



Response from the Sports & Remedial Therapies Council, RE “Clouding the Issues” – Concerns of the Society of Sports Therapists regarding developments in Voluntary Regulation

Having had sufficient time to go through the correspondence from SST we feel a more in depth response should be given.

Who is SRTC?

The Sports and Remedial Therapies Council (SRTC) is the leading body for sports therapy and remedial therapy as recognised by the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC).

The SRTC is an independent, not-for-profit, professional forum that represents professional associations, training providers, educational establishments and other stakeholders that meet the sports therapy and remedial therapy core curricula.

Who is CNHC?

The CNHC is the UK regulator for complementary healthcare practitioners.

Its key function is to enhance public protection by setting standards for registration with CNHC. The CNHC 'quality mark' is being recognised as the hallmark of quality for the sector. This means that the general public, and those who commission the services of complementary healthcare practitioners, are able to choose with confidence by looking for the CNHC quality mark.

The Department of Health in November 2009 stated “CNHC is the **only** voluntary regulatory body for complementary healthcare which has official government backing. No other organisation has the same exacting criteria or focus on safety and quality”.

In April 2010 the Secretary of State for Health Andy Burnham, stated ““Emerging evidence clearly demonstrates that the public needs better protection, but in a way that is measured and does not place unreasonable extra burdens on practitioners. I am therefore minded to legislate to ensure that all practitioners supplying unlicensed herbal medicines to members of the public in England must be registered with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC). I believe that the introduction of such a register will increase public protection, but without the full trappings of professional recognition which are applied to practitioners of orthodox healthcare. I will be considering the similar measures we need to put in place to afford an appropriate level of protection for people using acupuncture treatments”.

HPC Regulation

The SRTC does not dispute the fact that the SST made an application to HPC to regulate sports therapy. The SST agree that the “process has gone no further towards the final stages of Statutory Regulation”. It is due to this fact that the an invitation was sent to all Professional Associations involved in Sports Therapy and Remedial Therapy, including SST, to form the SRTC, with the intention of working with the CNHC to ensure that sports therapy and remedial therapy is regulated to protect the public, knowing full well that the CNHC has full government backing.

Neither the SRTC nor any of its members have ever knowingly made any false claims regarding HPC regulation. All statements made have been reinforced with written evidence from the HPC and now from SST.



Taking the issues raised in the SST statement point by point.

1. Information on CNHC can be found at the start of this statement, and also on their website www.cnhc.org.uk

The CNHC is not limited to the professions that were in its original remit, a fact that can be supported by the government moving some of the 'aspirant' professions that had applied to HPC, to the CNHC, as above.

2. The HPC has stated that Sports Therapy was not included in the 'White Paper' relating to regulation. The SRTC and its member organisations have written documentation from the HPC stating that Sports Therapy regulation is not on the White Paper 'Trust, Assurance and Safety: the Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century' last is not a priority, and will not be regulated at any time in 'the near future'. As there are a further 5 professions 'in the queue' ahead of Sports Therapy, it is clear that this information is correct. The SST also acknowledges this in their statement "the process has gone no further towards the final stages of Statutory Regulation".
3. The SST validates/approves courses from diploma to masters degree level. These courses vary from 10 day practical training on the diploma course, up to 3 years training for a degree. Graduates of any of these courses can obtain full membership of the SST. The SRTC does not accept that a degree is required for a therapist to be classed as a sports therapist, a fact that the SST even accepts with its own membership criteria. Part of the SRTC remit has been to put in place a minimum standard of training, in line with current National Occupational Standards) (NOS). This training is standardised throughout the whole of the UK, and is the standard to which the CNHC accepts registrants.
4. Sports Therapy is not yet an 'allied medical profession', and as such is currently complementary to orthodox medicine.
5. The SRTC is made up of very highly skilled and experienced Sports Therapists and Remedial Therapists, and fully understand what a Sports Therapist is, and does. We would refer back to point 3.

The claim made regarding 'poolside attendants' is incorrect. At no point was it stated that poolside attendants or gym staff would be registered as Sports Therapists. The SRTC made it clear that this would never happen.

6. This is an incorrect statement. Those registering as Sports Therapists or Remedial Therapists with the CNHC will be required to have qualifications in either Sports Therapy or Remedial Therapy that meet the NOS. Massage practitioners can register with CNHC (if they meet the same exacting criteria), under the Massage category. We would refer back to point 3.
7. The claim made that "any applicant to CNHC who is a member of a professional body that has linked itself to the organisation will automatically be admitted to the register", is the same claim that the SST makes, when it tells its members, regardless of whether they have an approved diploma or degree, that they will be automatically registered with HPC (when) the profession is regulated.



The process currently in place at the CNHC ensures that those wishing to register meet the exacting criteria. The SRTC as lead body has a standard in place, and member organisations 'assess' the suitability of the potential registrant as meeting the minimum standards.

8. The SRTC has amongst its members experienced therapists, educators and assessors, with experience of working at all levels of practice and education. Quality assurance is the priority of the SRTC.
9. Whilst we cannot comment on the statements made relating to Skills Active, as that is a matter between them and SST, and the SRTC has not seen evidence of this communication, we can confidently state that as a Sector Skills Agency, Skills Active would not be able to work with just one Professional Association alone, as this would not represent the whole industry. As it was, Skills Active consulted the whole profession, and the National Occupational Standards in Sports Therapy were formed as a result.
10. We cannot comment on this serious allegation, however we have passed this statement to the CNHC for clarification

The SRTC have deemed that current courses on offer, at below degree level, if they meet National Occupational Standards, and the Core Curricula, give the graduate sufficient knowledge and skills in Sports Therapy. This level exceeds the current standard that is accepted by the SST for full membership to its organisation, at diploma level.

We agree that anyone can call themselves a sports therapist without any qualification, however, they would not be allowed to join any SRTC member professional association, nor register with the CNHC. Whilst the CNHC does not, at the moment, offer any 'protection of title' for Sports Therapists and Remedial Therapists, whilst we have no statutory regulation in place, it is still the only organisation recognised by the government as affording some protection of the public. It is the remit of the SRTC and its members to ensure that by promoting the CNHC, the public will recognise that it should only use those registered with the CNHC, as already advocated by the government.

We at the SRTC completely refute any allegations made of circulating false and inaccurate information. Everything we state is factual, and is supported by information from the agencies concerned.

We wholly disagree that the CNHC should retract from involvement in Sports Therapy, as this is crucial for the protection of the public and the raising of standards. We also believe that employers of Sports Therapists will want to recruit practitioners who are registered with a single regulator rather than be confused by the myriad of professional bodies purporting to represent Sports Therapists.

Whilst we may have to wait 10 years for Sports Therapy to be regulated by the HPC, we have secured its regulation through the CNHC, an organisation that is fully supported by the government and many other agencies.

On a final note, the SRTC will continue to work hard at unifying the profession, and will work with any organisation that wishes to get involved in the future of Sports Therapy and Remedial Therapy.