



## **Policy and Education Committee**

### **Minutes of the Policy and Education Committee held in Public on Wednesday 4 October 2023, via Go-to-Meeting.**

*Confirmed*

**Chair:** Professor Deborah Bowman

**Present:** Dr Daniel Bailey  
Sarah Botterill  
Simeon London  
Professor Patricia McClure  
Professor Raymond Playford  
Nick Woodhead

**Council Assoc:** Harriet Lambert  
Laura Turner

#### **In attendance:**

Steven Bettles, Head of Education and Policy  
Fiona Browne, Director of Education, Standards and Development  
Banye Kanon, Senior Quality Assurance Officer  
Michelle McDaid, Quality Assurance, Project Director, Mott MacDonald  
Chloe Johns, Project Manager, Mott MacDonald  
Liz Niman, Head of Communications, Engagement and Insight  
Matthew Redford, Chief Executive and Registrar  
Maxine Supersaud, Head of Resources and Assurance  
Hannah Warwick, Mott MacDonald

#### **Observers with Speaking Rights:**

Maurice Cheng, Chief Executive, Institute of Osteopathy, iO  
Ian Fraser, Chair, Council of Osteopathic Education Institutions  
Santosh Jassal, Secretary, Osteopathic Alliance (OA)  
Dr Jerry Draper-Rodi, Director, National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR)

#### **Observer/s:**

Caroline Guy, Member of Council  
Robert Cartwright, Registrant and member of the Osteopathic Alliance.  
Sally Gosling, Institute of Osteopathy

#### **Item 1: Welcome and apologies**

1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.
2. Apologies were received from:

- Dr Marvelle Brown, Lay Committee Member
- Bob Davies, Registrant Committee Member
- Dr Bill Gunnyeon, Chair of Council
- Dr Stacey Clift, Senior Policy and Research Officer
- Rachel Heatley, Senior Policy and Research Officer

### **Item 2: Minutes and matters arising**

3. The minutes of the meeting 15 June 2023, were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following paragraph being amended as shown:

Page 3, paragraph 7e.

*It was explained that, [paragraph 26 of the Graduate Outcomes and Standards for Training](#), details diversity requirements in relation to the 50 patients seen in terms of a diversity of case presentations (including for example, neuro musculoskeletal and non- neuromusculoskeletal) and protected characteristics of patients (including for example: religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).*

4. There were no matters arising.

### **Item 3: Student Fitness to Practise Guidance**

5. The Head of Education and Policy introduced the item concerning guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education – consultation on reviewed guidance.
6. The key messages and following points were highlighted:
  - The paper reported to the Committee the draft updated Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education, and sought agreement to recommend this to Council for consultation.
  - A draft consultation strategy and document were presented to the Committee for recommendation to Council for formal consultation.
  - An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the consultation.
7. In discussion the following points were made and responded to:
  - a. Members commented that the combined the Guidance document was a sensible approach but asked whether doing so made the information less accessible. It was agreed that the information contained in the combined Guidance was considerable. To address this editing to remove overlaps of information has been undertaken and editorial work would continue to ensure the document was accessible and user friendly. The Communications team would also review the guidance for final editing prior to consultation.

- b. Members were informed that in updating the Guidance in order to identify and highlight areas that might be missing or require further development it had been cross-referenced against similar guidance published by other health regulators.
- c. Members commended the team for the work to date in developing the combined Guidance which was now more comprehensive. It was noted that the inclusion of case examples and highlighting behaviours would be particularly useful for students.
- d. The Committee was informed that COEI would be discussing the Guidance at its next meeting. It was noted that the combined guidance would be likely to be welcomed by the Council and would be especially helpful in supporting the OEIs in facilitating students understanding of and addressing their regulatory responsibilities.

