

Mr H.S.  
Oban,  
Argyll,  
Scotland

19/10/2009

To Gail Breeze,

Administrator EHTPA

Dear Gail,

I have just spent the last hour attempting to make sense of and respond to the Department of Health consultation Document on Herbal/ Traditional Medicines.

Whilst I have some legal training, have wide ranging knowledge of complementary medicine and have worked as a consultant for NICE (when it was the HEA) and in health advocacy, I could make very limited sense of the document.

In my view document is inaccessible to patients. I found very limited opportunities to express my support for statutory regulation, or for herbal medicine in general. There was no space to express my very positive experience of herbal treatment and appreciation for the professionalism of my practitioner. I am a frequent user of herbal medicine.

This document excludes the very people who have direct experience of the treatments involved. It assumes a high level of knowledge with regard to current legislation and institutional hierarchy and provision. Additionally, to make sense of what seems to be a very poorly constructed questionnaire, one would need to feel confident interpreting legal, technical and medical jargon.

Since this document pertains to Traditional Medicines, it may well be the case that many Asian and Chinese clients may wish to respond, but may not have a level of English (setting all the other skills needed aside) which enables them to do so. It doesn't seem to be available in any other language.

As I am not currently working as a health professional, I classed myself as an interested party. By question 24 I was completely frustrated that I felt I had less of a voice at the end than I had when I started. I had to resort to saying that I was 'unsure' as most of the questions were poorly worded, incomprehensible or contained terms which were unfamiliar to me and not defined. (Pittilo report and 'grandparenting' being the examples which come to mind!)

Consequently, I wish to state clearly that I do not feel that the consultation document takes my views into consideration and in fact diminishes them. Nor do I believe it meets equal opportunities criteria.

I am grateful for the opportunity to give you this feedback and remain deeply committed to supporting access to herbal medicine and to statutory regulation.

Yours faithfully,

Mr H.S.  
Oban,  
Argyll,  
Scotland