

**GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL**  
**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT COMMITTEE**

**Case No: 384/5032**

**Interim Suspension Order Hearing**

**DECISION**

**Case of:** Mr Dick Wyatt

**Committee:** Ms Judith Worthington (Chair)  
Ms Margaret Wolff  
Ms Jackie Salter

**Legal Assessor:** Mr Andrew Davies

**Representation for Council:** Mr Nick Leale

**Representation for Osteopath:** None

**Clerk to the Committee:** Miss Priya Popat

**Date of Hearing:** Tuesday 20 December 2011

---

**Decision:**

The committee has decided to proceed in the absence of Mr Wyatt.

The reasons for this decision are as follows.

The committee first satisfied itself, in accordance with rule 20 of the Procedure Rules 2000, as applied to interim hearings by rule 40 (5), that all reasonable steps have been taken to serve notice of today's hearing on Mr Wyatt.

The notice was sent by special delivery to Mr Wyatt's registered address on 14 December 2011, in accordance with rule 65 of the Procedure Rules. That notice was delivered and signed for on 15 December, and Mr Wyatt has confirmed both to Ms Taylor and to the Council's solicitor, Mr Leale, that he had received the papers. The committee accepted the advice of the legal assessor that there is no minimum notice period provided by the rules of this Committee (or the Act), and concluded that adequate notice had been given having regard to the urgency and all the circumstances of the case (rule 40 (2)).

The committee then considered whether to exercise the discretion provided by rule 20 to proceed in Mr Wyatt's absence. As set out in paragraph 29 of the relevant GOsC guidance note, this is a discretion to be exercised with the utmost care and caution. The committee considered the factors set out at that paragraph of the guidance note. It is of particular importance in this case that Mr Wyatt has indicated more than once that he has received the papers, and that he does not wish to attend the hearing or to be legally represented. On 16 December he told Ms Tailor that he did not wish to be contacted again (he made a similar point in his letter of 28 November 2011, when he wrote that he would accept no further communications from the Council). The committee are satisfied that Mr Wyatt has deliberately and voluntarily absented himself from today's hearing, and that he is well aware of the purpose of the hearing and of the powers available to the committee. An adjournment has not been requested, and would serve no useful purpose, as Mr Wyatt would be highly unlikely to attend any adjourned hearing.

While it is no purpose of the hearing today to make a decision on questions of fact, the allegations against Mr Wyatt are serious, and there is a strong public interest in dealing with this application for an interim suspension order expeditiously.

For these reasons the committee decided that it would be in the interests of justice to proceed with the hearing today.

**Decision:**

The committee has decided to make an interim suspension order and orders the Registrar to suspend the registration of Mr Dick Wyatt in accordance with section 24 (2) of the Osteopaths Act 1993. In accordance with section 24 (3) (a) of the Act, this order will have effect until the Committee reaches a decision in respect of the allegations in question.

The reasons for this decision are:

The committee has carefully considered the documents before it, including the statement of the original complainant setting out Mr Wyatt's Linked In profile as at 7 September 2011, Mr Wyatt's letter to the Council dated 12 October 2011, the Registrar's letter to Mr Wyatt dated 13 November 2011 attaching Mr Wyatt's updated Linked In profile, Mr Wyatt's letter dated 28 November 2011, the Registrar's reply dated 1 December 2011, and a blog entitled "My Wife with Cancer" to which Mr Wyatt contributed on 8 June 2010.

The committee has heard submissions from Mr Leale and has accepted the advice of the legal assessor. It has also considered the GOsC guidance note on Interim Suspension Orders dated October 2011.

The committee has power to make an interim suspension order if it is satisfied that it is necessary to do so in order to protect members of the public. The committee is so satisfied.

The committee considered first the seriousness of the allegations made about Mr Wyatt. These allegations are very serious. On two entirely separate occasions, on different internet platforms, Mr Wyatt has made claims that, as a cranial osteopath, he is able to cure serious medical conditions, in one case (the Linked In profile) cancer, Parkinson's, and motor neurone disease, in the other (the blog) various types of cancer. He says on the blog "I have taught myself to destroy cancer – cells, tumours, metastatics, the whole business" that this is "my core business, but something the orthodox medics usually can't do". He claims that everyone he has treated is cancer free, so far as he and "the medical side" can establish, and invites members of the public to contact him.

The committee accepts that the allegations against Mr Wyatt amount to using his status as a registered osteopath, and the credibility conferred by being a member of a regulated profession, to prey upon vulnerable and desperate people suffering from serious medical conditions.

The committee then considered whether there was a real risk of significant harm to the health, safety or well-being of patients or other members of the public. The committee is satisfied that there is such a risk. Mr Wyatt's claims could have the effect of persuading seriously ill patients and their families to pursue treatment with Mr Wyatt rather than seeking out appropriate treatment. This carries a real risk of serious harm. At the very least, his claims could present false hope of what he, as a cranial osteopath, is capable of achieving.

There is a real risk of repetition, in that (despite his protestations in his letter of 12 October 2011), the June 2010 blog entry makes very similar claims to the Linked in Profile. Furthermore, in the blog entry, Mr Wyatt claims that "I use opportunities such as this site to publicise my services". The evidence of a very similar claim being made in the past casts doubt upon the reliability of Mr Wyatt's assurances in his letter of 12 October, and strongly suggests that he may continue to make similar claims in the future unless this committee were to make an order today.

The committee considered whether the imposition of an order is proportionate to the risk, and took into account the likely impact of a suspension order on Mr Wyatt. While the committee has no details from Mr Wyatt of the impact of an order, it is likely that it would have adverse financial and reputational consequences. Having balanced the need for an order against the consequences

for Mr Wyatt, the committee is satisfied that the consequences of an interim suspension order are not disproportionate to the risks to the public if such an order were not made.

There is a right of appeal in accordance with section 26(6) of the Osteopaths Act 1993.