

CNHC Policy Update 1

Introduction

This is the first CNHC Policy Update. It follows a request at the November 2016 Verifying Organisations meeting for CNHC to bring together information about what we do to influence health and care policy. Our work in this area to date has led to a number of key changes to recommendations about complementary healthcare and we share these with you below.

This first update includes a summary of an unusually large number of activities and this may not always be the case. We will issue these updates on an occasional basis when relevant information is available.

Key facts

CNHC was set up with government support with the sole purpose of enhancing public protection by holding a UK register of practitioners who have met UK standards. CNHC is also the holder of an Accredited Register through the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). All CNHC registrants are automatically included on CNHC's Accredited Register.

How CNHC creates opportunities for complementary health practitioners

1. GMC updates guidance following CNHC request:

- In 2015 CNHC asked the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) to contact the General Medical Council (GMC) with a view to updating its guidance for doctors. The GMC did update its guidance to confirm that doctors may refer to practitioners on Accredited Registers, such as CNHC's. This confirmation does not, however, guarantee funding.
- In addition, in November 2015, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, Jane Ellison said: *"Both the Government and the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) recommend that when a patient or service user chooses to visit a health or care practitioner who is unregulated, only those on an accredited register are consulted"*.
- To support this and to keep getting the message out to doctors and commissioners about Accredited Registers, the PSA includes updates in both GP and Commissioning bulletins.

2. CNHC responsible for joint project between the PSA and Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH)

CNHC alerted PSA to the Royal Society of Public Health's (RSPH's) report on Rethinking the Public Health Workforce in 2015, which made no mention of complementary therapists. This led to a meeting between RSPH, CNHC, the British Acupuncture Council and the PSA from which the joint project between PSA and RSPH emerged. This led to a survey of practitioners on Accredited Registers which CNHC sent to all CNHC registrants to have a say about the potential for having a greater involvement in the public health workforce.

Practitioners who are not on an Accredited Register are not being involved in these discussions. It is far less likely than ever before that practitioners who are not on an Accredited Register will be able to work with or in the NHS.

All CNHC registrants are automatically on CNHC's on-line, searchable [Accredited Register](#).

3. CNHC meeting led to Scottish Government update to complementary healthcare guidance

Back in 2014 CNHC requested a meeting with representatives of the Scottish Government to discuss CNHC's role in Scotland and to propose an update to the complementary healthcare guidance provided by the Scottish Government to NHS Health Boards (Health Department Letter (HDL) (2005) 37). A meeting was held in December 2014 at which an update of the guidance was discussed.

CNHC followed up this meeting at regular intervals to prompt an update which was finally made in April 2016. The revised guidance provides information to all NHS Boards, Special Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships in Scotland about the Professional Standards Authority’s Accredited Registers programme.

The new guidance (DL (2016) 06) states: “the Scottish Government recognises that complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) may offer some relief to some people living with a wide variety of long term health conditions.” It also makes clear that use of accredited registers such as CNHC’s: “can have a number of benefits for practitioners, patients, contracting organisations and employers; providing reassurance that professionals are subject to a level of appropriate scrutiny.”

The revised guidance can be viewed on the Scottish Government’s website here: [DL\(2016\)06.pdf](#)

4. CNHC influences National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines:

- **CNHC’s January 2016 campaign led to NICE keeping complementary therapies in its guideline for supportive and palliative care.** NICE had proposed removing complementary therapies from its guideline for supportive and palliative care in adults. CNHC provided a robust response and encouraged organisations from across the sector to respond, which resulted in NICE keeping the original guidelines in place.
- **CNHC supports inclusion of complementary therapies in NICE guidelines for low back pain and sciatica.** More recently NICE has included massage and yoga classes in its guideline for low back pain and sciatica. It did not include the Alexander Technique and CNHC responded to support the case made by the Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (STAT) that it should be included and further research recommended.
- **CNHC supports inclusion of complementary therapies in NICE guidelines for Parkinson’s Disease** CNHC has also responded to NICE’s consultation on the update to its guidelines on Parkinson’s Disease again to support the inclusion of the Alexander Technique and the case made by STAT.

CNHC continues to engage with NICE around guidelines that are relevant for CNHC registrants and the wider complementary health sector. You can find out more about NICE at www.nice.org.uk

5. NHS working not the holy grail....

Overall very few practitioners of any discipline across the complementary health sector actually work in the NHS. Although many practitioners aspire to this it is not necessarily helpful to see this as the be all and end all. Where GP referrals have happened, practitioners have built good relationships with local GPs over a period of time. This requires much patience and determination and CNHC registration has most certainly paved the way.

If you have issues you would like us to look at – such as NICE guidelines or other areas that particularly affect your discipline – then please contact us about this using the details below.

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For further information about ‘[Professional Advantages of CNHC Registration](#)’ go to www.cnhc.org.uk and click the link under ‘Current Registrants’

For details of how to register or renew call 020 3668 0406

email info@cnhc.org.uk or visit www.cnhc.org.uk