

Lobby Briefing Notes - 1

The current position

- The consolidation has exposed problems with access to homeopathy.
- The government has been made aware of these problems.
- The government would have to consult and introduce new legislation to address these issues.
- The government has assured homeopaths and their patients that it expects access to homeopathy to continue as it has for the last 44 years.

Concerns

- Homeopaths and patients are concerned that the access to homeopathy, the livelihoods of homeopaths and the health of patients depend on trust that the law will not be exploited in some way.
- Homeopaths and patients are concerned that MPs should be able to respond rapidly if the government's assurances prove unfounded.
- In that event homeopaths and patients would want steps to be taken:
 - to protect the right to freedom of choice as to what medical system a person wishes to use;
 - to remove from safe homeopathic medicines the restrictions designed to protect people from potentially dangerous pharmaceuticals.
 - to acknowledge that those trained to use homeopathic medicines should have access to their full range of medicines.
- Homeopaths and patients are profoundly concerned that, in a climate of concerted attacks on homeopathy, the government has undertaken an exercise which exposes the weaknesses in the law without taking any action to deal with these.

Useful points

- 6 million people use homeopathy in the UK, most accessing it outside of the NHS.
- If these patients used the NHS instead, it could increase the cost of the NHS by up to 10%.
- If thousands of homeopaths lose their jobs, the costs of unemployment will rise and tax revenues will fall.
- There is no recorded case of a homeopathic medicine causing the patient harm.
- The cost to the NHS of treating the adverse effects of pharmaceutical drugs is 500 times the whole of the NHS homeopathy budget (£2bn v. £4m)
- Claims that there is no evidence that homeopathy works are unfounded (see the Faculty of Homeopathy website at: <http://www.facultyofhomeopathy.org/research/>).
- The whole campaign against homeopathy started after an expert report was presented to the Swiss government stating that "that the individual CAM interventions, *especially homeopathy*, were effective, under Swiss conditions safe and, as far as could be judged from the trial situation, also cost-efficient".[1]

1. Gudrun Bornhöft and Peter Matthiessen (eds), *Homeopathy in Healthcare – Effectiveness, Appropriateness, Safety, Costs: An HTA report on homeopathy as part of the Swiss Complementary Medicine Evaluation Programme*, trans. from the German by Margaret M Saar (Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag, 2011).