

# **The Law, Complementary Therapies and Infant Massage**

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One of the reasons the Guild of Infant and Child Massage came into being was to do with the increasing interest the Government started to have in complementary therapies at about the turn of the century. A House of Lords Select Committee was given the task of looking at this field with a view to producing a report that the Government could examine and make a decision as to whether or not any legislation needed to be implemented or not.

The Select Committee surmised that it was necessary for osteopaths and acupuncturists to have some regulations imposed on their practice and that there was a need for these practitioners to be members of a single regulatory body. They felt at that particular stage that all other therapies need not have any regulations imposed on them. This is rather 'in a nutshell' and I wish I could direct you to the website so that you could read the full report for yourselves. Unfortunately, the webpage concerning the report is no longer on the Government's website. This rather gives the impression that it has all gone quiet and that the Government's interest has moved on to other pastures (such as fighting wars/terrorism, etc, etc). However, at the time that the report was still of interest and could be accessed via the website, I wrote to my local M.P. who (after quite sometime) got back to me with a letter from the Dept. of Health, whose letter clearly outlined the need for a regulatory body within each field of complementary medicine, regardless of whether this was to be imposed by law, or not.

Moving on from the Government's take on all of this, some of you may be arguing that this is all quite unnecessary because, after all, infant massage (and related subjects) are not complementary therapies, but Parent Education. Unfortunately, the Government see it as a complementary therapy, because the 'educating' is done through the medium of massage and massage has a physiological affect on the body. Maybe, in time, it would be possible to persuade the powers that be to recognise this as Parent Education, or maybe it will not ever be an issue because the Government's interest will never be rekindled and the need to regulate infant massage etc will never be an issue. However, in order to be seen as professionals it is necessary for certain standards to be in place.

Infant massage is fashionable at the moment and as many are jumping on the band wagon there is the potential for a watering down of skills as inadequate training courses spring up. Health professionals have to be accountable for their actions – so as infant massage teachers they need to be assured that the training they have taken is of the highest standard. Complementary therapists who are infant massage teachers need to be properly qualified and regularly up dated if they wish to be taken seriously by the health professionals who are, after all, the main gatekeepers to the parents they would like to teach. If legislation is implemented all teachers of positive touch will need to proof themselves – the Guild of Infant and Child Massage would like to see that everything is in place in case that it ever happens, but also in case that it does not, so that all parents can be reassured that they are getting nothing but professional, well qualified teachers if they chose to learn infant massage.

The Guild will endeavour to keep abreast of the Government's movements.