



Natural Healthcare Council Regulation 05.01.2008

The British Acupuncture Council (BACc) is encouraged to see that the new Natural Healthcare Council will be in operation from April this year. Along with many other organisations the BACc contributed to the consultation process organised by the Prince of Wales Foundation for Integrated Health, the body which has steered this new federal and voluntary register into being. Moves like this can only serve to increase public confidence in the healthcare which they choose for themselves.

There have obviously been a few adverse comments about the voluntary nature of the scheme, but the BACc, as the voluntary self-regulatory body now widely regarded as the lead body for the UK acupuncture profession, has demonstrated that a commitment to high standards, patient safety, and the highest levels of professional conduct can achieve almost as much as a statutory scheme. Practitioners feel the need to belong, and patients learn to trust the strength of an organisation which is there to protect them.

The acupuncture profession, although pictured in some of the news articles today, is not a part of this group but is itself on the verge of being regulated by statute. Building on the very positive outcomes of the House of Lords Select Committee Report in 2000, there have been a number of working groups for acupuncture and herbal medicine reporting to the Department of Health on the feasibility of statutory regulation, and the final one of these, the Joint Working Group, is expected to be presenting its own report to the Minister within the month. It is widely believed that this will see the acupuncture and herbal medicine professions, which include the majority of the Chinese medicine practitioners, regulated by law within three years. The most significant feature of statutory regulation for the general public is that it protects the use of professional titles; only registered practitioners will be allowed to call themselves 'an acupuncturist.'

The BACc will keep everyone informed by press releases here as this process unfolds.

<http://www.acupuncture.org.uk/content/news/news.asp?id=60>



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