**Draft Letter to Allied Healthcare Provider**

Dear

I am writing to you to explain why I need your help to continue to support the urgent treatment of my patients during the current lockdown. My professional body, the British Acupuncture Council (the only Professional Standards Authority (PSA) accredited body in the UK) has been made aware of some extremely inconsistent guidance from both national and local government, and although not directly targeting members, both have been sent to other acupuncture organisations. The British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) has contacted the Scottish government for clarity but has yet to receive a response.

To ensure accredited members in Scotland are operating to the highest level, and considering the inconsistency from the government, the BAcC has asked for a referral letter as an interim step until it receives this clarity

The BAcC has maintained throughout the current restriction period that its members may continue to practice ‘ancillary to health and medical services’ for patients with high needs or urgent care requirements, so as not to increase the burden on the NHS. However, more recently, the BAcC has seen advice that acupuncturists should have a referral from the NHS or other Allied Health Professional.

The closest guidance we can find is below:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-retail-sector-guidance/pages/close-contact-services-questions-and-answers/>

What appear to be the most relevant parts of this guidance for helping NHS or Allied Health Professionals to make decisions on what treatments should go ahead have been highlighted in red below:

**Q:  What are “other services or procedures which require physical contact or close physical proximity between a provider and a customer” that are “ancillary to medical, health, or social care services”?**

A:  [The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/344/contents/made) as amended set out the definition of a close contact service.

Where these ‘other services or procedures’ are ancillary to medical, health or social care services they may continue in Level 4 areas – this is to ensure that necessary medical, health or social care services, including care packages, may continue.

In relation to what “other services” are considered ancillary to medical, health, or social care services and may therefore continue in Level 4 areas, the Scottish Government cannot provide advice in relation to specific or individual examples - it is for individual practitioners to ensure that any “other services or procedures” they provide under Level 4 restrictions are legitimately ancillary to medical, health, or social care services. In Level 4 areas, we would advise that the focus of such treatment/care should be restricted to essential or urgent treatment of clinically diagnosed conditions where no treatment would have a significantly adverse impact on the wellbeing of the patient. For example, this could be treatment or care being provided in a hospice as part of a palliative care package.

I apologise for extra work this causes you, but I hope you understand that this is our only option until we have more clarity. It is vital that PSA Accredited Acupuncturists are taking the necessary steps to maintain professional practice and prevent the closure of accredited acupuncture services completely, as this would add even more pressure to an already vastly overstretched health service.