

Appendix 2

Additional Information provided by Ms Earl-Gray

‘Prevent non-evidence-based treatments being offered via local NHS services’

Firstly, apologies for being unable to attend the meeting.

My main points are as follows:

1. Treatments that have no substantiated evidence supporting them should not be funded and/ or recommended by the NHS. This protects the public from harmful (or useless) treatments, unregulated practitioners and from wasting their money.

2. The NHS should use their funds to improve existing, essential, yet poorly provisioned services, not treatments that are not proven to be effective. For example, local maternity services are greatly in need of funding for more staff and more training. It is neglectful and unethical to fund unproven treatments while essential services struggle.

3. The general public are increasingly aware of the lack of solid scientific evidence underpinning the misleading claims made by some Complimentary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practitioners. It is easy to see how tempting it could be for local government and the NHS to want to please the pro-CAM population of Brighton and Hove, however, I think this places the local NHS services at risk of not only embarrassing themselves, but wasting scarce resources and risking public health.

4. If the local NHS wishes to invest any money in CAM, then they should only invest in decent, properly conducted randomised-controlled trials that have enough participants to give meaningful results. We can only decide to offer CAM on the NHS when we know for certain that they work.

I assume that NHS commissioners and others involved in the provision of public health will understand the principles of evidence-based medicine and how these relate to providing an ethically sound range of treatments on a tightly-budgeted public health service. I would be surprised and horrified if anyone with this understanding were to offer CAM on the NHS at the current time.

