

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

**Monitoring report
as at 31 December 2021**

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. This document, the Business Plan 2020-21, sets out the aims and detailed activities for the period April 2020 to March 2021, in support of each of the themes.

Legend

Status ■ On track ■ Delayed ■ Cancelled/postponed

Change ↑ Positive ↓ Negative

Annex A to 6

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	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
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	■	We continue to promote and support. See Item 16 on the November 2021 Council agenda for further details.		
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	■	We continue to hold sessions with local regional groups and we also ran a session at the iO Convention in November.		
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	■	See Item 16 on the November 2021 Council agenda.		
Continue verification and assurance activity based on declarations made by osteopaths when renewing their registration annually and report on findings.	Registration	All year	■	Ongoing – further information outlined in Item 16 on the February 2022 agenda.		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
Update and review CPD equality impact assessment through the implementation period.	Professional Standards	All year	■	Ongoing – further information outlined in Item 16 on the November 2021 Council agenda.		
Continue to foster sustainable professional networks and learning communities that support professional development and minimise practitioner isolation.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	■	Initiated a more personal/hands on approach to regional lead liaison with a dedicated comms contact.		
Support new graduates (UK and Internationally qualified) making the transition into practice through better understanding of the barriers and enablers to building communities, including the development of appropriate resources.	Professional Standards, Registration, Communications	From July 2021	■	Ongoing: New registrants are signposted to our CPD 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	■	We worked closely to support the development of the ODG strategy document and we are working with the groups to support them to take forward their priorities.		
Continuing to support the National Council for Osteopathic Research to increase research	Chief Executive and Registrar,	All year	■	Continued to promote the		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
awareness and research activity to inform practice and patient care.	Professional Standards, Communications			PROMs work, commissioned blog on OsteoScout from NCOR.		
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	■	Ongoing. The 2020 report is at Item 10 of the November 2021 Council agenda.		
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	■	Initiated project on boundaries communications and engagement as a result of the data telling us that there is a disproportionate increase in these types of concerns.		
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	■	New Fitness to Practise ebulletin issued in business year.		
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	■	Ongoing – update at Item 6 on the November 2021 Council agenda.		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
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	■	Communications and Engagement Strategy and ongoing monitoring and feedback of stakeholder engagement and insight through monthly SMT / Comms discussions informed by a transitional activity matrix.		
We will promote registrants' wellbeing in order to support osteopaths to deliver high-quality patient care.	Chief Executive, Professional Standards, Communications	All year	■	Continue to update and promote our mental wellbeing page.		
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	■	Consultation launch approved by Council in November 2021.		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
Publish and actively promote guidance on adjunctive and complementary therapies.	Regulation, Professional Standards, Communications	By January 2022	■	See above		Publication and active promotion of the guidance will occur in the 2022-23 business plan year

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Goal two: We will develop our assurance of osteopathic education to produce high-quality graduates who are ready to practise.						
Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
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	■	Ongoing – COEI has appointed a new Chair and we have been meeting regularly to provide updates. COEI have recently agreed a strategy and responded to the GOPRE consultation.		
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	■	Ongoing in June 2021, the PEC considered a progress update including the outcome of engagement and workshops with other regulators and review of international models of quality assurance and development of clear and explicit standards for		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				training being piloted.		
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	■	Pilot work ongoing		
Removal of RQ dates and publication of conditions and publication of action plans for eligible osteopathic education providers.	Professional Standards	All year	■	Reviews are ongoing and all providers were considered in March and June 2021.		
Continue to monitor and enhance the quality of osteopathic education.	Professional Standards	All year	■	Ongoing.		
Publish consultation on draft of updated Handbook (alongside updated GOPRE including Standards for Training).	Professional Standards	By June 2021	■	As we are now piloting the new annual report and the GOPRE and draft SET standards, the handbook will not now be formally updated until the conclusion of this work. In the meantime, we are continuing to use the Interim Handbook which was agreed by the		This objective will now feature in the 2022/23 Business Plan and will commence once the GOPRE and SET are finalised by Council in May 2022.

