

## Complementary and Alternative Therapies

Funding for treatment is by Prior Approval – applications should be made to the Exceptional Cases Panel using the [funding request form](#)

<b>Date:</b>	<b>February 2019</b>	<b>Date of Last Review:</b>	<b>September 2016</b>
<p><b>Policy: It is the responsibility of referring and treating clinicians to ensure compliance with this policy.</b></p> <p><b>All complementary and alternative therapies, including acupuncture, are considered low priority and will only be commissioned by the NHS on an exceptional case basis.</b></p> <p>Complementary and alternative therapies include (but are not restricted to): acupuncture, chiropractic treatment, herbal medicine, osteopathy, homeopathy, reflexology, alexander technique, aromatherapy and meditation.</p>			

### RATIONALE

Acupuncture shows some superiority in patients with chronic musculoskeletal, headache, eg tension-type headache and osteoarthritis pain when compared with no treatment or sham treatment<sup>1</sup>, but the evidence is not consistent to show significant benefit<sup>2-9</sup>. Similarly, there is a lack of robust evidence that other complementary therapies improve patient outcomes<sup>10-12</sup>. Mainstream treatments for which there is evidence of effectiveness should be prioritised.

### GLOSSARY

<b>Acupuncture:</b>	A traditional Chinese method of healing by inserting thin needles into certain areas beneath the skin and electrically stimulating or heating and rotating them.
<b>Alexander technique:</b>	Teaches improved posture and how to move more efficiently.
<b>Aromatherapy:</b>	The use of essential oils to promote wellness and health.
<b>Chiropractic treatment:</b>	A system of physical manipulations of minor displacements of the spinal column. These minor displacements of the spine are believed to affect the associated or neighbouring nerves and so cause malfunctions of the muscles throughout the body. By manipulating the affected part of the spinal column, the patients complaint, whatever it may be, eg back ache is relieved.
<b>Homeopathy:</b>	An alternative approach to medicine based upon the theory that diseases are curable by those drugs which produce effects on the body similar to symptoms caused by the disease. In administering the remedies, the theory is that their effect is increased by giving them in minute doses obtained by diluting them to an extreme degree.
<b>Osteopathy:</b>	A system of treatment by manipulating bones and other parts with the idea of thereby restoring functions in the bodily mechanism that have become deranged.
<b>Reflexology:</b>	The thumb and fingers are used to press areas of the feet or hands, thought to be connected to organs, glands and other parts of the body.
<b>Sham therapy:</b>	An inactive treatment or procedure that is intended to mimic the intervention being studied as closely as possible

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