



General
Osteopathic
Council

Hearings before the GOsC Professional Conduct Committee

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) hearings of the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) are generally open to members of the public and the press. The openness of the proceedings reflects the GOsC's public accountability. Seating at hearings is limited and it may not always be possible to accommodate all those who wish to attend. On occasion, an application for a hearing to be held 'in-camera' (i.e. not in public) will be granted in exceptional circumstances. The PCC may also agree to parts of a case being held in private, if, by doing so, it protects the anonymity of the person who is the alleged victim, or if disclosure of confidential evidence is involved.

Respondents and witnesses are usually under considerable strain. If you attend a hearing, please ensure that all mobile phones are switched off. Do not talk or move around during the hearing as this can upset concentration. Cameras, tape recording equipment, or any other device capable of capturing a permanent record is not permitted.

Hearings usually start at 10.00. If start times differ on subsequent days it will be announced in public at the hearing. The Chairman will announce appropriate times for lunch and comfort breaks during the proceedings. Please aim to arrive back at Osteopathy House five minutes before the proceedings are due to reconvene.

Please make a point of familiarising yourself with the fire exits in the room in which you are sitting. In the event of an evacuation, follow instructions from GOsC hearings staff. You may bring drinks into the hearing room, but please do not eat in the hearing room.

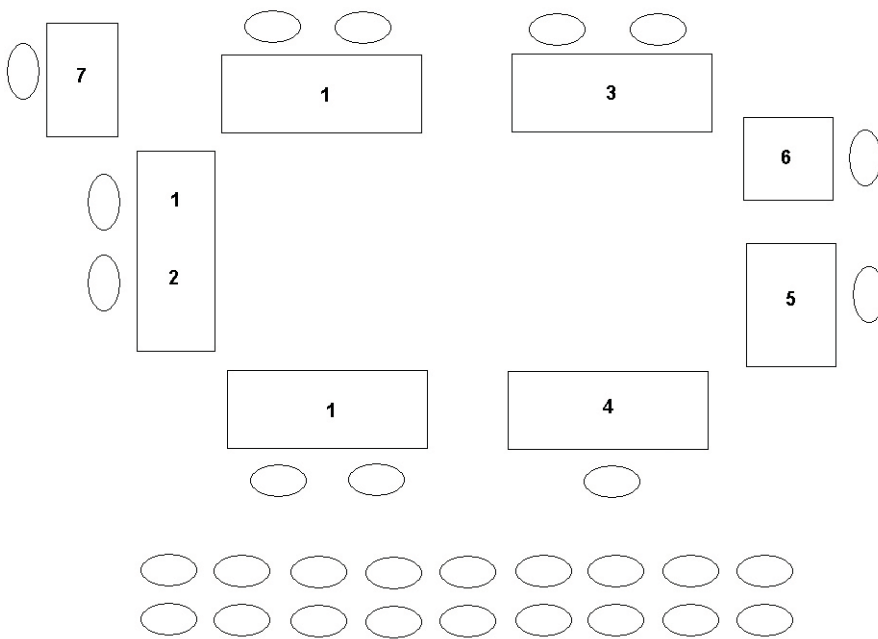
At various points during the hearing the PCC will retire to make decisions in private. At these times, you will be asked to leave the hearing and GOsC hearings staff will announce when the PCC is ready to deliver its decision. The decision, when made, will be announced in public.

The charges that an osteopath is facing can be provided on request after they have been read by the clerk near the start of the hearing. If you have any further questions or require further information you should speak to the hearings officer or clerk, but please wait until you can see that they are not committed to tasks associated with the smooth running of the hearing. A plan showing the room layout and hearing attendees is pictured overleaf.

Occasionally, a hearing may not be concluded in the time allocated: in such an instance, the PCC may decide to adjourn (stop) the proceedings at an appropriate point and they will reconvene the hearing at a different time. Notices of the new date will appear on the GOsC website.

Further information is available on the GOsC website at: www.osteopathy.org.uk. The case outcomes and decisions will be published on the website.

Room Layout – FTP Hearings



ATTENDEES AT THE HEARING

1. Members of the Professional Conduct Committee
2. Legal Assessor
3. Osteopath and any representatives
4. Case Presenter on behalf of the GOsC
5. Witness
6. Shorthand writer / Stenographer
7. Hearings Clerk

PCC: there will be five members, whose role it is to hear the case. The Chair (who is a lay member of the PCC) will be an experienced panel member who runs the proceedings. The PCC will include two osteopaths and three lay people (non-osteopaths).

Legal Assessor: a barrister or solicitor-advocate of more than ten years' experience sits with the panel to advise on matters of law and the admissibility of evidence, but is not involved in any decision-making by the panel.

Case Presenter: a solicitor or barrister instructed by the GOsC who presents the case on behalf of the Council.

Hearings Clerk: services the panel, organises all parties to appear on time.

Shorthand writer / Stenographer: takes a verbatim account of the full proceedings.

Fitness to Practise Hearings

The PCC can consider allegations that an osteopath has been guilty of:

- > Unacceptable professional conduct
- > Professional incompetence
- > Convicted of a criminal offence in the UK, that is material to the osteopath's fitness to practise.

The GOsC has to prove the case against the osteopath, which means that the PCC must be satisfied to the civil standard of proof, i.e. that, on the balance of probabilities, the alleged offences did occur.

The PCC receives no information about the case in advance of the hearing.

If a case is proved, the PCC will decide what sanction should be applied.

The sanctions available to the committee are:

- > Admonish the osteopath
- > Impose conditions on the osteopath's practice
- > Suspend the osteopath from the Register for a fixed period of time
- > Remove the osteopath from the Register.



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The General Osteopathic Council

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