



Acupuncture Childbirth Team London Practitioners' Protocol

- 1. Membership Requirements**
- 2. Aims**
- 3. Team Structure – steering committee, group consensus**
- 4. Membership Subscriptions**
- 5. Practice Protocols – boundaries, advertising, use of logo, safe practice**

1. Membership Requirements:

ACT membership is open to all acupuncturists who are graduates of a BAAB accredited college of Traditional Acupuncture and are usually Members of the British Acupuncture Council **MBAcC** www.acupuncture.org.uk or if not must abide by comparable educational standards, continued professional development and Codes of Practice to the BAcC

All practitioner members must have undergone a minimum of 3 days of post graduate training in obstetric (14 hours) and fertility (7 hours) acupuncture, covering:

- 1) physio/pathologies of pregnancy and fertility, including red flags
- 2) acupuncture treatment for:
 - antenatal
 - pre-birth
 - intra-partum
 - post –partum
 - miscarriage
 - mal-position, including breech
- 3) The equivalent of 1 day (7 hours) of training in fertility is required.

ACT London's recommended reading text is 'The Essential Guide to Acupuncture in Pregnancy and Childbirth' Debra Betts ISBN 8 27912 03767 8 www.jcm.co.uk

- All practitioner members of ACT London abide by the Codes of Practice, Codes of Conduct, Codes of Ethics and Codes of Safe Practice as outlined by their professional body.

- All members are expected to behave towards their colleagues in a polite and professional manner on equal footing.
- All practitioner members of ACT London hold up to date valid insurance for full professional indemnity cover and they ensure that they have informed their local authority of their acupuncture practice.
- All practitioner members must attend at least 3 of the 6 yearly Educational (Edu) and Shared Clinical Experience (ShCEX) ACT London meetings.



2. Aims:

- To provide an acupuncture service which can fluently and appropriately incorporate into the existent medical maternity and gynaecological provisions of the county or area.
- To respectfully blend our services, matching the needs of the midwives and obstetricians, using our specific skills and knowledge to help guide women to the safest possible treatment.
- To appropriately use Traditional Acupuncture to promote that gestation, labour and recovery are as natural as possible in any given circumstances.
- ACT practitioners aim to support the wishes of the mother wherever possible in the context of appropriate and safe practice.
- ACT practitioners engage with Western Medicine (WM) in order to benefit their patients. Including updating their WM knowledge in relation to fertility, pregnancy and postnatal care, and liaising with WM practitioners as appropriate.



Educational Aims:

- To provide CPD (Continuing Professional Development) in the safe and effective use of acupuncture for women's health including gynaecology, fertility, pregnancy, obstetrics, pre-and postnatal care.
- To appropriately understand the physiology and pathologies of gynaecology, fertility, pregnancy and childbirth, and to have a clear and accurate understanding of red flags and the appropriate referral stream should any concerns arise.
- To gain a clear understanding of Western fertility and obstetric protocols, treatments and interventions, and to clearly understand Western treatment reasoning.
- To provide education about other complementary therapies used in fertility and obstetric support, to better understand their application and efficacy, and to appropriately understand any contra-indications.

Each year 6 meetings will be convened for educational and clinical exchange purposes.

- There will be 6 meetings a year with a combination of speaker led educational content and clinical case discussion.
- Each of these 6 meetings will count as 2 hours of CPD.
- Practitioner members who do not attend the minimum requirement of 3 meetings per year will have their profile removed from the website. This may be reinstated with appropriate attendance.
- Provisional practitioner members are required to attend at least 3 meetings per year.



3. Team Structure:

- The Team comprises all members who have paid a yearly subscription and who attend at least 3 of the 6 yearly meetings.
- The structure of the Team is non-hierarchical. The decisions about how the Team is formulated and operates are based on group consensus.

