings passionately believes in a core curriculum across the board, not just for Society approved colleges. In their vision, each college could then teach additional modules which they feel are of importance, such as acute prescribing.

‘Trainee homeopaths don’t do much acute work, there are of course a few exceptions, and yet we are living in a world that is all about acutes’. (Interview4, 2022)

‘The course providers need to be much more pro-active in teaching their students how to communicate with the public, especially given the many limitations imposed upon us, about what we can ‘claim’. It is much harder to convince practitioners of many years standing, to modify the manner in which they communicate to the public. It really needs to start from year one of training.’ (Interview5, 2023)

Whilst core content may be taught by a limited number of colleges, it is unclear the extent to which all colleges prepare students to establish their homeopathic clinics.

The SoH does supply on its website a *Leap in to Practice* area. There are samples of patient templates, professional advice on a range of topics from business bank accounts to tax and safeguarding to GDPR as well as guidance on setting up a social media presence, building a website and top tips to promote your practice. (Leap into Practice, 2023) The SoH also holds ad hoc workshops.

Homeopath and business woman, Mary Greensmith who runs Postgrad-Homeopathy – an organisation which sets out to help homeopaths gain experience and confidence whilst building their practice through a number of courses – nevertheless, still claims most, if not all, students leave college with no idea how to set up and run a successful business. And then they are surprised when their business is not sustainable. Running a business requires a completely different skill set. Nothing seems to have changed eight years on’. (Courses for Homeopaths, 2023)

‘Students get one lecture if they are lucky on the business side of things and almost what is worse is they also leave with a range of self-limiting beliefs with regard to what to charge, their value and worth, how to balance the books, how to promote themselves and a range of other business skills.’

In addition to concerns regarding sufficient businesses strategizing, there are issues related to patient self-empowerment or as one interviewee explained ‘the idea that you must not teach people how to prescribe, about remedies, about repertories etc because they won’t need a homeopath is madness. As we all know, the more you learn about homeopathy the more you realise you need a homeopath. Or why not become one yourself? (Interview7, 2023)

‘A sure-fire way to encourage more students into the profession is to encourage homeopaths to ‘teach’ Facebook groups for example, how to collect symptoms, how to use a repertory, about 1<sup>st</sup> aid homeopathy, about what they can do for themselves. Encourage them to buy a remedy kit.’ (Interview7, 2023)

### **Can research unite homeopathy?**

The response from one of the membership organisations is worthy of note.

‘Quality research has its place in extending our knowledge and understanding of homeopathy. However, the focus should be on enhancing our own knowledge, skills, understanding and experience, so that we can deliver the best possible care to our patients. Research specifically or solely designed to convince or placate those who choose to deny the efficacy of homeopathy, will not achieve its objective.’ (Interview5, 2023)

Is this a reason not to undertake a range of research? If the same attitude had been adopted by epidemiologist Dr Alice Stewart in the 1950s we might still be X-raying pregnant mothers and exposing unborn children to harmful doses of radiation (A Survey of Childhood Malignancies, 2023). Research might be ignored or attempts made to undermine it for many years, but as the above example shows perseverance is imperative.

David Tredinnick MP, speaking at the 2019 HRI international Homeopathy Research conference in London, said of research: 'It is quite clear we do need this valuable research to interact with the medical establishment. It is only a matter of time in my view before the weight of this new evidence is going to win the day for us. The future is bright and the future is homeopathy'. (HRI London 2023 – Call for Abstracts closed, 2023)

The HRI, a UK-based charity dedicated to conducting and promoting 'high quality research in homeopathy' at an international level, has on its website a free database of the latest trials and studies. (HRI Research, n.d.)

A request for an interview was made in December 2022 to establish how much of the research is carried out in the UK and how well is it supported by the membership organisations and individual homeopaths. No response was received.

4H has an informative page on its website setting out the types of research conducted, but there are no specifics regarding the research 4H as a group sponsor or support (Evidence in Homeopathy, n.d.)

