



Council
9 July 2020
Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2019-20

Classification	Public
Purpose	For noting
Issue	<p>The GOSc has an Equality and Diversity Policy, agreed in 2018, which sets out Council's equality and diversity objectives as well as our duties as a designated public authority under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>This report represents our Annual Report to Council on the work we have undertaken on equality and diversity in the year.</p>
Recommendation(s)	To note the Equality and Diversity Annual Report.
Financial and resourcing implications	The cost of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion assurance audit was included in the budget for 2020-21.
Equality and diversity implications	These are set out in the paper.
Communications implications	We will ensure the GOSc webpage on Equality and Diversity has a link to this Council paper so that our activity report is readily available.
Annex(es)	Report on activities: 2019-20
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Background

1. The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) is a designated public authority and is subject to the public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act 2010. In exercising our functions, we need to have due regard to the need to:
 - a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - c. Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
2. Having due regard means the GOsC must think consciously and carefully about these three aims in its day-to-day work, so that equality issues influence its decisions in developing policy, in delivering services, and in its role as an employer.
3. The GOsC has an [Equality and Diversity Policy](#), which was agreed in 2018. The Council agreed the following objectives:
 - a. Ensure our regulatory activities are fair and free from unlawful discrimination;
 - b. Ensure that promoting equality and valuing diversity are reflected in the standards we set for the osteopathy profession;
 - c. Promote equality of opportunity and access to the osteopathy profession;
 - d. Communicate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders in an accessible manner;
 - e. Ensure high standards of in the recruitment, development and ongoing work of staff and non-executives.
4. Underpinning the Equality and Diversity Policy is an action plan, against which we report the activities we have undertaken. The action plan, setting out our report of activities for the period covering 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020, is attached at the annex.

Discussion

5. Last year, Council identified the need to review and update the policy and to refresh the action plan. This work has been delayed; however, the Executive intend for the policy and action plan to be reviewed as part of a planned Equality, Diversity and Inclusion assurance audit. This is discussed in the annex.

Recommendation: To note the Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

Report on Activities in 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020

Equality and diversity theme	Main activities
1. Service provision	<p>A. We will ensure that information is available (or can be made available) in accessible formats, whether in hard copy or online.</p> <p>We ensure all documents intended for external use are offered in accessible formats including posting out of printed copies of online materials where requested.</p> <p>Our Register is available online and we answer registration queries by telephone for those who cannot access the Register online. We have information about accessibility on the website and we aim to meet level 2. (See <u>osteopathy.org.uk/accessibility</u>)</p> <p>We continue to seek to incorporate in our website high standards of accessibility and readability, for example, in the reporting year we have ensured learning resources and materials to support our new CPD scheme have been designed to meet a range of learning styles and draw upon best practice in use of typefaces, fonts and colours to enhance accessibility.</p> <p>Over the past year we have ensured that we utilise images (photos and illustrations) to reflect diversity in our magazine.</p> <p>B. We will use a wide variety of channels to communicate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders.</p> <p>We continued to utilise our own channels including our bi-monthly print magazine The Osteopath, monthly news ebulletins, websites and social media. Additionally, we carried out face-to-face communication and engagement at events, regional group sessions and through webinars.</p>

We are clear that when we need to communicate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders, for example, during consultations, that we take their needs into account in order to maximise the interaction we have with them.

In the year we have positively promoted awareness of LGBT+ history month through changing our GOsC profile picture on social media to a temporary design of the GOsC logo featuring the rainbow flag; through a series of posts on social media; in the February 2020 ebulletin sent to registrants and in GOsC staff email signatures. We have used our social media channels to promote our participation in the #TimeToTalk mental health awareness campaign.

C. We will ensure that Osteopathy House and any GOsC external events are accessible.

We maintained an ongoing commitment to ensuring Osteopathy House is accessible for meetings and events, including a hearing loop for use in the Council Chamber. In 2019-20 we ensured that our technology to support hearings and other meetings remained fit for purpose. This includes a microphone system which aids those with hearing or speaking difficulties, and video conferencing technology, including a large screen TV.