#### **The Committee:**

- a. Agreed to recommend *Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education*, for consultation in accordance with the strategy outlined.**
- b. Agreed the Consultation Strategy and Consultation document.**
- c. Noted the Equality Impact Assessment.**

#### **Item 4: Patient Engagement progress update**

- 8. The Director of Education, Development and Standards introduced the item on behalf of the Senior Policy and Research Officer, Rachel Heatley, which provided a progress report on the GOsC's patient engagement activity and an outline of current patient engagement priorities.
- 9. The key messages and following points were highlighted:
  - a. Patient engagement activities since June 2023 have include ongoing work on the evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the shared decision-making resources project to support the implementation of the Osteopathic Practice Standards and consulting patients on the guidance for Interim Suspension Orders and Undertakings.
  - b. On 28 September, the GOsC hosted a joint deliberative workshop with the General Chiropractic Council (GCC) which was facilitated by Community Research to explore patient views on the duty of candour and in particular, exploring nuanced areas which may require further guidance, support and resources to support decision making for osteopaths and patients.

c. At the meeting of Council in July, consideration was given to a number of options and ideas about how to involve patients with the GOsC's decision making processes as something distinct from consultation with patients. Further updates on developments and progress will be reported to Council in November 2023.

d. Current priorities include:

- the completion of the evaluation of the shared decision-making resources project in October 2023 to enable an evidence-informed approach to promotion to support the implementation of the Osteopathic Practice Standards and good communication between patients and osteopaths.
- an audit of forum membership to ensure continued promotion of the diversity of the forum and views.
- an experience survey seeking members' feedback on what we are doing well and what we could improve and whether our policies (e.g., expenses policy) remain fit for purpose.

e. Upcoming activities will include:

- consultative work with patients on the draft Council strategy
- seeking feedback on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 action plan
- Professional Standards Authority Research Symposium – a joint presentation with GCC, Community Research on the duty of candour research and findings from the workshop.

10. The Committee had no additional comments regarding the Patient Engagement update and noted the report.

11. The Chair informed the Committee that Rachel Heatley, Senior Policy Officer, , although still working with the GOsC and the Professional Standards Team, would in future be working on a part-time basis so that she can pursue post-graduate studies. On behalf of the Committee the Chair asked that her thanks to Rachel be noted and all her excellent work in developing the patient partnership project to date be acknowledged.

**Noted: The Committee noted the GOsC patient engagement strategy since June 2023 and the current priorities and future plans.**

### **Item 5: Registrant Perceptions Survey update**

12. The Head of Communications, Engagement and Insight introduced the item which providing an update on the Registrants' Perception Survey and tender interviews.

13. The Committee was informed that 6 providers made an application to tender. Four providers were invited to interview, and a successful candidate has been selected subject to contract and will be named in due course. It was noted that the quality of all the applicants was impressive and of a high standard.
14. Dr Dan Bailey was especially thanked for his contribution to the selection process.

**Noted: The Committee noted the update on the Registrants' Perception Survey.**

### **Item 6: London School of Osteopathy (LSO): Agreement to RQ Specification and Appointment of Visitors**

15. There were no declarations of interest submitted for this item.
16. The Senior Quality Assurance Officer introduced the item which the Committee approval of the Review Specification for the renewal of the Recognised Qualification (RQ) review at the London School of Osteopathy (LSO).
17. The key messages and following points were highlighted:
  - a. The London School of Osteopathy currently provides the following qualifications the recognition period of which is 1 September 2019 with no fixed expiry.
    - Master of Osteopathy (MOst)
    - Bachelor of Osteopathy (Hons)
  - b. The visit will take place no later than October 2024 in discussion with the LSO.
  - c. A draft review specification was presented the Committee to approve.
18. In discussion the following points were made and responded to:
  - a. It was suggested and agreed that paragraph 6 of the Draft Review Specification for LSO - Renewal of Recognised Qualification Review could be strengthened with an amendment to the wording:
 

Specific issues for consideration may include:

    - Review of risk management to ensure transparency and assurance to the delivery of the course ~~Could~~ shall include ensuring that Osteopathic Practise Standards are embedded into the policies and processes.
  - b. It was confirmed there would be scope within the timeframe for reflection during the visit and for introducing modifications to the process as required – this is provided for in the Handbook.

- c. The Chair raised the issue of risk and how risk is mitigated with consideration given to risk appetite and tolerance. It was suggested that these areas might be expanded on further within the review specification.

**Agreed: The Committee agreed the Review Specification for the London School of Osteopathy renewal of the RQ Review of the following programmes:**

- **Master of Osteopathy (MOst)**
- **Bachelor of Osteopathy (Hons)**

### **Item 7: Updates from Observers with speaking rights**

#### **19. Osteopathic Alliance**

Key messages were:

- a. Looking to understand the active Allied Health Strategies and reform. There are concerns the reforms will have a negative impact on the profession.
- b. A meeting was held with the Institute of Osteopathy and other stakeholders to clarify AHP strategies and associated contracts with the Institute of Osteopathy and any impact that these may have on undergraduate education and the profession as a whole.
- c. The announcement of the possibility of the merger of the UCO contextualised concerns that had been raised at the meeting regarding the direction of osteopathy.
- d. Members and stakeholders were invited to attend the next meeting of the Osteopathic Alliance, 13 October, where issues raised would be discussed.

