



Meeting of Council

Minutes of the 113th Meeting of Council (Private), an in-person and online meeting, Thursday 25 November 2021 at Osteopathy House, 176 Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 3LU and via the meeting platform Go-to-Meeting.

Confirmed

Chair: Dr Bill Gunnyeon

Present: Daniel Bailey
Sarah Botterill
Professor Deborah Bowman
Elizabeth Elander
Caroline Guy
Simeon London
Dr Joan Martin
Dr Denis Shaughnessy
Deborah Smith

Presenting: Steven Bettles, Policy Manager, Professional Standards
Fiona Browne, Director, Education, Standards and Development
Dr Stacey Clift, Senior Policy Officer, Professional Standards
Sheleen McCormack, Director of Fitness to Practise
Liz Niman, Head of Communications and Engagement
Carl Pattenden, IT Manager (Item 6)
Matthew Redford, Chief Executive and Registrar
Maxine Supersaud, Head of Resources and Assurance

In attendance: Marcia Scott, Council and Executive Support Officer

Item 1: Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. There were no apologies.

Item 2: Minutes

2. The minutes of the 112th meeting, 29 July 2021, were agreed as a correct record.

Item 3: Matters arising

3. There were no further matters arising from the meeting of 29 July 2021.

Item 4: Conflicts of interests

4. It was noted that registrant members of Council may have interests associated with this item. Due to the nature of the discussion all members were required to participate and remain in the meeting. A declaration was noted for Simeon London as an Education Visitor and a visit pending for January 2022.
5. The Director of Education, Standards and Development introduced the item which asked Council to consider the management of conflicts of interest in the osteopathic sector.
6. The key messages and following points were highlighted:
 - Education Visitors may also be members of Council and the Policy and Education Committee. This is allowed under the Osteopaths Act 1993.
 - The Policy and Education Committee considered issues which arise in the management of conflicts of interest for Visitors who are also Committee or Council members.
 - The Policy and Education Committee saw advantages and disadvantages of Visitors being Committee members and or members of Council.
 - A discussion by Council on conflicts of interest is appropriate due to the complexity of the issues which might arise both for Visitors, the Committee, Council and for external stakeholders.
7. In discussion the following points were made and responded to:
 - a. Members of Council welcomed and congratulated the Executive on a timely paper. It was an important issue which required resolution by Council.
 - b. Members made the following comments:
 - There should be a separation of function between Visitors and the GOsC Governance structure.
 - The issue is the number of available visitors in the pool.
 - The current policy mitigates any conflicts of interest.
 - Removing Council and Committee members might create difficulties in identifying experienced and qualified visitors from the pool.
 - It was suggested that registrants should be encouraged to join the visitor pool and over a transitional period shadow those who are experienced visitors.
 - c. Lay members of Council expressed reservations about the current system where members of the governance structure also had Visitor/Examiner roles. It was accepted that the policy was well-crafted and clear in its purpose but

a change would be timely as perception issues remain with the current policy. It is understood that change will not happen quickly, but it is important to begin work towards the changes required.

8. In summary the Chair made the following comments:
 - a. Council should be looking to move to a position where no members of the governance structure are Visitors.
 - b. The Conflicts of Interest Policy is not incorrect per se but there is an issue relating to Visitors and Examiners, the perceptions this presents, and the risk to the reputation of the GOsC if something untoward did take place.
 - c. It is suggested that work be undertaken to consider the options of moving towards a point where it would not be acceptable for member of Council and the PEC to be Visitors or External Examiners and to consider how to address the issues concerning the pool of Visitors.
 - d. It was suggested and agreed that after January 2022 no member of Council act as a Visitor.
 - e. Members commented that the suggested change offered a ladder of opportunity for registrants to consider and develop skills.
 - f. It was noted that recruitment was an ongoing issue, and has historically been a challenge. It was noted that there is now wider access to the Mott McDonald pool of Visitors and there are plans for GOsC to recruit during 2022.

Noted: Council considered the current conflicts of interest policy in relation to Education Visitors and members of Committee and Council.

Agreed: Council agreed that after 31 January 2022, no Council member would act as an Education Visitor and that work should be undertaken to move to a point where no member of the governance structure (Council and the PEC) should be an Education Visitor or External Examiner.

Item 5: Evaluation the implementation of the Communications and Engagement Strategy: our learning and method of reporting

9. The Head of Communication, Engagement and Insight introduced the item which considered the learning in relation to the measurement and reporting on the impact of the Communications and Engagement Strategy to date and Council's preferred approach to evaluating the impact of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.
10. The key messages and following points were highlighted:
 - a. This paper seeks to share with Council our learning as we implement the communications and engagement strategy and to facilitate consideration of

our evaluation framework. It also seeks agreement from Council about how to demonstrate the impact and/or success of our Communications and Engagement Strategy.

- b. The paper explains how other regulators are approaching evaluation of the impact of their strategic work, takes into account feedback from Council about how we could demonstrate the impact of our own communications and engagement strategy.
- c. We have proposed three options on how we might report on the impact of the Strategy. We would like Council's view on which of the three options it feels would be most useful as a method for further reporting, taking into account the strategic level of operation appropriate to Council.