According to Interview2: 'Sadly, there appears to be a scepticism and a lack of respect towards the value of research and the scientific process, from the homeopathic community in this country. This is driven by a couple of things - one is the lack of understanding regarding the value of research and secondly the Randomised Control Trial model of measuring efficacy of one drug does understandably pose problems for homeopathic research and homeopaths.' (Interview2, 2022)

In homeopathy, treatment is tailored to the individual therefore prescribing one drug to 60 people, for example, is not how homeopathy works thus many homeopaths will feel this type of research is not relevant to them.

'Understandably, many homeopaths have decided that they are just going to keep working in their alternative world where patients come through word of mouth and they are not really that influenced by research, so why engage with it. Also, I am sure many think, we didn't become

homeopaths to be engaged in research, we became homeopaths to cure patients.’ (Interview2, 2022)

Nevertheless, there are many homeopaths who strongly believe in research about homeopathy as practised by homeopaths – and that is where the POD projects come in (Patient's Own Data) using MYMOPS (Measure Yourself Medical Outcomes Profile).

But what is a MYMOP and service evaluation POD project and how do they benefit homeopathy?

MYMOP is a problem specific and individualised measure which captures what patients consider are the two most important symptoms associated with a specific problem and an activity of daily living that is affected by these symptoms. (Measure Yourself Medical Outcomes Profile, 2021)

A POD project seeks to collate all MYMOP relating to one specific condition. MYMOP, run by a company called Meaningful Measures, are now being promoted within the NHS and becoming acceptable as a measure.

By way of an example, homeopath Dr Philippa Fibert has been running an autism POD project and explains: ‘We document what patients want help with, and how effective that help is. The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Pod for example is a group of experienced homeopaths all specialising in supporting families with children with autism.’ (The ASD POD project, 2020)

By working in these ways, homeopaths and the families, can provide useful information about the value of homeopathy for those with autism.

POD projects are in their infancy and a project similar to the ASD POD has been running into long COVID since January 2021. Throughout that year, data was regularly presented at HINT monthly meetings.

The potential of a database of long COVID cases is substantial, it is something homeopathy can highlight as transforming anecdotes into usable data.

The Society was allegedly approached on a handful of occasions and encouraged to be the central administrative and collection point for MYMOP POD Projects, but as yet they appeared to not be interested.

Those homeopaths who are pro POD projects appear to be on a mission – ‘We need to persuade our audience with tangible results. Once they see the result of using MYMOP then we might persuade more homeopaths to follow this approach. And some colleges are slowly starting to educate their students about MYMOP and their value’ (Interview2, 2022)

Communicating results from completed/ongoing POD projects is an important part of raising awareness and creating interest. Dr Philippa Fibert is delighted that the most recent meta-analysis that came out of a European group of academics for homeopathy and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) has used two of her trials. This analysis with six trials, two of which are hers, shows how homeopathy is significantly effective for ADHD.

Dr Fibert now plans to take the analysis to her local NHS mental health group who are enthusiastic about these trials. It is therefore unfortunate that recently the HRI refused to fund the final part of her ADHD research.

The HRI website does suggest that it supports projects that focus on clinical areas where homeopathy could be of particular value. But it also emphasizes that there are ‘no active HRI clinical research projects at this time’.

The HRI does support data collection. Its website highlights that to ‘fully explore what homeopathy can and cannot treat, more needs to be done to assess patient outcomes during routine clinical care’. The research body suggests this can be performed through Clificol, an internet-based database designed to collect clinical cases of homeopaths around the world. (Learning from Day to Day Practice, n.d.)

## Long COVID research

It is interesting to note how the long COVID POD came about - In April 2020 a package of care was offered to UK NHS frontline staff which included a COVID nosode provided by homeopathic pharmacy Ainsworths (Frontline Immune Support for NHS Staff, n.d.). Given NHS staff anecdotal observations, and the absence of emerging helpful conventional treatments, it was decided to conduct a service evaluation (the long COVID POD project) (Reporting what patients say, n.d.). To our knowledge this is the first documentation of homeopathic treatment for the symptoms of long COVID.' (Pinkus, Relton, Majumdar, & Fibert, 2022)

According to *A service evaluation of homeopathic treatment of long COVID: the long COVID POD project*, conventional treatment is mostly supportive rehabilitation, with each symptom managed with a relevant drug or therapy.' But it is notable that few therapeutic trials of potentially helpful interventions for the condition have yet been conducted'.