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				PEC on 7 December 2020.		
Publish and disseminate findings from public and patient involvement in osteopathic education.	Professional Standards, Communications	From April 2021	■	These findings have been disseminated and we are working on a follow up to the PPI seminar with education providers and patients which took place in March 2021.		
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	■	Ongoing.		
Continue to embed OPS (2019) within educational provision and quality assurance framework.	Professional Standards	All year	■	Ongoing through the Annual Report pilot and education provider discussions.		
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	■	Ongoing student presentations. This academic year will be the first time that we have been invited to present at all the education providers with students.		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
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	■	Ongoing.		
New activities introduced in 2021-22						
Explore issues connected to the future sustainability of the profession.	Chief Executive, Professional Standards	All year	■	Ongoing conversations with key stakeholders including the iO and OF.		Plan for commissioning registration modelling as part of Business Plan 2022/23.

Annex A to 6

Goal three: We will build closer relationships with the public and the profession based on trust and transparency.						
Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
Ongoing activities (business as usual)						
Review visibility of information to support participants in hearings and publication of decisions.	Regulation, Communications	All year	■	Ongoing.		
Continue to collect witness and parties feedback and arrange to evaluate this feedback to enhance our FtP processes.	Regulation	All year	■	Ongoing.		
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	■	New series of interprofessional blogs launched with first one 7 October 2021		
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	■	Ongoing promotion and running of the Patient Involvement Forum, plus feeding back to the profession on findings		
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	■	We continue to promote Registration Marks to osteopaths and have now sent over 2.6k 'I'm and/or We're Registered Marks' (English)		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				and over 50 in Welsh.		
Increase the numbers within our patient and public reference group including the diversity of patients.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	■	Our reference group has increased from 3 to 27 members. Further information about this was considered by PEC on 7 October 2021.		
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	■	Discussions on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commenced at the review of performance workshop in October 2021.		Activity to ensure we have a structured approach to CSR will feature in the business plan for 2022-23. We have commenced discussion with an external organisation who may provide support on this area of activity.
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	■	Ongoing – we regularly participate in inter-regulatory forums across a range of areas and functions		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				and use this to inform our work.		
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	■	This has been delayed because of resourcing issues within the regulation team	We plan to bring a discussion paper to the Policy and Education Committee in March 2022	Activity post PEC in March 2022 will feature in the 2022-23 business plan.
Consult on and publish the Practice Note on Questioning Witnesses.	Regulation	From June 2021	■	This, together with the consultation on the remote hearings guidance has been delayed because of resourcing issues.	We plan to run the consultations with the aim to present results to the May 2022 Council.	The consultation response will be presented in May 2022 and publication will follow in the 2022-23 business plan year.
Consult on and publish the Remote Hearings Protocol.	Regulation	From July 2021	■	Please see above		
Publish the consolidated Screeners Guidance.	Regulation	By June 2021	■	Published July 2021		
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	■	This review has commenced and we plan to reflect this learning within the interim remote hearings guidance document and	We plan to run the consultations with the aim to present results to the May 2022 Council.	The consultation response will be presented in May 2022 and publication will follow in the 2022-

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				accompanying consultation planned to commence in late November 2021		23 business plan year.
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	■	Published first in new series of 'Insights on Fitness to Practise' bulletins on 2 September 2021.		
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	■	We ran our 3 rd FtP live webinar on 23 September 2021 which had over 100 attendees.		
We will use new forms of content within the ebulletin to help demystify and humanise the work of the GOsC	Communications	From April 2021	■	There has been good use of videos, blogs and animations and the first of the GOsC staff profiles. We have also had guest blogs from other organisations e.g. ASA.		
We will further enhance our social media presence to include a greater recognition of equality and diversity.	Communications	From April 2021	■	We've increasingly posted on our social media channels to highlight religious		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				festivals, and causes around equality and diversity, such as LGBT+ History Month and Black History Month. We've also started to give greater prominence to members of staff on our social media channels, by sharing blogs written by staff, and we recently started a staff profiles page.		
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	■	We have continued with our increased use of social media in the reporting period .		
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	■	Ongoing – we have increased number and diversity of patients, strengthened patient voice, increased number of projects directly		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				involving patient feedback and begun to integrate the patient voice on wider issues.		
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	■	Ongoing – see PEC paper of 7 October 2021 for detailed information. We gave the key note presentation at the PSA symposium in November 2021.		

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Goal four: We will be an exemplar in modern healthcare regulation – accessible, effective, innovative, agile, proportionate and reflective.						
Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
Ensure our continued compliance with the Osteopaths Act 1993 and our underpinning Rules.	Chief Executive, Registration, Regulation, Professional Standards	All year	■			
Prepare an Annual Report on activities undertaken in year and submit to Parliament and publish.	Chief Executive, Communications	By September 2021	■	2020/2021 Annual Report and Accounts published and disseminated		
Submit the Annual Report to Charity Commission.	Chief Executive	By January 2022	■	Completed.		
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	■	Reports made to Council at every meeting.		
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	■	Annual training for PCC and IC members held in November and December 2021.		
Update and review existing information and support to osteopaths under investigation in our FtP procedures.	Regulation	All year	■	We have completed an initial review and discussions internally are planned for early 2022.		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
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	■	Registration feedback from the verification and assurance process has informed a new series of blogs. We have published three so far. We have also created a richer email notifying osteopaths when they are chosen for the V&A process leading to far fewer queries for the team.		
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	■	Activity ongoing.		
Ensure that the GOsC continues to meet its duties under the Equality Act.	Chief Executive	All year	■	EDI Framework 2021-24 approved by Council in July 2021.		
Monitor revisions to the Welsh Language Act and implement new Welsh Language Standards requirements.	Communications	From May 2021	■	We submitted our Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report to the		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				Welsh Language Commissioner in October, which was presented to Council in June 2021.		
Support Council in implementing its ongoing development.	Chief Executive, Chair of Council	All year	■	Discussion held at the Council Strategy day in September 2021. Ongoing activity with Audit Committee to consider performance of GOsC.		
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	■	Budget Strategy presented at Item 12 on the November 2021 Council agenda.		
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	■	Performance Review report 2020-21 published in November 2021.		
Implement IT proposals to enhance and streamline our work.	IT	All year	■	We have refreshed the Cloud Engage project and		Activity will be included in the

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				timeline. See Private Item 6 on November 2021 Council agenda.		business plan 2022-23.
New activities introduced 2021-22						
Introduce a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 and associated action plan.	Chief Executive, EDI staff forum	May 2021 - July 2021	■	Approved by Council, July 2021.		
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	■	Ongoing		
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	■	Ongoing		
Routinise communication with the devolved administrations and establish regular meetings with the four Chief Allied Health Professions Officers.	Chief Executive	All year	■	Updates provided within Chief Executive reports to Council.		
Develop and implement an 'Associate Council member' programme for osteopaths.	Chief Executive	From June 2021	■	Council approved programme in July 2021. Recruitment campaign now underway.		Induction activity for Council Associates to be included in business plan 2022-23.
Undertake a comprehensive review of the international registration application process.	Registration	From June 2021	■	Discussion on international		

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				registration held in private meeting of PEC in October 2021.		
Explore a performance review scheme for legal assessors and expand the existing pool of legal assessors.	Regulation	From June 2021	■	Timeline for legal assessor recruitment campaign is currently being worked on.		
Undertaken a re-tender exercise for external audit services.	Chief Executive	December 2021	■	Audit Committee recommendation to defer re-tender to explore possible group tender with other regulators.	Paper to Council February 2022	Activity to be included in business plan 2022-23
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	■	Discussion at RaAC in June 2021 and timeframe agreed.		
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	■	Staff appraisals include space for discussion on development needs.		
Develop GOsC approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by benchmarking our work against other organisations.	Chief Executive and CSR working group	From September 2021	■	Discussions on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commenced at the review of performance		Activity to ensure we have a structured approach to CSR will feature in the

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Activity	Lead	Original timing	Status	Comments	Revised timing (if applicable)	Defer to 22-23 (if applicable)
				workshop in October 2021.		business plan for 2022-23.
Review and report on CSR activities undertaken and identify actions to enhance our work.	Chief Executive and CSR working group	By March 2022	■	See above.		