

Consultation response
Mandatory Licensing of Special Procedures in Wales
Welsh Government
April 2023

Age Cymru is the leading charity working to improve the lives of all older people in Wales. We believe older people should be able to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, have adequate income, access to high quality services and the opportunity to shape their own future. We seek to provide a strong voice for all older people in Wales and to raise awareness of the issues of importance to them.

Age Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on mandatory licensing and special procedures. Though older people are not generally considered large users of services covered by the proposed licencing arrangements, it is important that such services are properly regulated. We welcome the introduction of mandatory licencing as this allows better protection for older people.

In particular, acupuncture is a treatment option that some older people may turn to for pain relief. In our last three annual surveys¹ older people have told us of issues they have had being able to access health care, and delays in getting the treatment they need through NHS services. We have seen an increase in the volume of older people who have accessed private health care as they simply could not wait for NHS services to be available. This may increase the number of older people that seek acupuncture services for pain management.

We are aware through our ongoing programme of engagement with older people that it is not always easy to find information and advice about the services they need. In addition to the need to regulate special procedure services, there is a need to provide advice to the public on what services are regulated and why. As such it is important that the introduction of licencing of special procedures is accompanied with a publicity campaign. As older people are more likely to be digitally excluded, it is

¹ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-cymru/documents/covid-19-survey/age-cymru---report-on-the-current-experiences-of-people-aged-50-or-over-across-wales-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-and-views-on-the-year-ahead---june-2022.pdf>

important that such campaigns consider how digitally excluded people can be reached.

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