The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) is nominated by the Team and the roles comprise of:

Membership Secretary: *to manage new membership enquiries, contact list, group email correspondence (announcing the meetings), the membership list (together with the treasurer), meeting attendance register*

Treasurer: *to manage funds (taking subscriptions, paying for the venue and speakers and social meetings), to issue receipts for subscription payments.*

Meeting Chair: *to source speakers (with the help of the whole committee), liaise with speakers about their talk, coordinate between the speaker, ACT (and the Venue), chair the Team meetings and arrange re-imbursements and thank you letters (although this can be shared between the steering committee members).*

Publicity: *manages social media (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn); possible new entries for the website.*

Website manager: *manages the website (events listing, members' profile upload)*

Steering Committee Secretary: *to organise steering committee meetings, manage agendas and minutes, provide Zoom links and add Zoom recordings to the website*

The steering committee decides on the specific allocation of tasks.

- The role of the Steering Committee is to spearhead the decision making process, reflecting the members interests, and to then delegate throughout the team to accomplish the necessary tasks.

- The Steering Committee (SC) meetings are held separately from Edu and ShCEx meetings in order to ensure that administrative matters are kept separate from Team meetings.
- The majority of administration is to be handled through email correspondence. Minutes, team documents and memos will be posted on the website and/or sent by email.

Group Consensus

- All actions and decisions taken by the Steering Committee will be recorded in the SC minutes. These are available on request by any ACT member.
- Suggestions by any Team member are welcome at team meetings or by email and will be discussed and recorded in the SC minutes.
- The structure of the Team and how it operates will be an ongoing and organic development, as the Team accommodates its services to the current medical provisions. Continuous updating and refinement is part of the Team commitment.



4. Membership Subscriptions:

Annual Subscriptions

- The Team membership runs from September 1st of one year to August 31st of the next.
- Annual Subscriptions are payable by 1 November each year. Paying by BACS is mandatory.
- The figure for the annual subscription is £50.00 (includes website profile and 6 meetings a year)
- Members who have not paid by 1 November, will be removed from the membership list and website.
- Members who join after the start of the new subscription year pay a fee of £20 plus £5 per meeting (calculated on the number of meetings left in the subscription year)
- Maternity leave has the following options: The member continues to pay £50.00 with the normal benefits (including website profile and access to the meeting minutes, as well as email updates of activities), but does not have to attend the 3 mandatory meetings per year). The member stops paying the £50.00, but may attend any group meetings paying £10.00 per meeting (pays for speaker and venue), in that case the profile of the member on the ACT website will be suspended, but the member can opt to be kept updated about activities. Re-registration as member is possible within 2 years from the suspension.
- Acupuncturists who are interested in becoming a member of ACT may attend the group meetings and pay £10.00 per meeting.
- Members of other ACT groups in the UK may attend our meetings for a fee of £10 per meeting.

Membership Benefits

Members receive

- use of the designate letters ACT
- access to 6 CPD sessions per year, 3 of which must be attended in person, the others may be watched via a recording if available.
- a personal page on the Team website with links to personal and practice websites detailing
 - Name and qualifications
 - Practice address(es)
 - Contact details (telephone number(s), Email address)
 - Personal website address
 - personal social media accounts
 - a 160 word biography
 - a photograph
- the overall publicity, promotion and exposure of the Team, use of the Team logo and promotional material
- Access to past minutes of Team meetings and Steering committee minutes on request
- Specialist social media exchanges (e.g., ACT London and ACT UK Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- a clinical support network of colleagues providing the opportunity for mentoring and interning



5. Practice Protocols:

The Boundaries of ACT Practice

- ACT practitioners promote the practice of acupuncture in gynaecology, fertility, pregnancy, labour and postnatal care according to professionally recognised standards. This involves adhering to the requirements for ACT membership as described in these practitioners' protocols.
- ACT is a professional interest group and as such is intended for the purpose of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) specifically in the field of acupuncture for Women's health including gynaecology, fertility, pregnancy, labour, obstetric and postnatal care.
- Practitioners should have a willingness to work together with acupuncturist colleagues, midwives, doctors and other practitioners in the support of caring for a woman in pregnancy or labour as well as during fertility treatments and other gynaecological care.
- Individual members may hold their own views, but if these views diverge from the aforementioned ideals for an ACT practitioner, then they should clearly state that these views are not representative of ACT.
- Members are expected to act with integrity, professionalism and respect for the views of others.