NHS England claims to want patients with long COVID to be seen in bespoke clinics within six weeks of a GP referral, and it has a target to have 90 such clinics up and down the country (News, 2022).

The NHS also has an online presence <https://www.yourCovidrecovery.nhs.uk/> to provide personalised support.

Currently, only one third are presently seen within the promised six-week timeframe suggesting that the current model is not serving patients with long COVID well, and it is in patient's interests to generate evidence about the effectiveness of other models.

'Diverse research and data collection over many years already suggests the helpfulness of homeopathy for pandemics and conditions similar to long COVID, and this service evaluation suggests that patients found homeopathic treatment helpful for their self-reported long COVID symptoms ... within weeks of taking homeopathic remedies.' (Pinkus, Relton, Majumdar, & Fibert, 2022)

‘By 4-6 weeks patients recorded a 1.5-point (38%) improvement; and by 8-12 weeks, a 2-point (47%) improvement in their MYMOP symptoms.’ (Pinkus, Relton, Majumdar, & Fibert, 2022). Most patients were prescribed a COVID nosode at their first appointment. ‘However, whilst approximately half were prescribed the COVID nosode alone, half were also prescribed individualised remedies additional to a COVID nosode, so it is not currently possible to estimate the patient-rated effect of the nosode alone. This would be of interest since a single remedy would be cost-effective, efficient, and preclude the need for a consultation’.

The authors of the Service Evaluation conclude, given the early positive findings highlighting the improvements with homeopathic treatment, ‘a more robust study is now warranted to confirm this service evaluation given the lack of therapeutic options for this condition.

‘It is now proposed to conduct a pragmatic randomised controlled trial and qualitative interviews to more systematically explore: patients’ experiences of treatment; the comparative effectiveness of adjunctive homeopathic treatment compared to usual care; and optimum treatment protocols such as the effectiveness of the COVID nosode.’ (Pinkus, Relton, Majumdar, & Fibert, 2022)

The service evaluation has been submitted to the European Journal of Integrative Medicine for publication.

Given homeopathy, in such a short time, has witnessed such positive results, it would appear that recording successful treatments and supporting vital research are both essential to the future of homeopathy post COVID.

HINT has supported the long COVID research from its inception and has helped raise 50% of the investment needed so far. (Long-COVID Homeopathic Research Project, 2021)

ARH says it is not supporting the research as it was not invited to participate and they found out about it through various ‘grapevines’. It accused it of not being ‘a joined-up initiative’.



SoH says it has a 'friendly, working relationship with HRI whose role is to promote high quality research. As a register and member organisation, we chose to leave this to the experts.'

However, the Society has in the past encouraged members to use outcome measures such as MYMOP and has run three webinars for members on the use of MYMOP.

The SoH statement concluded by saying: 'HRI Chief Executive and Society Fellow Rachel Roberts will be updating Society members on what is going on in the field of research at the Members Discussion and AGM taking place in April 2023.'

### **Discussion – recommendations for a way ahead post COVID**

The Science & Technology Committee in 2010 stated that homeopathy is not to be taken seriously.

Since then, the UK government and a number of organisations such as the ASA and the Professional Standards Authority, have needed little encouragement to find ways of driving through regulation in a bid to constrict, and worst-case scenario shut down or force homeopathy underground.

From a strategic communication standpoint, a seemingly fragmented sector, with often disparate and antagonistic voices, when faced with a common enemy would do well to evaluate its approach.

Homeopathy must find a way to challenge the bullies in the playground; cowering is not an option post COVID.

One of the many reasons the pharmaceutical sector has established itself at the heart of all governments worldwide is because, despite the variety of companies that make up the multi-billion-pound sector, they speak with one voice through their lobby groups.

