

**GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL
Business Plan
April 2021 - March 2022**

FINAL

GOsC BUSINESS PLAN 2021-22

1. The General Osteopathic Council has agreed a Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 as an enabling document to provide the overarching approach that Council intends to follow. The Strategic Plan sets out the statutory context within which we operate, a vision statement and four goals for 2024. Further detail is provided below.
2. The statutory context of our operation is as follows:
 - To protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public
 - To promote and maintain public confidence in the profession of osteopathy
 - To promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of the profession.

3. The vision statement set out within the Strategic Plan is:

A partnership in professional standards that fulfils our statutory duty to protect the public and promote patient safety and well-being through modern regulation which supports and develops osteopaths.

4. Our four goals for 2024 are:

We will support the osteopathic profession to deliver high-quality care, which will protect patients and the public in the context of changes in the dynamic landscape of healthcare.	We will develop our assurance of osteopathic education to produce high-quality graduates who are ready to practise.
We will build closer relationships with the public and the profession based on trust and transparency.	We will be an exemplar in modern healthcare regulation – accessible, effective, innovative, agile, proportionate and reflective.

5. Under each of these four goals we have provided more detailed activity which collectively articulates how the goal will be achieved in 2020-21. Headlines from each goal are provided below for ease of reference:

Goal 1: We will support the osteopathic profession to deliver high-quality care, which will protect patients and the public in the context of changes in the dynamic landscape of healthcare.

- We will engage with, and listen to, our stakeholders, before analysing and responding to their feedback across the full range of our work.
- We will continue to support and empower registrants to meet the requirements of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme.

- We will evaluate CPD implementation data to inform our work.
- We will support new graduates (UK and Internationally qualified) making the transition into practice.
- We will continue to support research including into the concerns prevalent to osteopathic care.
- We will continue to learn from our fitness to practise processes.

Goal 2: We will develop our assurance of osteopathic education to produce high-quality graduates who are ready to practise.

- We will work with the education sector to facilitate strategic thinking and development.
- We will continue to embed the OPS within education provision and within the student communities.
- We will explore issues connected to the future sustainability of the profession.

Goal 3: We will build closer relationships with the public and the profession based on trust and transparency.

- We will ensure patients are at the centre of our regulatory approach across all parts of our business.
- We will introduce new communication around fitness to practise, such as ebulletins and webinars, to demystify and humanise our work in this area.
- We will further enhance our social media presence to include a greater recognition of equality and diversity.

Goal 4: We will be an exemplar in modern healthcare regulation – accessible, effective, innovative, agile, proportionate and reflective.

- We will comply with our statutory rules and legislation.
- We will introduce a new approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- We will develop our capacity for using data more effectively.
- We will introduce a new 'Council Associates' programme for osteopaths to identify future leaders in governance.

6. In the development of this business plan, and our subsequent delivery of the activities set out under the four goals for 2024, we will always have regard for the following principles which underpin our regulatory approach:

- We will always be patient focused
- We will be reflective, respectful and willing to engage and learn
- We will work in collaboration with all our partners and our stakeholders
- We will ensure our approach is evidence informed
- We will be transparent and proportionate
- We will ensure our focus is on the delivery of the objective

7. This document, the Business Plan 2021-22, sets out the detailed activities for the period April 2021 to March 2022, in support of each of the four goals.

Goal one: We will support the osteopathic profession to deliver high-quality care, which will protect patients and the public in the context of changes in the dynamic landscape of healthcare.			
Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
Ongoing activities (business as usual)			
Continue to empower osteopaths to undertake the CPD scheme through a programme of ongoing supportive communication and engagement with a particular focus on the peer discussion review.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Continue to collaborate with osteopathic groups and organisations to support osteopaths undertake the CPD scheme including the peer discussion review.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Collect, analyse and report on data about activities undertaken by registrants in their CPD cycle and take appropriate actions based on the evidence.	Registration, Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Continue verification and assurance activity based on declarations made by osteopaths when renewing their registration annually and report on findings.	Registration	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Update and review CPD equality impact assessment through the implementation period.	Professional Standards	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Continue to foster sustainable professional networks and learning communities that support professional development and minimise practitioner isolation.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Support new graduates (UK and Internationally qualified) making the transition into practice through better understanding of the barriers and	Professional Standards, Registration, Communications	From July 2021	Policy and Education Committee

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Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
enablers to building communities, including the development of appropriate resources.			
Continue to work collaboratively with the Osteopathic Development Group on initiatives that enhance patient safety and/or quality of patient care.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Continuing to support the National Council for Osteopathic Research to increase research awareness and research activity to inform practice and patient care.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Collaborate with professional indemnity insurance providers, the Institute of Osteopathy and the National Council for Osteopathic Research to report on the prevalence of concerns about osteopaths and practice.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Professional Standards, Regulation	All year	Policy and Education Committee
To consider the prevalence of concerns and any implications for the sector connected to patient safety and the quality of patient care.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Professional Standards, Regulation, Communications	By October 2021	Policy and Education Committee
Collect, analyse and report on generic case learning points from fitness to practise hearings and consider implications and next steps with all stakeholders, including GOsC Committee members.	Professional Standards, Regulation, Communications	All year	Council, Audit Committee
Continue to engage with the Department of Health and Social Care, the four UK governments, and other regulators on the reform of healthcare professional legislation.	Chief Executive and Registrar	All year	Council

Goal one: We will support the osteopathic profession to deliver high-quality care, which will protect patients and the public in the context of changes in the dynamic landscape of healthcare.

Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
New activities introduced in 2021-22			
We will engage with, and listen to, our stakeholders, before analysing and responding to their feedback across the full range of our work.	Professional Standards, Communications, Regulation	From April 2021	Council, Policy and Education Committee
We will promote registrants' wellbeing in order to support osteopaths to deliver high-quality patient care.	Chief Executive, Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Further develop and consult on guidance to support registrants who are engaged in adjunctive/complementary therapies to understand the application of the Osteopathic Practice Standards.	Regulation, Professional Standards, Communications	By October 2021	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Publish and actively promote guidance on adjunctive and complementary therapies.	Regulation, Professional Standards, Communications	By January 2022	Council

Goal two: We will develop our assurance of osteopathic education to produce high-quality graduates who are ready to practise.			
Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
Ongoing activities (business as usual)			
Work with the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions to facilitate strategic thinking and development in order to ensure the sector works together coherently, collegiately and collaboratively.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Review levels of assurance provided by the existing quality assurance method and explore mechanisms for enhancing assurance and informing QA activities.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Use findings of the review of the existing quality assurance method to update the risk-based approach to quality assurance strategy 2020 to 2025.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Removal of RQ dates and publication of conditions and publication of action plans for eligible osteopathic education providers.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee, Council
Continue to monitor and enhance the quality of osteopathic education.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Publish consultation on draft of updated Handbook (alongside updated GOPRE including Standards for Training).	Professional Standards	By June 2021	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Publish and disseminate findings from public and patient involvement in osteopathic education.	Professional Standards, Communications	From April 2021	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Work with patients, educational providers and others to understand and develop best practice for the involvement of patients in osteopathic education and training.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Continue to embed OPS (2019) within educational provision and quality assurance framework.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee

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Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
Continue to embed the OPS (2019) within the student community through our ongoing engagement with students at all stages of their training.	Registration, Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Policy and Education Committee
Ensure we retain a focus on the external horizon to identify any issues relating to education and training which may impact on current objectives and plans.	Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee
New activities introduced in 2021-22			
Explore issues connected to the future sustainability of the profession.	Chief Executive, Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee, Council

Goal three: We will build closer relationships with the public and the profession based on trust and transparency.			
Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
Ongoing activities (business as usual)			
Review visibility of information to support participants in hearings and publication of decisions.	Regulation, Communications	All year	Council
Continue to collect witness and parties feedback and arrange to evaluate this feedback to enhance our FtP processes.	Regulation	All year	Council
Continue to work with patients and others to identify, review and translate examples of osteopaths and other health professionals working with patients to inform interprofessional working and learning.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Policy and Education Committee, Council.
Work with patients to promote among osteopathic stakeholders the value of patient involvement in their own work and, encourage use of patient feedback to inform improvements in practice.	Communications, Professional Standards	All year	Policy and Education Committee, Council.
Work with patients, registrants and others to promote awareness, accessibility and usability of the Register, and to provide assurance about the Register and our registration processes.	Communications, Registration	All year	Policy and Education Committee, Council.
Increase the numbers within our patient and public reference group including the diversity of patients.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	Policy and Education Committee, Council
As a registered charity, develop greater links with our local community for example, via a work placement scheme.	Chief Executive and CSR working group	From September 2021	Remuneration and Appointments Committee
Participate actively across the inter-regulatory forums to gather intelligence and build relationships to enhance our approach to regulation.	Chief Executive and all departments	All year	Council

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Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
New activities introduced in 2021-22			
We will undertake a comprehensive review of our Fitness to Practise Publication Policy ensuring that any revisions are reflective of best practice within the sector.	Regulation	By November 2021	Policy and Education Committee, Council
Consult on and publish the Practice Note on Questioning Witnesses.	Regulation	From June 2021	Policy and Education Committee, Council
Consult on and publish the Remote Hearings Protocol.	Regulation	From July 2021	Council
Publish the consolidated Screeners Guidance.	Regulation	By June 2021	Council
We will conduct a review of our implementation of remote hearings and meetings through the pandemic, ensuring that we take learning forward so that our future work is informed by experience.	Regulation	From July 2021	Audit Committee, Council
We will introduce a new Fitness to Practise focussed newsletter / bulletin for osteopaths which will provide insights, learning and reflection points from concerns we receive and will augment the FtP webinars.	Regulation, Communications	From April 2021	Council
We will undertake a series of Fitness to Practise webinars with the profession, public and patients to improve understanding and demystify the fitness to practise process.	Regulation, Communications	From April 2021	Council
We will use new forms of content within the ebulletin to help demystify and humanise the work of the GOsC	Communications	From April 2021	Council

