



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**Claudia Beamish MSP**

South Scotland

Ms Jeane Freeman MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport  
Health and Sport  
Scottish Government  
St. Andrews House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

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Dear Jeane

I am writing on behalf of a number of complementary and sports therapists who have been in touch about the restrictions placed on mobile therapists. I have also been in contact with Karen Young, a senior manager from the Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT), which represents more than 16,000 members across the UK each year.

During the early stages of the pandemic practitioners contacting me were, on the whole, understanding of the restrictions on close contact treatments but as the weeks have turned into months, mobile therapists working in areas with a Protection Level of 2, 3 or 4 have had no respite from the covid restrictions. They are still unable to work and their future remains uncertain, unlike others working in similar circumstances.

Having looked at the guidance on close contact services, I am struggling to understand the justification for the strict restrictions on mobile therapists yet mobile hairdressers are offered greater freedom.

If the difference between therapists and hairdressers is the face-to-face contact, then there are many therapies available that do not require the practitioner to be near a person's face, or which can avoid the face area. Practitioners should be trusted to follow hygiene guidelines. Enhanced hygiene measures are in the close contact services guidance and both hairdressers and therapists are to follow the same guidance.

It is estimated the 70% of complementary and sports therapy is carried out on clients with long-term health conditions. For people suffering with chronic pain and other long-term conditions they are an essential support to health and wellbeing. Some organisations have called for this sector to be given key worker status.

I am aware that the FHT has been in touch with the Scottish Government however, I would like to reiterate some of the points I am sure Karen has made.

They operate an Accredited Register, which is a government-backed, UK-wide programme run by the Professional Standards Authority, which is specifically designed so that the public and care commissioners can choose a non-statutory regulated health professional with confidence, knowing that they are suitably qualified, insured and accountable.

Complementary and sports therapists often contribute to a client's medical care package which makes them in many cases ancillary to medical, health and social care services. I understand that if they are providing treatment as a referral from a health care professional, then that treatment may continue.

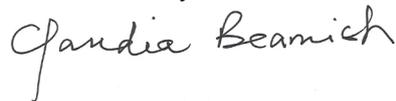
Given this could be the case for much of the work they undertake, I would be grateful for clarity on how they demonstrate that they are working in that capacity. Would the statutory-regulated health professional be required to provide authorisation, such as a written referral, for the therapist to carry out the treatment? Would mobile therapists still be excluded? Would static premises under tier 4 be given permission to work if it was by a referral from a health care professional?

I am regularly contacted by people suffering from chronic conditions who are struggling to manage their pain and frustrated that many of the pain clinics have not resumed. Continuing to cut off access to complementary and sports therapy treatments that can help to alleviate symptoms seems short sighted.

I know the Scottish Government is under tremendous pressure to find the right balance between protecting public health and allowing some normality to return. However, I see complementary and sports therapy as an intrinsic part of many people's health and wellbeing which should not be withheld lightly.

I hope you will give my comments serious consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**Claudia Beamish MSP**  
**Member of the Scottish Parliament for South Scotland**

Cc: Karen Young, Federation of Holistic Therapists