

## The Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health Response to the Review of UK Health Research (Cooksey Review)

1. The Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health welcomes the opportunity to submit comments to your Review regarding the creation of a single budget to support health research funded by the Medical Research Council and the NHS R&D Programme.
2. The Foundation welcomes the decision to create a single research fund as this will, hopefully, create greater clarity over the funding of health research whilst creating real opportunities for synergies between key stakeholders including Universities and NHS Trusts. The Foundation also supports the principle of bringing basic science closer to clinical development to speed the transfer of new treatments that work for patient benefit.
3. The Foundation does not conduct clinical research, however we would like to take this opportunity to make the following observations:

- a. Long-term conditions (such as chronic pain, back-pain, arthritis and depression) affect over 15 million people in the UK<sup>1</sup>. Many clinicians would agree that orthodox treatments for these conditions are often not as effective or acceptable as they or their patients would wish.<sup>2</sup>

Complementary medicine, combined with self-care and an emphasis on prevention, can be effective for many of these conditions.<sup>3</sup> The most recent Government White Paper on Health<sup>4</sup> is supportive of this integrated health approach, as are 74% of the general public<sup>5</sup>.

- b. Commissioning of complementary therapies is being undertaken within the NHS and there is a need to ensure that evidence is available to commissioners.
4. Therefore in establishing the structure of the fund consideration should be given to:
    - a. Ensuring that appropriate funding is available to conduct research into the effectiveness and safety of complementary therapies in areas where there exists indicative evidence of effect.

In previous years special support funding for research into complementary therapies has been made available by the Department of Health. This has gone some way in establishing valuable research programmes into complementary therapies at certain Universities. In the last year this funding has been withdrawn and the Foundation would urge the reinstatement of the previous arrangement as a means of continuing to both build a strong

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, 2006

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Fisher et al, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The Smallwood Report, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> 'Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services'; DoH, 2006

<sup>5</sup> ICM telephone research conducted on behalf of the Foundation for Integrated Health on a sample of 1013 adults (selected as representative members of the GB population) between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006

research culture and capacity in this field whilst continuing to build an evidence base for the safety and effectiveness of complementary therapies; so ensuring that the advances made during the previous investment arrangements are not wasted.

- b. Ensuring that the public and their needs are placed at the centre of any considerations, to develop a patient-focused research disposition within the research agenda.
5. The Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health considers this review to be of great significance to the future of health research in the UK, and to the health of the nation. We hope that you will find our comments to be constructive and will be happy to meet with you and your team if that would be of help.

