

The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture UK (ATCM)

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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Inconsistent government lockdown easing policies lack scientific basis and clarity says Integrated Healthcare Collaborative (IHC)**

The Integrated Healthcare Collaborative (IHC), of which The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine & Acupuncture UK (ATCM) is a Core Member, has written to the Prime Minister to demand the government explains its scientific justification for preventing complementary healthcare workers from returning to practice.

The complementary, traditional and natural healthcare industry has been fully supportive of, and compliant with, the government's measures to control the spread of Covid-19. As such, the majority of practitioners and therapists have been unable to provide consultations in person, although many have continued to support clients remotely where possible.

However, in recent weeks, the government has allowed professions, such as physiotherapists and podiatrists, who practise in a setting and mode of practice akin to complementary, traditional and natural healthcare workers, to return to work. In addition, hairdressers and barbers, who also provide close contact services, have now been told by the government that they too can return to work, as long as they take precautions.

The IHC is concerned that there does not appear to be any logic, clarity, or scientific basis to the government's decision-making in this area. Indeed, many complementary healthcare workers believe that this policy is unfair, inconsistent, and discriminatory. The result is that this valuable sector of the healthcare workforce, and clients who use their services, continue to suffer.

Healthcare professionals in this sector contribute to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of millions of people across the UK. They want to return to practice as soon as possible, but cannot, because of this continued confusion and non-science-based policy-making by the government.

The IHC has asked the Prime Minister to publish the government's scientific advice and justification for continuing to prevent the return to practice of this sector of the healthcare workforce, and to provide clarity on when they will be able to do so.

The ATCM is working hard with its colleagues in the IHC to hold the government to account in this matter, and to take action so that our members can return to work quickly and safely.