When we use the term Big Pharma we recognise the collective meaning of a business group with significant economic, political or social influence. Use the term homeopathy outside the sector and the response is generally quizzical.

Despite former MP David Tredinnick's assessment in 2015 that 'the future is homeopathic', it is Big Pharma that has dominated the COVID 19 stage, while homeopathy has worked quietly in the background attending worldwide to all those with symptoms, with success but little public recognition.

So how do we discard the mantle of fearful victim and elevate homeopathy to its rightful place, operating once again alongside allopathic medicine as part of the much-discussed integrated care plans?

David Tredinnick called for 'a more aggressive approach from the homeopathic community' and perhaps that is what we must be prepared to adopt, together, with one voice.

Uniting to broadcast the message that homeopathy can help long COVID sufferers, or the NHS staff off sick with burnout, or provide support for the 35 minor ailments for which GPs no longer issue prescriptions (May 2022), or people experiencing mental health difficulties post lockdowns could be the first stage.

Naturally, organisations and individuals have their own mission to which they dedicate their resources, but for homeopathy to survive, in the words of Rumi, it needs to find the field beyond 'wrong doing and right doing' and operate the unifying partnership from that position.

An agreed objective of promoting and improving the reputation of homeopathy to a wider audience is key.

At this juncture it is important to define what improving the reputation of homeopathy looks like. If we do not know that, how do we know if we have got there. It is also vital we recognise that an achievement is not about holding events, building websites, commissioning research – they are all worthwhile tools, but the success of campaigning and influencing should be measured on the outcomes – the 'takeaway' which is then acted upon by the participants.

Working collaboratively on communication with a 'more aggressive approach' is our Rumi 'field'.

With that in mind we can now draft a robust communication strategy which focusses on presenting not only a united front to homeopaths, patients, potential new students and influencers, but is proactive in influencing those we have not yet reached.

For that strategy to be successful it must involve all organisations without exceptions, and to be effective, must be systematic, emphasising that the future is indeed homeopathic.

Imagine a homeopathic community which adopts the best practices of all the organisations involved and supports each other in a single set of promotional goals.

One strategy is to think of homeopathy, perhaps controversially, almost as a 'brand'. Branding is defined as a name, sign, symbol, term, design or a combination of them intended to identify goods and services ... to differentiate them from those of other sellers. (Mudrík).

Branding can strengthen the good reputation, amplify loyalty, support the perception of a greater value and help customers realize that they entered the world controlled by the same values ... A brand represents a big idea, a system of beliefs that customers consider as unique and useful for them. (Mudrík).

An integral part of this strategy is adopting a more 'aggressive' stance when explaining the difference between homeopathy and the medicalised approach. Few would argue today that the earth is flat and yet a few hundred years ago, those advocating that the earth was a sphere were derided as loons. Eventually the flat earth view was encompassed within the more comprehensive spherical concept, both co-existing dependent on perspective.

This is the conflict that exists between homeopathy (spherical) and conventional medicine (flat). It is the difference between the whole patient being treated not the diseased parts.

My experience of sitting in with many homeopaths is they balk at highlighting pitfalls of flat earth medicine which only treats labelled diseases. Homeopathy is so much more expansive and deserves a robust promotional campaign.

For clarity, I am not suggesting that acceptance of homeopathy is tantamount to rejection of conventional medicine. It has its role, particularly in A&E. Yet in *Homeopathy in Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine*, the authors describe the use and effectiveness of homeopathic medicine when treating the most serious cases of acute diseases inviting us into a critical discussion of how homeopathy works. (Martin Fass, 2017)

An overarching communication strategy is required to help reinvigorate old explanations and definitions, contextualising and challenging the medicalised approach.

What are the qualities any communication should have? As a minimum it must be:

**Integrated:** Joined up – all pulling in the same direction.

**Timely:** Taking advantage of what might be in the news or trending on social media. For example, a recent article in The Telegraph (*'The Royal Family swear by Homeopathy – but is it just nonsense'* February 7, 2023) should have been reacted to immediately by rallying all homeopaths to write to the Letters Editor. Responses may not have been published but such activity can eventually change the debate.

