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Committee Clerk
Health and Social Care Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

4 September 2015

Consultation on the Public Health (Wales) Bill

The Professional Standards Authority for the Health and Social Care welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the Public Health (Wales) Bill.

About the Professional Standards Authority

As you may know the Authority promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of patients, service users and the public by raising standards in regulation and registration of people working in health and care. We are an independent body, accountable to the UK Parliament.

As part of our work we:

- Oversee nine health and care professional regulators and report annually to Parliament on their performance
- Conducts audits and investigations and can appeal fitness to practise cases to the courts if sanctions are unduly lenient and it is in the public interest
- Conduct research and advise the four UK governments on improvements in regulation
- Promote our concept of right-touch regulation and publish papers on regulatory policy and practice
- Accredit voluntary health and care occupational registers to improve consumer protection and raise standards

More information about our work and the approach we take is available at

www.professionalstandards.org.uk

Our response to the consultation

The consultation proposes the creation of a 'mandatory licensing scheme for practitioners carrying out 'special procedures', namely acupuncture, body piercing, electrolysis and tattooing'.

As we have mentioned above, the Authority operates a programme to accredit voluntary health and care occupational registers to improve consumer protection and raise standards. This programme was established by the *Health and Social Care Act (2012)* to provide assurance about those health professions not regulated by statute. An up to date list of currently accredited registers is provided on our website:

<https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/accredited-registers/find-a-register>

As you will see, a number of registers already include acupuncturists, including those managed by the British Acupuncture Council, the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council and the Federation of Holistic Therapists. Our concern about the proposal to create a register for the occupation in Wales therefore is that it would duplicate what already exists. Our accreditation programme requires that registers set standards of practice for an occupation and issue guidance, set standards of education and quality assure courses, check practitioners' competence and behaviour before registering them, encourage practitioners to continue to develop their skills, respond to complaints about practitioners and exclude them from the register as necessary to protect the public.

Our recommendation would be that rather than establish a further register in Wales for acupuncturists, instead the profile of our programme could be raised and the assurance we provide in relation to accredited registers taken into account, encouraging the public to use those practitioners who are listed on an accredited register.

Further, general information about the programme is available on our website:

<http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/accredited-registers>

We would be pleased to discuss this response further with you. Please feel free to contact me at douglas.bilton@professionalstandards.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Douglas Bilton
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