

BOB ICB and Frimley ICB Priorities Committee Clinical Commissioning Policy Statement

Policy Number/ Name	BOBFPC100 Complementary and Alternative Therapies
Date of BOBFPC Recommendation	February 2024

Complementary and alternative therapies are treatments that fall outside of mainstream healthcare. These therapies and treatments may range from acupuncture and homeopathy, to aromatherapy, meditation, and colonic irrigation. There is no universally agreed definition. When a non-mainstream practice is used together with conventional medicine, it is considered 'complementary'. When a non-mainstream practice is used instead of conventional medicine, it is considered 'alternative'.¹

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West ICB and Frimley ICB Priorities Committee has considered the current national guidance and evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness for the use of complementary and alternative therapies. Due to the lack of robust high-quality evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness compared to pharmacological and other conventional healthcare interventions, the use of complementary and alternative therapies is **not normally funded** except in the case of manual therapies for the management of low back pain and sciatica as part of a musculoskeletal treatment package and only as part of NHS back pain pathways.

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/complementary-and-alternative-medicine>

NOTES:

- Potentially exceptional circumstances may be considered by a patient's ICB where there is evidence of significant health status impairment (e.g. inability to perform activities of daily living) and there is evidence that the intervention sought would improve the individual's health status.
- This policy was developed and recommended by Thames Valley Priorities Committee which was the predecessor of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West ICB and Frimley ICB Priorities Committee.
- This policy will be reviewed in the light of new evidence or new national guidance, e.g., from NICE.
- BOBFPC clinical policy statements can be viewed at [Clinical Commissioning Policy Statements & IFRs | BOB ICB](#)

Appendix

Therapies encompassed by Policy Statement BOBFPC100: Complementary and Alternative therapies, may include the following (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic
- Herbal medicine
- Homeopathy
- Osteopathy
- Alexander Technique
- Pilates
- Bach and other flower remedies
- Meditation
- Shiatsu
- Yoga
- Aromatherapy
- Bodywork therapies, including massage.
- Reflexology
- Healing
- Hypnotherapy
- Anthroposophical medicine
- Chinese herbal medicine
- Naturopathy
- Maharishi Ayurvedic medicine
- Eastern medicine (Tibb)
- Traditional Chinese medicine
- Crystal therapy
- Iridology
- Radionics
- Dowsing
- Kinesiology