Whilst ensuring that we anticipate the needs of our visitors, we also encourage visitors to let us know if they have specific needs for each meeting, so that we can ensure accessibility issues are addressed. For example, we were able to accommodate a request from an individual who applied for a non-executive role.

D. We will ensure that complainants and witnesses are effectively supported through the fitness to practise process.

We provide comprehensive guidance for all participants in fitness to practise hearings, whether they are witnesses or registrants.

Guidance for witnesses: <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/standards/complaints/hearings/attending-a-hearing/witness-guidance/>

	<p>Guidance for registrants: https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/publications/guidance-for-osteopaths/</p> <p>E. We will meet our duties under the Welsh Language Act.</p> <p>We submitted our annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Commissioner following the Annual Report to Council in July 2019.</p> <p>This year our initiatives in this area have included reorganising the Welsh information on our website to make the section easier to use. In the reporting year, the Register included 20 practices where the Welsh language can be used with patients.</p>
<p>2. Policy development and implementation</p>	<p>A. We will assess the equality and diversity implications of all new policy development and operational activities.</p> <p>We are conscious that we need to ensure our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is appropriate and fit for purpose. To ensure that we are assessing the implications of equality, diversity and inclusion on our work, in the reporting year we identified an individual who would be able to undertake an equality, diversity and inclusion assurance audit. The scope of the audit was considered, and approved, by the Audit Committee in March 2020. However, this work is currently on pause due to the immediate impact of the coronavirus pandemic. We hope to restart this activity later in the year.</p> <p>For reference, the scope of the audit was as follows:</p> <p>'...provide a baseline to understand what areas should be prioritised for improvement, and where there is already best practice that should be maintained or replicated. A report with an EDI gap analysis and identified good practice in the GOsC. The report will include recommendations about how to address the gaps in a staged approach. In addition to suggested priorities, areas of potential risk and opportunities for improvement will be identified. The recommendations will be presented with an action plan that clearly sets out quick wins and longer-term actions to address the gaps.'</p>

	<p>In the reporting period an equality impact assessment was completed regarding the appointment of a new Chair of Council, one lay member of Council and two registrant members of Council. The EIA was undertaken by an individual independent from the Executive team to enhance its robustness. The EIA enabled us to assess our recruitment process and enhance its suitability. The EIA was reported to the PSA as part of the appointment scrutiny process and accepted by PSA as being appropriate.</p>
	<p>B. We will publish formal equality impact assessments on all major projects.</p> <p>See response to A.</p>
	<p>C. We will seek to ensure that our consultations, surveys and research projects address equality and diversity issues, and that there is an appropriate diversity of respondents.</p> <p>In the reporting period we undertook the following public consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancellation of hearing under Rule 19 • Registration assessment process • Draft restoration guidance • PII guidance (NB: we need to re-run this consultation as it was affected by the coronavirus pandemic) <p>In all our consultations we seek to involve not just registrants but a full range of stakeholders, using a range of approaches including written consultation, focus groups and one-to-one meetings.</p> <p>This year, we have continued to undertake a significant amount of engagement with our stakeholders to help embed and support practice in accordance with our standards.</p>

3. Data collection and analysis

A. We will collect and record equality and diversity data from those we interact with including: respondents to consultations and research surveys; and complainants and others involved in fitness to practise proceedings.