11. The Chair set the context for the paper:

- a. The reason for the introducing the Communications and Engagement strategy was to improve on the communications with the GOsC's key stakeholder, its registrants.
- b. The areas of particular interest for Council are:
 - whether the implementation of the strategy is making a difference;
 - the focus on the outcomes and impact and how these are monitored;
 - what will provide assurance that activities being undertaking are making a difference.

12. The following points were made and responded to:

- a. Some reservations were held relating to all three options. It was asked if a simpler dashboard could be considered which presented the outcomes and impact of the strategy at a high level.
- b. The Chief Executive suggested that Council consider Option 3 as the approach to evaluating the Communications and Engagement Strategy with a survey of registrants and stakeholders to acquire baseline data about the perceptions of the regulator.
- c. It was suggested and agreed that updates on communication could be integrated into the Chief Executive's Report in the public session of Council.

Agreed: Council agreed Option 3 as the approach to evaluating the impact of our Communications and Engagement Strategy.

Item 6: Cloud Engage project update

13. The Director of Education, Standards and Development introduced the item which gave an update on the progress of the cloud engage project and the governance framework including risk management.

14. The key messages and following points were highlighted:

- a. Following IT audits we have been moving towards putting our IT packages into cloud environments. This enhances security and reduces risk.
- b. The registration database (Integra) was the next in line to transition to the cloud, but work was significantly impacted by the pandemic.
- c. This work has been restarted in 2021 with a series of cross-departmental workshops. A Project Implementation Document (PID), risk and issues log and project plan have been developed.
- d. The project is being implemented to reduce costs, streamline processes, and simplify the relationship between the database and the o-zone. We have a project timeline for this work through to March 2023.
- e. Project risks have been described and mitigations have been identified.
- f. Governance around this project is proposed as follows:
 - Council: high-level oversight of the project and updates provided via the Chief Executive and Registrar reports throughout 2022-23.
 - Audit Committee: ongoing reporting and monitoring of project including oversight and review of the PID, risk and issues log.
 - Senior Management Team: monthly meetings and consideration of emerging issues.
 - Project team: meetings every two weeks to review progress and the PID.

15. The following points were made and responded to:

- a. Members were advised the current software is very old, implemented in 2013.
- b. It was explained that Advanced is one of the biggest IT companies in the UK and have been a supplier for the GOsC for 8-9 years. It was confirmed that the GOsC must comply with GDPR and therefore GOsC data will be hosted within the EU. The concern about assurances on the provision of support was understood considering the size of the Advance but Council were given assurance that the experience in terms of support has always been positive.
- c. It was confirmed that the GOsC is part of an inter-regulatory forum and does share information with the other healthcare regulators.
- d. It was confirmed that the plans are in place for any downtime in GOsC's IT systems and that communications would be circulated to ensure that registrants are notified of any breaks in service.

16. In summary the Chair highlighted:

- a. Implementing a new IT system and/or upgrade carried a number of risks which must be acknowledged and not underestimated.
- b. There must be assurance on the level of technical expertise that exists within GOsC to oversee what is being done on behalf of the organisation and there is sufficient resource for the project to be undertaken appropriately and within the timescale.

Noted: Council noted the progress of the cloud engage project.

Agreed: Council agreed the governance framework for the cloud engage project.

Item 7: Regulatory reform update

17. The Chief Executive gave an update on the current position of the DHSC regulatory reforms. The paper served two functions:

- to provide Council with an update on regulatory reform activity, and
- to sight Council on early discussions with the General Chiropractic Council around co-location within Osteopathy House.

18. The key messages and following points were highlighted:

- a. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) are making progress towards the reform of legislation of healthcare regulators, although the timetable has significantly slipped.
- b. Reformed legislation would be introduced for the General Medical Council first with the Nursing and Midwifery Council most likely next in line. The timetable for reform to the legislation of the other healthcare regulators remains unknown.
- c. GOsC continues to engage positively with KPMG as they undertake work for the DHSC looking at the number of healthcare regulators. Emerging intelligence suggests that the majority of organisations who responded to the KPMG survey favour no significant reform of the current regulatory landscape, but do encourage the greater sharing of services.
- d. The Chief Executive and Registrar of the General Chiropractic Council (GCC) has reached out to the GOsC to explore the possibility of co-location with Osteopathy House. Such a move would generate a new income stream for the GOsC and would demonstrate our ongoing ability to closely collaborate with one of our most similar regulatory partners. The Chair also informed members

that he had discussions with the GCC Chair, Mary Chapman, about the possibility of co-location.

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

- a. It was explained that the GCC have a contract with the HCPC part of which was based on the availability of meeting rooms for hearings and other events. The HCPC are undertaking an estate review and in the process of selling part of their estate which has allowed the GCC to activate a release clause.
- b. It was commented that it was too early to contemplate shared services but would be something that might be considered at a later stage.
- c. Members raised concerns about the impact of negative perceptions that could be inferred with the development of the co-location plans especially as osteopathy is an Allied Health Profession and chiropractic is not. Member were assured that the discussions were in the very early stages and that no decisions could be reached without much more detailed information for consideration and discussion by Council.

Noted: Council considered and noted the content of the paper.

Item 8: Policy and Education Committee minutes: October 2021

20. The Chair of the Policy and Education Committee had no additional comments regarding the minutes of the PEC meeting 7 October 2021.

21. Council had no questions regarding the minutes of the PEC meeting.

Item 9: Any other business

22. There was no other business.

Date of the next meeting: 9 February 2022