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Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
We will further enhance our social media presence to include a greater recognition of equality and diversity.	Communications	From April 2021	Council
We will use social media as a tool to engage with our stakeholders creating easier access to our key content in a measurable way.	Communications	From April 2021	Council
We will scope, develop and plan a visible and meaningful patient voice across the full range of our business.	Professional Standards, Communications, Regulation and Registration	All year	Policy and Education Committee, Council.
Support our patient group to work in partnership with us to provide their fullest possible contribution to our work.	Professional Standards, Communications	From April 2021	Policy and Education Committee, Council

Goal four: We will be an exemplar in modern healthcare regulation – accessible, effective, innovative, agile, proportionate and reflective.			
Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
Ongoing activities (business as usual)			
Ensure our continued compliance with the Osteopaths Act 1993 and our underpinning Rules.	Chief Executive, Registration, Regulation, Professional Standards	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee, Audit Committee
Prepare an Annual Report on activities undertaken in year and submit to Parliament and publish.	Chief Executive, Communications	By September 2021	Audit Committee, Council
Submit the Annual Report to Charity Commission.	Chief Executive	By January 2022	Audit Committee, Council
Manage the complaints caseload in an efficient, effective, fair and timely way seeking to achieve a target of 12 months for the majority of fitness to practise complaints to reach a hearing.	Regulation	All year	Council
Provide training as required to fitness to practise panellists, including supporting the induction and integration of new members through training in addition to separate annual training days for IC and PCC/HC members.	Regulation	From April 2021	Council
Update and review existing information and support to osteopaths under investigation in our FtP procedures.	Regulation	All year	Council
Seek feedback from those using or applying our registration processes (including registrants, registration applicants and registration assessors) in order to better understand their experiences and improve our registration systems.	Registration, Communications	From April 2021	Council

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Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
Monitor activity of individuals removed from the Register during 2019-20 and 2020-21, writing 'cease and desist' letters and prosecuting them as necessary, as described above.	Registration, Regulation	All year	Council
Ensure that the GOsC continues to meet its duties under the Equality Act.	Chief Executive	All year	Council
Monitor revisions to the Welsh Language Act and implement new Welsh Language Standards requirements.	Communications	From May 2021	Council
Support Council in implementing its ongoing development.	Chief Executive, Chair of Council	All year	Council, Remuneration and Appointments Committee
Provide Council with the information needed to make appropriate resourcing decisions connected to the ongoing financial stability of the GOsC including consideration of reducing/changing expenditure patterns, outsourcing activity, shared services and building estate options.	Chief Executive	All year	Council, Audit Committee
Engage with the PSA Performance Review process, through regular data reporting and acting on issues arising from the performance review process and associated audits.	Chief Executive and all departments	All year	Council, Audit Committee
Implement IT proposals to enhance and streamline our work.	IT	All year	
New activities introduced 2021-22			

Goal four: We will be an exemplar in modern healthcare regulation – accessible, effective, innovative, agile, proportionate and reflective.			
Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
Introduce a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 and associated action plan.	Chief Executive, EDI staff forum	May 2021 - July 2021	Council
Implement the findings from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit as articulated in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24.	Chief Executive, EDI staff forum	All year	Audit Committee, Council
Develop and begin to implement a data and insight strategy to enhance our capacity for research including data collection, analysis and insight.	Chief Executive, Professional Standards and all departments	All year	Council, Policy and Education Committee
Routinise communication with the devolved administrations and establish regular meetings with the four Chief Allied Health Professions Officers.	Chief Executive	All year	Council
Develop and implement an 'Associate Council member' programme for osteopaths.	Chief Executive	From June 2021	Remuneration and Appointments Committee, Council
Undertake a comprehensive review of the international registration application process.	Registration	From June 2021	Policy and Education Committee, Council
Explore a performance review scheme for legal assessors and expand the existing pool of legal assessors.	Regulation	From June 2021	Policy and Education Committee, Council
Undertaken a re-tender exercise for external audit services.	Chief Executive	September 2021 – December 2021	Audit Committee, Council
We will sign up to 'The Mental Health at Work Commitment', building on the Stevenson/Farmer report, 'Thriving at work'.	Chief Executive, HR Manager	From June 2021	Remuneration and Appointments Committee

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Activity	Lead	Timing	Link to governance structure
We will build on the results of the staff survey by investing in our people to enhance the talent which exists within the GOsC staff team.	Chief Executive and HR Manager	From June 2021	Remuneration and Appointments Committee
Develop GOsC approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by benchmarking our work against other organisations.	Chief Executive and CSR working group	From September 2021	Remuneration and Appointments Committee, Audit Committee
Review and report on CSR activities undertaken and identify actions to enhance our work.	Chief Executive and CSR working group	By March 2022	Remuneration and Appointments Committee, Audit Committee