

S3W-24431 - Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con) (Date Lodged Friday, May 29, 2009): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it considers it a worthwhile use of NHS funds to offer complementary treatments such as physical therapy and massage to people with chronic back pain.

Answered by Nicola Sturgeon (Monday, June 08, 2009): The Scottish Government recognises that complementary or alternative medicine may offer relief to some people suffering from a wide variety of conditions and leaves it open to NHS boards to provide these therapies based on their assessment of needs in their areas and in line with national guidance about treatment for the condition(s). The treatment of individual patients is a matter of professional judgement.

Guidance was issued to NHS boards in August 2005 to remind them that this option was open to them. The letter, NHS circular HDL (2005) 37, is available electronically at: http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/HDL2005_37.pdf (circular issued as a result of my meetings with Andy Kerr and Department of Health)

NHS boards are expected to take account of relevant evidence-based guidelines and advice in the planning and delivery of NHS services.

Physical therapy is a routine element of rehabilitation for people with low back pain as part of NHS physiotherapy services.