

Accredited Registers

Targeted Review – Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC)

April 2025

1. Outcome

- 1.1 We conducted a Targeted Review of the CNHC following their 2024-2025 Annual Check. Our Targeted Review focussed on Standard One.
- 1.2 We found that Standard One was met with the following Recommendations:
 - **Recommendation One:** The CNHC should develop a more sustainable approach to manage misleading or inappropriate registrant advertising concerns.
 - **Recommendation Two:** The CNHC should provide us with data of how they have managed registrant advertising concerns to allow us to track the progress of these to ensure that instances of misleading advertising are declining.
- 1.3 We will check how the CNHC has considered the Recommendations at its next assessment.

2. Background

The Process

- 2.1 We conduct an annual check for each Accredited Register. This is used to monitor whether there have been any significant changes to key processes or significant concerns raised that could affect whether the *Standards for Accredited Registers* (the Standards)¹ continue to be met.
- 2.2 In some cases, where we need further information or where we have concerns, an annual check will be escalated to a targeted review of the Accredited Register. A targeted review consists of a more in-depth assessment of specific Standards.
- 2.3 Following a targeted review, an Accreditation Panel considers whether the Standard(s) continue to be met. The Accreditation Panel may issue Recommendations or Conditions. In serious cases, it may consider suspending or withdrawing accreditation.
- 2.4 More information about the annual check and targeted review assessment process for existing Accredited Registers is set out in our *Accredited Registers - guidance on renewing accreditation*.²

The CNHC

- 2.5 The CNHC is a UK not-for-profit private limited company that maintains a voluntary register of complementary healthcare practitioners. It was established

¹ [Standards for Accredited Registers 2023 \(professionalstandards.org.uk\)](https://professionalstandards.org.uk/standards-for-accredited-registers-2023)

² [annual-review-process-guide.pdf \(professionalstandards.org.uk\)](https://professionalstandards.org.uk/annual-review-process-guide.pdf)

in 2008, and first received PSA Accreditation in September 2013. The CNHC is governed by a Board of Directors, including a lay Chair, with oversight from Profession Specific Boards and a Professional Committee. The CNHC registers practitioners from eighteen different professions and has almost 6000 registrants. Their register can be accessed here <https://search.cnhcregister.org.uk/?name=&therapy=&city=&postcode=&radius=&commit=Search>

The CNHC's annual check

2.6 The annual check involved a:

- review of information provided to the team by the CNHC in its annual check form, submitted on 21 November 2024.
- review of 'Share Your Experience' submissions received since the last review.
- check of CNHC's register.
- review of the actions taken to address Recommendations issued at the previous annual review.

2.7 We found that we required additional information to make a decision about Standard One. The rest of this report discusses our targeted review against this Standard.

3. *Standard One – Eligibility and Public Interest test*

Summary

3.1 Our Targeted Review found that this Standard was met subject to recommendations.

Reasons for Targeted Review

3.2 This Targeted Review was initiated owing to a high proportion of registrant websites (34%) containing claims that appeared to be non-compliant with CNHC and ASA guidance. As part of the Targeted Review, we provided CNHC with the opportunity to check our assessment and further information was provided to us which meant that some of the instances (though a minority) did not meet our threshold for concern.

Targeted Review findings

- 3.3 Since that time, the CNHC's efforts to address the issues at concern have proved to be largely effective (21 out of the 32 websites in question are now no longer of concern). This suggests that the CNHC are able to address the instances of misleading claims when they are brought to their attention. There do appear to be a small number of websites that have made no changes, and we advise that the CNHC continues to follow up with these registrants.
- 3.4 Furthermore, CNHC's complaints suggest that while there is an issue with non-compliance, it is not yet translating into concerns being raised with the CNHC about misleading advertising. This indicates that proportionality should be considered when determining an appropriate response to non-compliance, as

there is no clear evidence of immediate risks to public protection arising from the non-compliant statements.

- 3.5 Therefore, we considered that it is appropriate to close this Targeted Review without escalating to an Accreditation Panel. Instead, two recommendations have been issued. These recommendations provide the mechanism for us to continue to track progress through the annual assessment processes and are intended to drive a more sustainable approach to driving further improvement across registrants' advertising practices.
- 3.6 The first recommendation is intended to drive sustainability in the process, which currently depends on the Chief Executive's time. The second recommendation is intended to support the CNHC's own checking process with the PSA's annual assessment process by checking websites which have been subject to a CNHC intervention. This checking process will be conducted in addition to our routine random sampling of a proportion of CNHC registrant websites/
- 3.7 In future years, we may convert these recommendations into conditions if we do not see sustained improvement.

4. *Impact assessment*

- 4.1 The above changes, once completed will have a positive impact on the impact assessment, likely reducing the risk of exaggerated, untrue, or unsafe claims made by CNHC registrants on their websites, or in the course of their practice.