**Clear and consistent:** Communication style and messages reflect an agreed, consistent, unified approach.

**Targeted:** The right messages reach the right audiences in the right manner at the right time. Since March 2020, a whole range of channels have come online, most of which command huge audiences and inquiring listeners who have moved away from the accepted narratives. Is homeopathy courting those? Recently Dr Phillipa Fibert was interviewed by Dr Tess Lawrie for her regular podcast, available

through Substack, allowing a wider audience to be informed about the homeopathic research into long COVID.

**Accessible:** Information should be easily understood. So much of what is written about homeopathy is not written by communication experts, making our audience work too hard.

**Credible:** Stay within guidelines but not slavishly in the fearful manner homeopathy does at present.

**Planned:** It is important to keep to the 12-month timeline to create momentum - adapt it as you go along to reflect ongoing activity and developments.

In the absence of a homeopathy council which would normally take ownership of a 'brand' communication strategy, 4H ideally should be reformed and refocussed to ensure all UK organisations, with their own unique views and talents, are represented thus enabling it to speak with one voice for the sector.

Once that has happened, the 4H website also needs to be refocussed, whilst keeping the sign posting elements, and become more campaigning.

The site should also seek to promote the good work already being done out in the field. For example, why not have a page highlighting those local groups that are so proactive such as the Sapphire Clinic or the West Sussex West Surrey Homeopathic Group.

A simple example in how to be more strategy driven can be seen with the 4H event to be held in April 2023, *A United Voice: Better, Brighter, Bolder* is designed to 'identify, discuss and build new ideas and strategies for the future of the profession.' The programme, according to 4H, is dominated by interactive small group sessions and the focus of discussion will be determined by those attending who will be asked to select and propose topics when they register.

From a communication point of view this is a missed opportunity. Prospective attendees should be requested to submit topics in advance and from these submissions 4H should at least provide key headings in order to ensure the most concerning topics are discussed across the board, including the controversial issues.

A similar exercise was carried out in 2015 (as reported in The Homeopath Summer 2015) when the hope was the information gleaned from a consumer research project would lead to the creation of targeted campaigns to build greater awareness about homeopathy. Unfortunately, there is no evidence online that such a strategy was deployed. It was also suggested that an app be created – but again this has yet to materialise.

From this project's research and questionnaire there are a number of key areas which have the potential to unite homeopathy as a whole, and as a spin off, benefit individual membership organisations.

**Find and reach out to new audiences with refreshed, robust messages that challenge the long-held view of flat earth medicine**

Many people confuse homeopathy with herbal remedies or the broad field of natural medicine. Our existing literature is largely to blame. Whilst homeopathic remedies are highly diluted substances sourced from nature, why the insistence in always using ephemeral images? We are a serious medicine – let us be congruent in our messaging.

What is wrong with explaining clearly that the symptoms are not the disease which means the cause of the problem is never addressed by pharmaceutical medicine. Removing the symptoms without addressing the underlying cause means it is only a matter of time before the symptoms return, a higher dose of medicine is required with the increasing risks of side effects or more serious complaints developing. We should be highlighting the failings in this flat earth approach so patients understand their choices.

**Attract more students to the profession.**

There are many simple and cost-effective PR strategies to tackle this by engaging members of all the membership organisations, past students and colleges etc.

**Promote, launch and coordinate POD projects across all key health issues. And find a way to bring them into the mainstream of homeopathy. Embed the use of MYMOP and the importance of research, and more specifically POD projects, into colleges.**

In the survey of homeopaths, although 87.3% said that at present they do not support research by sharing their cases/submitting MYMOP, 87.5% said they would be willing to do so.

A well-run campaign will build an ongoing homeopathy knowledge base in colleges and amongst working homeopaths who specialise in specific areas. As a consequence, these can then be used to evidence the role of homeopathy in the treatment of specific symptoms and in improving outcomes.