Letters and Logos

- All ACT members are entitled to use the designated letters ACT to denote their membership to this professional interest group.
- The ACT London logo may be used by ACT members in their promotional literature, including business cards and websites
- Members may not use the ACT name or logo, or any other membership name or logo, to suggest or imply superiority over other acupuncture colleagues or other healthcare practitioners.
- Members may not criticise or undermine other healthcare disciplines or practitioners, either directly or by implication.

Advertising

- All advertising must be legal, decent, honest and truthful and must conform to relevant rules of the ASA (Advertising Standards Authority).
- Members must not make claims of superiority or disparage professional colleagues or other professionals.

Practice Parameters

- ACT membership does not require a practitioner to attend labours. It is up to the discretion of each individual member as to the parameters of their range of obstetric practice; antenatal, intra-partum or post-partum.
- As a Team member of ACT London a practitioner may offer or ask for support from another member to intern, mentor, or do labour interning.
- No member has an obligation to mentor or to take interns.
- Each practitioner is free to practise their own style of acupuncture, according to the guidelines of their professional body.
- Each practitioner is free to operate according to their own clinic(s) guidelines with respect to pricing (individual treatment sessions, labour attendance, home visits) and clinical arrangements.

Pricing of referrals

- If a patient is referred between ACT practitioners, it must be clearly explained to the patient that there may be a variance of fees.
- For labour attendance it would be a courtesy to consider when agreeing to Labour-Rota coverage that you may be willing to commit to the same fee schedule as the booking practitioner.

Extracts from the BAaC Guide of Safe Practice

Breech presentation in late pregnancy

The use of moxibustion on BL 67 Zhiyin for attempting to turn breech babies is a well-documented treatment and its apparent simplicity and non-invasive nature have made it a popular choice for pregnant women to explore before opting for conventional medical procedures. Treating a patient with breech presentation or giving instructions for self-administering treatment at home might be a simple procedure but can carry some risks. As a practitioner you have a duty of care towards the patient and her unborn child and are responsible, and potentially legally liable, for any adverse events which occur as a result of your treatment. It is essential, therefore, that you recognise your own limits of competence based on your training history and clinical experience.

The BAcC does not wish to discourage any practitioners from treating patients with breech presentation. However, you should ensure that you are able to affirm the following three statements with confidence before offer in treatment to the patient. If you are unclear or uncomfortable about any one of these statements, we would strongly advise referring the patient on or with the patient's permission, contacting a member of the healthcare team responsible for their obstetric care

- 'I am aware of my limits of competence'
- 'I am aware of the "red flag" and contraindications to this procedure listed below and am confident that I am able to recognise both the signs and symptoms of these and/or any references made to any of these in the patient's clinical notes'
- 'I am aware of the appropriate safety instructions for a patient to safely self administer moxa treatment within her own home'.

Commonly occurring red flags and contraindications to the use of moxibustion for patients with breech presentation are:

- recent uterine surgery, including Caesarean section
- low-lying placenta, placenta previa
- uterine or pelvic abnormalities, e.g. uterine fibroids, septum: obstetric staff clearance advised
- insufficient liquor (oligohydramnios) or excessive liquor (poly-hydramnios): obstetric staff clearance advised
- history of any bleeding in pregnancy, antepartum haemorrhage
- threatened premature labour
- any query about ruptured membranes
- any hint of foetal distress
- foetal abnormality, any sign of compromised foetus
- multiple pregnancy
- significant maternal hypertension, any signs of pre-eclampsia, diabetes, cardiac problems or thyroid disease: obstetrician or midwife clearance advised
- Rh negativity
- where Caesarean section is to be performed for other reasons.

If you are sure that the treatment is safe to administer, you should always record the patient's informed consent along with full details of either treatment offered or instructions given to the patient for the self-administration of treatment.