



General  
Osteopathic  
Council

Making a complaint  
about a member of the  
General Osteopathic Council

## INTRODUCTION

1. The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) is committed to providing a high quality, accessible and responsive service. Any complaints and comments regarding Members of the GOsC Council (the Board), including members co-opted to the Board or Committees (the Member), will be fully investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

## SCOPE

2. This procedure provides a formal route for complaints to be raised with GOsC. However, all parties are encouraged, wherever possible, to raise concerns directly with the Member concerned, in the first instance, in order to seek an early resolution to the issue. Once this has been done, or in situations where this is not appropriate, the following complaints procedure comes into play.
3. This procedure is for dealing with complaints that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct for Members (the Member's Code), which is available on the GOsC website [www.osteopathy.org.uk](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk). This process is not designed to deal with complaints about a decision that has been based on GOsC guidelines or policy. For these issues, you should write to the person you have been dealing with or the GOsC Chief Executive & Registrar.

## HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

4. You can make your complaint in writing or by telephone. If you write with your complaint, please provide your telephone number, if a response by telephone would be convenient. If you e-mail your complaint, please say if a reply by e-mail would be acceptable and, if not, please provide a full postal address.

5. Complaints should be addressed to:

The Clerk to the Council  
General Osteopathic Council  
Osteopathy House  
176 Tower Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 3LU

Telephone: 020 7357 6655  
Fax: 020 7357 0011  
E-mail address: [jquinnell@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:jquinnell@osteopathy.org.uk)

6. The process will be managed by the Clerk to the Council (Jane Quinnell, address as above, telephone: 01580 720213, fax: 01580 720602 and email [jquinnell@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:jquinnell@osteopathy.org.uk)). To help process your complaint quickly, if you write in, please use the attached complaints form at Annex A, and provide the following:
  - a. A clear description of the complaint including details of which provision(s) of the Code of Conduct has/have allegedly been breached, who has been involved so far and what you hope to achieve through making this complaint.
  - b. Your full postal address, telephone and fax numbers (and e-mail address if you have one).

7. If you telephone with your complaint, we will ask for the above information to complete the form and we will send it to you for approval and for you to sign the required Declaration.
8. Complaints should be drawn to our attention at the earliest opportunity and ideally within 6 months of the event being complained about occurring.

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM US?

9. The GOsC will:
  - a. Acknowledge receipt of your written complaint or signed declaration within five working days
  - b. Arrange for the complaint to be fully investigated, informally in the first instance, by the Chairman of Council or the Acting Chairman, if the complaint is about the Chairman of Council
  - c. Keep you informed of progress
  - d. Send a full reply within 21 working days. If this is not possible, we will explain why and give you a date by which you can expect a full reply.

## WHAT IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE GOsC RESPONSE?

10. If you are not satisfied with the response, you can ask for the matter to be reviewed. You are encouraged to say why you remain dissatisfied with the outcome and write to the Chairman of the GOsC (or the Acting Chairman who carried out the initial investigation):

The Chairman of Council or Acting Chairman  
General Osteopathic Council  
Osteopathy House  
176 Tower Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 3LU

11. On receipt of the letter, the Chairman of Council or Acting Chairman will ensure that we acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days and keep you informed of progress.

## THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

### 12. Composition of Panel

- a. The Chairman will arrange for the complaint to be fully investigated by convening a panel of three people appointed by Council from amongst members of bodies regulating other health professions and/or of other similar bodies. At least one member of the panel will have appropriate legal experience or experience of acting in a judicial or human resource capacity.

The Panel will appoint one of themselves as Chairman.

### 13. Complaint

- a. The complaint must be in writing and signed by you. You must detail the conduct complained of and say why you are not satisfied with the initial investigation and conclusion.

- b. Complaints will be considered within three months of receipt by the Chairman of the Panel.

The Chairman may extend this period in exceptional circumstances.