#### **Promote the importance of business skills for homeopaths and start in college**

Over and above the core curriculum, colleges should be encouraged to run a number of modules about how to set up, market and run a business, bringing in relevant experts in the field.

Teach students the basics of auditing their practices; how to keep detailed notes about cases, what was curative and what was not. The homeopathy knowledge-base needs to be growing continually.

If a college does not have the finance to bring in specialist business lecturers, the website Postgrad Homeopathy <http://postgrad-homeopath.com/> offers a variety of practical courses and potential solutions to the lack of business acumen amongst homeopaths.

#### **Promote extra practical/on the job experience**

Any core curriculum should include an internship of some kind/practice in the field; for example, it is suggested that students and homeopaths support the *Travelling Homeopath Collective* and volunteer at one of the many UK festivals. They are an opportunity for professional homeopaths and students to gain first-hand experience of prescribing in acute settings and seeing the polycrest remedies in action. My experience as a student at Glastonbury 2022 was invaluable.

## **Collaborative working to attract thousands more to homeopathy**

In our survey, 52.6% of those asked said they would be willing to work longer hours to reach more people and 63.2% said they would be willing to work collaboratively to offer access to homeopathy out of hours.

With that in mind, we should be encouraging homeopaths to work collaboratively by forming GP Federation style clinics to offer access to homeopathy 24/7. If we want to attract more people to homeopathy we should have homeopaths working together and offering round the clock support. The approach taken by Homeopathy 247, launched by homeopath and business entrepreneur Mary Greensmith, appears to be a positive move towards round the clock care worldwide

<https://homeopathy247.com/>

## **Support lobbying/influencing efforts**

Provide support to those membership organisations already lobbying more explicitly. Different organisations have different strengths and interests. If every membership organisation identifies its preferred area of focus the others can get behind them.

Continue the cross-fertilisation work started by HINT; attend a wide range of parliamentary groups on specific health topics and offer homeopathy as an alternative. We need to get a voice heard at a level where it can make a difference.

Draft key messages to be used with political audiences, for example there are many in government who want to see sensible spending. According to Jean Duckworth PhD FSHom (Retired), the scientific-bureaucratic perspective, with an emphasis on the use of evidence-based frameworks, has moved the focus in healthcare away from caring, compassionate personalised care to a financial model. But as Duckworth, who had a special interest in the contribution that homeopaths can make to NHS practice, said, homeopathy may provide the opportunity to straddle the different philosophical and practice paradigms.



## Conclusion

Homeopathy in the UK needs to be braver. Those in the driving seat need to be more courageous.

But the sector needs to prepare before heading for a more centre stage. We should be exploiting the failings of a medicalised approach without breaking any rules and regulations in place to constrict us.

Unless we are all working for the good of homeopathy rather than ourselves and our organisations; unless we subscribe to the idea of homeopathy can actually 'save the world' as one interviewee suggested, unless we really believe and are prepared to be more daring, the future is precarious. All organisations and charities need to work together – no one should be excluded.

The buzz word for our time is integration; unless we truly collaborate in an open-hearted way, and surrender our egos, let all our angst go about our organisation being the biggest or the best and are willing to engage in the outside world, not just within our own protected environment, homeopathy faces an uncertain future.

From isolation to integration is the only way ahead for homeopathy in the UK post COVID.

