WELLBEING WITH BENEFITS…IS AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR ACUPUNCTURIST THE SECRET TO MAKING LASTING CHANGES TO YOUR HEALTH & WELLBEING?

- New survey of British Acupuncture Council acupuncturists and their patients launched to mark **Acupuncture Awareness Week: 9-15 November 2026**
- 70% of practitioners always provide their patients with suggestions or guidance that they can use between treatments to support their health and wellbeing
- And, over 77% are seeing patients making positive changes as a result – in fact, 59% of patients surveyed said they have made changes to their diet as a result of an acupuncturist's advice
- Over three quarters (76%) of acupuncturists said the most common reason for people to seek acupuncture was to support a chronic condition
- CEO of the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) says: *"Western thinking around modern health and wellbeing is just catching up with traditional acupuncture, which is inherently rooted in preventative approaches and lifestyle change"*

A new survey launched for **Acupuncture Awareness Week AAW (9-15th November)** highlights the 'transformative power of acupuncture' and welcomes the significant role it is playing in empowering the nation's health. The survey, commissioned by the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) of its members, found that over 70% of practitioners always provide their patients with suggestions or guidance for them to use between treatments to support their health and wellbeing. Notably, 77% said that patients make positive changes to their daily habits and diet as a result of this advice.

The advice given by acupuncturists ranges from: changing diet and eating habits (92%); helping patients to better understand digestion and the effect of different foods (63%) and guidance related to movement and exercise (82%), through to self-care advice for people to try "at-home" including taking up yoga, tai chi or qigong (59%) and breathing exercises (51%), with over a third (37%) recommending techniques to help people manage energy and review pacing and routines in daily life.

Over three quarters (76%) of acupuncturists said the most common reason for people to seek acupuncture was to support a chronic condition, which reflects national NHS data showing that nearly half (46%) of all adults are diagnosed with a chronic condition by the age of 40 and over a quarter (26%) of adults live with chronic pain[2].

However, over half of people (51%) said they had been experiencing symptoms for more than a year before trying acupuncture, one in five (20%) said it has been six months to a year and only 5% said they sought treatment within the first month of experiencing symptoms. The reasons

people sought treatment also connect the survey to a wider health challenge. More than half (52%) attended for joint or musculoskeletal issues, 20% for mental health and 17% for sleep issues. These findings reflect concerns that can reach into many parts of life, including work, as well as the relationship between physical and emotional wellbeing.

The scale of the workplace impact is striking. In Great Britain, work-related stress, depression or anxiety accounted for an estimated 22.1 million lost working days in 2024/25, and work-related musculoskeletal disorders for 7.1 million. Together, they were the main contributors to days lost through work-related ill health. These national figures underline why supporting people's physical and mental wellbeing matters to employers as well as individuals.

BAcC research to coincide with AAW found that people are increasingly open to receiving and acting upon lifestyle and wellbeing advice from their acupuncture practitioner – with the vast majority (93%) of those surveyed happy to receive this guidance. Following treatment and the advice they received with their BAcC acupuncturist, 59% made a change to their diet; 42% to their exercise routine; 43% made a commitment to managing stress and over a third (34%) made changes to their sleep habits.

Since starting acupuncture, 79% of patients surveyed said their symptoms were much better. Over half of those surveyed (52%) said they noticed improved energy levels and 50% reported better sleep since starting acupuncture and following practitioner advice.

As part of AAW 2026, BAcC (the UK's largest, member-led professional body for traditional acupuncturists) is keen to highlight and broaden the understanding of the collaborative work between its members, medical professional such as GPs and allied healthcare professionals such as physiotherapists and counsellors. The latest data highlights this:

- 92% of acupuncturists surveyed say they advise patients to speak to their GP or another medical professional where appropriate. Identifying when a condition needs more medical attention is part of the degree-level training BAcC acupuncturists receive.
- 83% of respondents say they would also recommend other healthcare professionals (e.g. physiotherapist, dietitian, counsellor).
- 75% will often recommend useful resources, such as books, websites, apps or podcasts, whilst remaining responsibly, within their scope of practice.

Traditional styles of acupuncture utilise an understanding of health and illness that has developed for over 2,000 years and use the insertion of single-use, sterile, fine needles and when appropriate, moxibustion to help regulate and balance a person's qi (also described as life-force, energy or vitality). The acupuncturist is skilled to understand how to tonify deficiency, reduce excess and clear blockages, as these are seen as the main causes of illness in Chinese Medine. Moxibustion is the burning of a herb called "mugwort" (Chinese Mugwort, Artemisia argyi) to treat specific parts of the body, including acupuncture points. These are just two of the main modalities an acupuncturist may use during an acupuncture session.

In traditional acupuncture there is no mind-body split. In other words, the physical, emotional and mental aspects of life are seen as interdependent. British Acupuncture Council members are trained in one or more traditionally based systems of acupuncture: such as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Five Elements, Stems and Branches, Japanese Meridian Therapy, and many others. Traditional treatment is based on a thorough consultation – in TCM it's called the Ten Questions, which are all about understanding the person and their life to really get to the root cause of a person's ill health, which in many cases lifestyle factors contribute towards.

CEO of the British Acupuncture Council, Alex Jacobs MBAcC MRCHM comments,

"*This Acupuncture Awareness Week, we want more people to understand the transformative nature of acupuncture and its potential to help address the UK's complex health crises, from growing chronic illness affecting the workforce, day after day to an ageing population. Crucially, acupuncture with a fully qualified practitioner doesn't just temporarily treat symptoms; it treats the whole person and transforms health with lasting benefits.*

"Prevention, lifestyle change, and empowerment are key strategic goals at the heart of the government's new 10-Year Health Plan, which builds on the findings of Lord Darzi's independent investigation. So, we're delighted that this latest data shows that our members are working across communities to empower, educate and inspire people to make positive and lasting behavioural changes to support their health.

"*In many ways, modern thinking around health and wellbeing is just catching up with traditional acupuncture, which is inherently rooted in preventative approaches and lifestyle change. As a member-led organisation, the BAcC sets the highest standards for practice, education, and*

professionalism. With a minimum of three years' degree-level training in the full tradition of acupuncture, we know our members are perfectly placed to play a central role in the future of transformative healthcare."

While acupuncture is supported by clinical evidence and recommended by NICE as a treatment for chronic pain and headaches, it is not routinely or widely available in the NHS. However, there are a number of innovative and inclusive NHS projects offering acupuncture across the UK with acupuncturists working closely as part of multi-disciplinary teams including referrals. These services, such as the acupuncture community Gateway Clinic at Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, that has been using acupuncture as part of a multi-disciplinary team to support patients for 30 years, are supported by growing evidence and positive patient feedback – and look set to pave the way for wider, integrated access to acupuncture in the NHS.

This AAW campaign "**The Transformative Power of Acupuncture**", which is followed by the celebration of **World Acupuncture Awareness Day on 16th November**, aims to highlight the benefits and evidence base of traditional acupuncture to support people with a range of conditions including mental health issues, chronic pain, headaches and migraines. For more information and news follow @british_acu_council or visit https://acupuncture.org.uk/

The BAcC is an Accredited Register approved by the Professional Standards Authority for Health & Social Care (PSA), representing nearly 3,000 members. This accreditation provides assurance that our acupuncturists meet the same rigorous standards for training, safe practice, and professional conduct as all regulated healthcare professionals.

Use the free **Find** an **Acupuncturist** tool online to find a fully qualified BAcC member near you: https://acupuncture.org.uk/find-an-acupuncturist/

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For further information on the week or to interview a BAcC member, contact Jo Hudson or Caroline Beswick at Trinity PR via info@trinitypr.co.uk or call 0770 948 7959/60.

Notes to Editors

Get in touch if you'd like to:

- **Understand how acupuncture can help transform and empower our health (read more here https://acupuncture.org.uk/about-acupuncture)**
- **Learn about the latest research and evidence-base on acupuncture for a range of conditions**
- **Interview an expert acupuncturist & BAcC member**
- **Read powerful testimonials from acupuncture patient case studies**
- **See powerful and recent interviews with patients, practitioners and consultants mapping out the success of the—Gateway Clinic – a specialist community acupuncture clinic within Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust - where they map out the success of the clinic and explain how this model could be replicated throughout the NHS.**

References:

1. British Acupuncture Council surveyed its membership online between September and October 2026. 127 acupuncturists responded. During this period, 117 people responded to an online BAcC member survey of patients,
2. https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2024/adults-health
3. https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/dayslost.htm - Workplace sickness reports

