

South Central Priorities Committees (Buckinghamshire PCT)

Policy Statement: Complementary and Alternative Therapies

Clinical Executive decision: March 2009

Date of issue: October 1995, January 1998, September 2003,
March 2009

October 1995

The South Central Priorities Committee considered the question of funding for complementary therapies in October 1995. Their conclusion was that the Buckinghamshire health economy did not have the finances available to purchase any form of complementary therapy. The only exception would be where the complementary therapy is provided as part of a broader contract with a mainstream provider (e.g. aromatherapy as part of a package of palliative care interventions).

In reaching this conclusion the Forum was influenced by:

- a) the lack of conclusive evidence for the effectiveness of complementary therapies; and
- b) the fact that Buckinghamshire's health economy has to prioritise mainstream treatments for which there is evidence of effectiveness.

September 2003

The DoH is currently commissioning research into complementary therapies. Therefore, substantive evidence, at least for some treatments, may be available in due course. At present, the Priorities Forum reconfirms that the reasons above still apply in 2003 and recommends that **complementary therapies should remain of low priority** and therefore not normally funded by the Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust.

February 2009

Buckinghamshire PCT confirms that the commissioning of alternative and complementary therapies remains a LOW PRIORITY for Buckinghamshire PCT. Patients will not normally be offered complementary or alternative therapies in specialist, secondary or primary care settings.

*To aid implementation, the title of this Policy Statement has been amended to clarify that the previously-used term 'complementary therapy' includes 'alternative medicines'. Additionally, a list of **examples** of therapies that are encompassed by this policy is appended below. It should be noted, however, that **this list is not exhaustive.***

NOTES:

1. Potentially exceptional circumstances may be considered by the patient's PCT where there is evidence of significant health status impairment (e.g. inability to perform activities of daily living.)
2. This policy will be reviewed in the light of new evidence or guidance from NICE.

Appendix

Therapies encompassed by Policy Statement *Complementary and Alternative Therapies* *The categorisation of complementary and alternative therapies devised by the House of Lords Select Committee (House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology (2000): Complementary and Alternative Medicine. The Stationery Office, London) has been followed.*
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldselect/ldsctech/123/12304.htm>

Group 1: Alternative therapies (professionally organised)

This group includes what may be called the principal disciplines:

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic
- Herbal Medicine
- Homeopathy
- Osteopathy

Group 2: Complementary therapies

This group includes therapies that are most often used to complement conventional medicine and do not purport to embrace diagnostic skills:

- Alexander Technique
- Pilates
- Bach and other flower remedies
- Meditation
- Shiatsu
- Nutritional medicine
- Yoga
- Aromatherapy
- Bodywork therapies, including
- Reflexology
- Healing
- Hypnotherapy

Group 3:

The therapies in this group purport to offer diagnostic information as well as treatment and, in general, offer a philosophical approach to care and through which various and disparate frameworks of disease causation and its management are proposed. These therapies are separated into two sub-groups: Group 3a includes long-established and traditional systems of healthcare; Group 3b includes other alternative disciplines.

(a) Alternative disciplines (established and traditional systems of healthcare)

- Anthroposophical medicine
- Chinese herbal medicine
- Naturopathy
- Maharishi Ayurvedic medicine
- Eastern medicine (Tibb)
- Traditional Chinese medicine

(b) Other alternative disciplines

- Crystal therapy
- Iridology
- Radionics
- Dowsing
- Kinesiology

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