#### 14. **Procedure**

- a. Copies of the complaint will be sent to the panel and the Member who is the subject of the complaint. A written response will be requested from the latter, within a reasonable time determined by the Panel.
- b. The Panel will consider the response and make any needed enquiries, of both you and the Member, to enable it to consider the complaint. The Panel may also hear evidence and the Member has a right to an oral hearing with a 'supporter' present, within a reasonable time determined by the Panel. Supporters are not entitled to address the Panel at the hearing. If the Member does not request an oral hearing, the matter will be considered on the papers alone.
- c. On conclusion of its enquiries and of any hearing, the Panel decides whether the complaint is upheld and if so, what action or sanction is recommended. The Chairman of the Panel then prepares, for the Council, a report of the complaint, the Panel's findings and its recommendation(s).
- d. If the Panel finds that the complaint is unjustified or is not supported by sufficient evidence, it must dismiss the complaint.

#### 15. **Administrative Provisions**

- a. All decisions of the Panel will be made by a simple majority of votes with the Chairman having an additional, casting vote when needed.
- b. Meetings of the Panel will be held in private unless the Chairman decides otherwise.
- c. The Panel may seek any advice, including legal advice, or secretariat support as it reasonably sees fit. The Panel will not use any lawyers used by the Council.

#### 16. **Sanctions**

- a. If the Panel concludes that there has been a breach of the Code it will recommend, to the GOsC, one or more of the following:
  - (i) that the Member be admonished by the Board and that this is recorded in the relevant minutes.
  - (ii) that the Member be suspended from the Board for a specified period not exceeding six months in total.
  - (iii) that the Member be removed from the GOsC under the General Osteopathic Council (Constitution and Procedure) Rules 1998.
  - (iv) that no action be taken.
  - (iv) that a report be made to the police or other authority.

#### 17. **Council Procedure**

- a. The Panel's report and recommendation(s) will be considered, in public business at the next meeting of the Board, except where the Panel has dismissed the complaint or the complaint has dealt with GOsC confidential information, in which case the report will be taken in the Private Session of the Board meeting. Where the Panel has recommended

that the police be informed of the matter, no report shall be made public until the conclusion of any action by the police or prosecuting authorities.

- b. The Board may agree to impose the recommended sanction by a majority vote of those present and voting (excluding the Member).
- c. The Board should not re-hear a complaint or substitute its own judgement for that of the Panel on whether a complaint should be upheld. In exceptional circumstances, it may remit a case for further consideration by the Panel, for example where a respondent claims that crucial new evidence is available which could not reasonably have been produced before the Panel.

## **WHAT IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE FINAL RESPONSE FROM THE GOsC?**

- 18. There are no further appeal mechanisms in operation with the GOsC as part of this process and you should seek separate independent legal advice if you wish to take this matter further.

## ANNEX A

# Making a complaint about a member of the General Osteopathic Council

The GOsC *Making a complaint about a Member of the General Osteopathic Council* leaflet sets out the relevant procedure. Once you have read that leaflet, and decided you wish to proceed with a complaint, please help us by providing the following information:

### Your Details

Your name

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Your address

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Your home telephone number

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Your work telephone number (if applicable)

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Your fax number (if applicable)

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Your email address (if applicable)

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### Complaint Details

Is this an original complaint or a follow-up to a reply you were not satisfied with? *Please tick*

Original complaint

Follow-up to a reply you were not satisfied with



## Help

If you would like to discuss any part of your complaint before sending this form or would like help with completing it, please telephone 01580 720213 and ask for the Clerk to the Council

## Declaration

I have no objection to the Council Member involved seeing my complaint.

I declare that the information I have given is true and accurate.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Checklist

Thank you for completing this form. Now, please make sure you have:

- > Given as many details as you can about your complaint, together with any supporting papers and documents.
- > Completed all sections of this form.
- > Kept a copy of this completed form for your records.
- > Read carefully and signed the Declaration.

## Please return this form to:

Ms Jane Quinnell  
The Clerk to the Council  
General Osteopathic Council  
Osteopathy House  
176 Tower Bridge Road  
London SE1 3LU



General  
Osteopathic  
Council

If you have any difficulty reading or accessing this document,  
contact the General Osteopathic Council on  
tel: 020 7357 6655 ext 242  
or email: [info@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:info@osteopathy.org.uk).

**The General Osteopathic Council**

Osteopathy House  
176 Tower Bridge Road  
London SE1 3LU

Tel: 020 7357 6655

Fax: 020 7357 0011

Email: [info@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:info@osteopathy.org.uk)

Web: [www.osteopathy.org.uk](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk)