

The British Acupuncture Council (BAC) is the national organisation that regulates and represents the 3,000-plus traditional acupuncturists in the UK. Entry to the BAC is gained after at least three years of formal degree-level training. BAC members support the health and wellbeing of people across the UK, giving over 2.3 million treatments a year. This year we are planning for the BAC to gain accreditation from the Professional Standards Authority (formerly the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence) as part of our continued efforts to strengthen the regulation of acupuncture. We hope that PSA accreditation will lead to our members being statutory regulated in future Governments.

Acupuncture is in a unique position to be championed in Wales considering new research demonstrating its efficacy. It recently received another recommendation by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, for headache (as well as for NICE recommendation for lower back pain). A recent “meta analysis” of over 18,000 patients also demonstrated that acupuncture is beneficial for chronic pain.

In the social services and well-being bill, we would like patients in Wales to be able to exercise choice and receive world-class treatment. We believe that acupuncture has the potential to offer cost-effective and personalised healthcare that demonstrably improves health and wellbeing outcomes for patients. Indeed there are many examples from around the country where our members have successfully worked both inside and alongside the NHS to meet patient needs.

BAC would like to make the following suggestions for consideration in the bill:

1. Include greater choice - the BAC wishes that people and families are able to choose what they want from a 21st century service. It's clear from the millions treatments a year for acupuncture, that the public wish to choose services such as acupuncture to improve their wellbeing
2. Evidence based cost effective services. It is important to note that BAC believes in an evidence based approach. Acupuncture can provide cost-effective results for people in social care and carers. There is NICE guidance recommending acupuncture as a cost-effective option for lower back pain (also for headache).
3. Quality care - meeting physical and mental needs. Acupuncture provides the holistic, quality care that people want – and demonstrate they need.

Thanks

Nick Pahl

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