*'Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success'.*

*(Henry Ford)*

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Background reading

Homeopathy Beyond Flat Earth Medicine – Timothy R Dooley MD

Homeopathic Science and Modern Medicine – Harris L Coulter

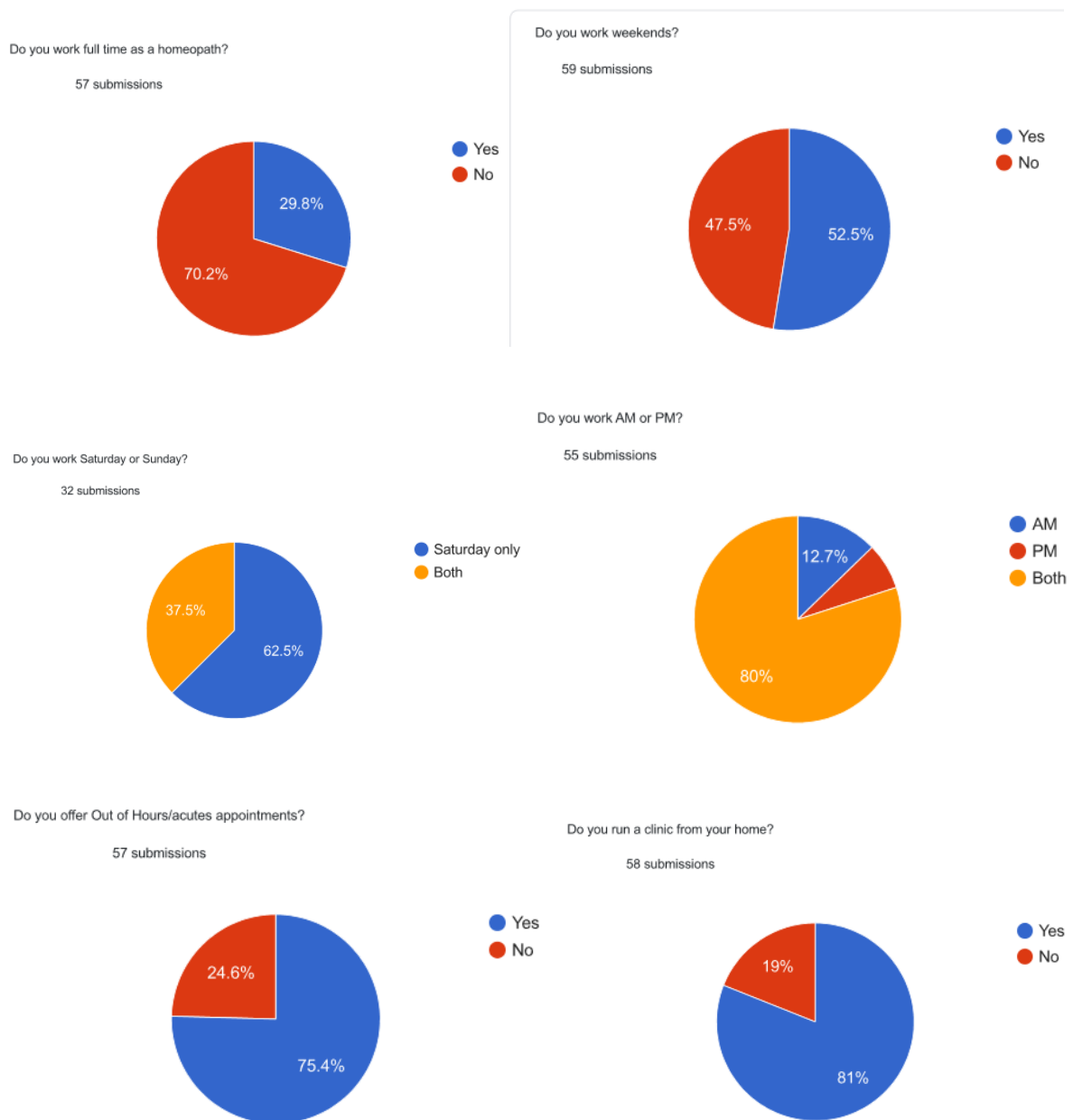
A New Model for Health and Disease – George Vithoulkas

Homeopathy in General Practice – Dr R A F Jack

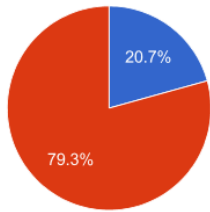
Wilful Blindness – Margaret Heffernan

Appendix

Questionnaire to homeopaths

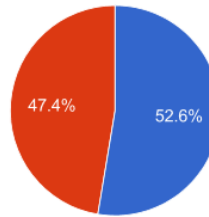


Do you rent a clinic?  
58 submissions



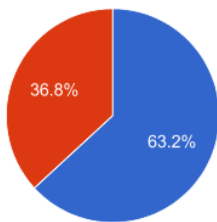
● Yes  
● No

Would you be willing to work longer hours in order to reach more people in your area?  
57 submissions