#### **20. Institute of Osteopathy**

Key messages included:

- a. Engagement with the Osteopathic Alliance to discuss their concerns.
- b. Commencement of the iO Strategic Plan is currently a major focus. Many themes had been identified at the January iO strategy day including workforce stability, addressing the reducing undergraduate intake, and concerns regarding doubling of deregistration and a drop in the average for retirement age from 58 to 50 which raises a red flag.
- c. Net zero growth in 12-24 months is being taken very seriously and working with regional groups, under and post-graduate institutions to find solutions but there are no quick fixes but there is an urgent need get an in-depth understanding of the issues facing the profession.

## 21. National Council for Osteopathic Research

- a. The Practice Based Research Network will be launched at the International iO Conference 20-21 October.
- b. The Conference focuses on 30 years of regulation and to celebrate Osteopathy as a profession. It is being supported by GOsC, OIA, Osteopathy Europe (OE), UCO, iO and NCOR. The conference will include international panel sessions with representatives from around the world.
- c. A series of free webinars have been organised for clinicians and for organisations Europe wide. The aim is to upskill osteopaths in research methods and developing a research culture whilst providing content relevant to clinical practice.
- d. The Complaints report is being finalised and will be submitted to the GOsC in due course.
- e. Funding has been received from the Osteopathic Foundation to support the Practice Based Network.
- f. A new member of staff has been appointed to the role of Research Administrator.
- g. The **Strengthening Osteopathic Learning and Research** conference took place in Toulouse, France. A topic of discussion was the issue of osteopathic education and the future of the profession worldwide where many challenges reflect those within the UK

## 22. Council for Osteopathic Education Institutions

- a. The issue of recruitment is an issue for the OEIs and has been for a number of years. The numbers are the lowest they have ever been. One of the factors is Brexit and has been a challenge not only for the institutions but also for those who wish to study in the UK.
- b. COEI is addressing the challenges which includes lobbying and representatives will be attending the House of Commons for a week to lobby and state case. COEI is also involved a range of activities to raise the profile of osteopathy and address the challenges, but it is a very difficult market in which the OEIs are working.

## 23. In discussion the following points were made and responded to:

- a. The Chair thanked the stakeholder representatives for their updates and their openness and willingness to share their thinking noting that the sustainability of the profession was a common and concerning theme

- b. Members were informed that there had been a year-on-year reduction of 14% in full-time student applications and for part-time students a drop of 24% for 2023-24 when compared to 2021-22. A more accurate statistic would be provided in due course.
- c. It was noted that the issue was not just a UK problem but there were student recruitment issues internationally.
- d. It was noted that the demand for private practice services remains and therefore the issue is not lack of demand but in getting students to consider osteopathy as a career path. It was also noted that funding for mature students was also a barrier.
- e. Members were advised that the iO has been lobbying NHS decision makers and approaching parliamentary all-party groups to look at how legacy systems which are barriers to the osteopathic profession can be removed but it is acknowledged as being a difficult challenge.

**Noted: The Committee noted the stakeholder updates.**

#### **Item 8: Any other business**

- 24. GOsC Strategic Plan: Towards 2030: The GOsC is currently consulting on the Strategic Plan for Towards 2030. Members will have been emailed for comment as part of the consultation process. Members are encouraged to engage with the consultation and to respond. Members can contact the Chief Executive if they would like to discuss the plan in more detail.
- 25. PEC Development Day, January 2024: Members were reminded that the development day would take place 18 January 2024 at Osteopathy House. Members were invited to put reflect and put forward thoughts to the Chair and the Executive on how they would like to use the time. Members would be updated on the arrangements in due course.
- 26. Change to Chair of the PEC: Members were informed that the from 1 April 2024 Professor Patricia McClure would assume the role of PEC Chair. Professor Deborah Bowman would be stepping down as a member of Council and member of the PEC from 31 March.

#### **Date of the next meeting:**

- **PEC Development Day: 18 January 2024**
- **PEC: 7 March 2024 at 10.00**