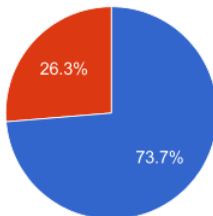
● Yes  
● No

Would you be willing to work collaboratively/on a rota with other local homeopaths to offer access to homeopathy Out of Hours – before 9am and after 5pm?  
57 submissions



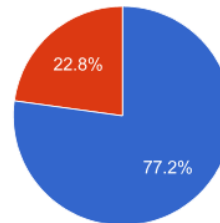
● Yes  
● No

Would you be willing to run a face to face clinic with other homeopaths?  
57 submissions



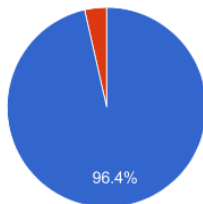
● Yes  
● No

Do you discuss any challenging cases in a homeopathic forum?  
57 submissions



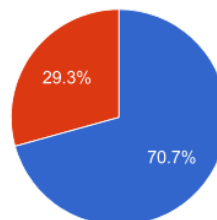
● Yes  
● No

Do you attend any online CPD?  
56 submissions



● Yes  
● No

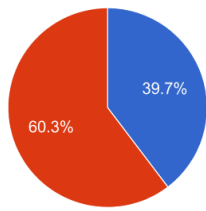
Have you heard of the People's Health Alliance?  
58 submissions



● Yes  
● No

Do you support homeopathic research financially with a donation?

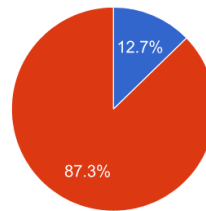
58 submissions



● Yes  
● No

Do you support homeopathic research by sharing your cases/submitting MYMOPS?

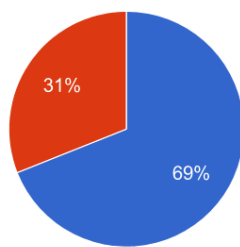
55 submissions



● Yes  
● No

Have you heard about the research into the role of homeopathy in Long Covid being carried out by St Mary's University, Roehampton?

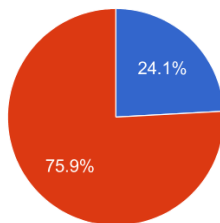
58 submissions



● Yes  
● No

Have you supported the current research into Long Covid at St Mary's University (it is looking into the outcome of the homeopathic treatment of the symptoms associated with Long-COVID patients)?

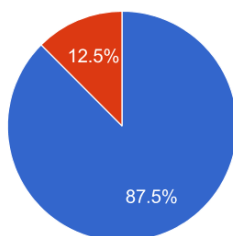
58 submissions



● Yes  
● No

Would you be willing to support homeopathic research?

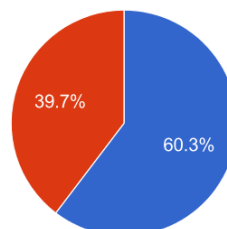
56 submissions



● Yes  
● No

Do you have a logo?

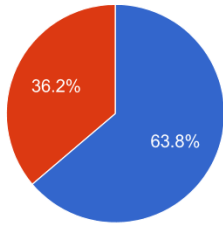
58 submissions



● Yes  
● No

Do you promote yourself online?

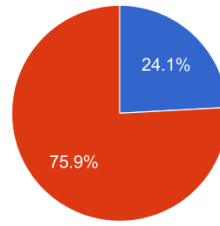
58 submissions



Do you have a brochure?

58 submissions

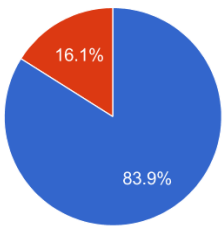
● Yes  
● No



● Yes  
● No

May we contact you for further information?

56 submissions



● Yes  
● No