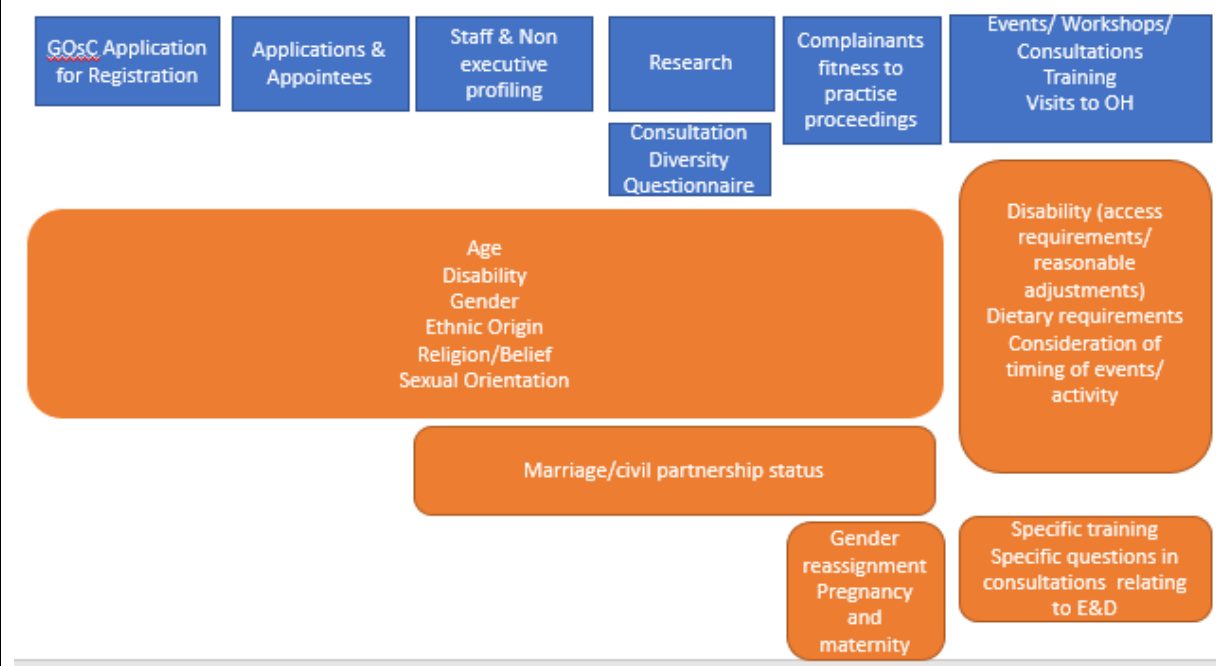


Figure 1: E&D Data Collection Process

We collect and record equality and diversity data across the full range of our business activities – see figure 1 – for a range of different purposes.

To ensure that we are systematically collecting and recording EDI data we are considering how we might undertake a full equality and diversity data collection exercise with our registrants to ensure we have an

	<p>accurate and up-to-date data set. In order to feasibility test whether a full E&D data collection would be possible we are exploring the possibility of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI expert input in the design of an electronic survey collecting protected characteristic data • Learning from other regulators about areas of best practice when implementing such data collection into core registration processes/systems (e.g. NMC and HCPC) • Whether said survey could be integrated and used across multiple organisational platforms e.g. integra, ozone and if so, how that data would be stored, so that it could be interrogated easily.
	<p>B. We will collect and record equality and diversity data in relation to consultation responses and research surveys and evaluate the data where possible.</p> <p>We collect and record equality and diversity data in relation to consultation responses and the CPD Evaluation survey.</p> <p>In the reporting year we ran four consultations which were supplemented with a diversity monitoring form. Data collected is evaluated and reflected upon to inform the purpose for which it collected. In the reporting year, data was collected and used to inform the CPD Evaluation papers considered by the Policy Advisory Committee (October 2019) and Council (November 2019).</p>
	<p>C. We will collect and record equality and diversity data on all applicants and appointees to non-executive and executive posts.</p> <p>We have continued to collect and record equality and diversity data in relation to staff and non- executive applications and appointments. In the year under report, equality monitoring statistics have been collated and reported to the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) as part of their scrutiny process for Council appointments/reappointments, and also to the Remuneration and Appointments Committee.</p>

Annex to 15

	<p>D. We will analyse data collected through these processes and ensure that it is used to inform the equality and diversity aspects of our work.</p> <p>Data collected is analysed and reflected upon to inform the purpose for which it collected. In the reporting year, data was collected and used to inform the CPD Evaluation papers considered by the Policy Advisory Committee (October 2019) and Council (November 2019).</p>
<p>4. Partnerships and the implementation/promotion of standards</p>	<p>A. We will seek to work in partnership with others to ensure best practice in equality and diversity (for example, with the osteopathic educational institutions and others in the implementation of the Osteopathic Practice Standards).</p> <p>We commissioned research (jointly with the General Chiropractic Council) about osteopathy, touch and communication, and we expect that any follow-up work will take account of equality and diversity implications for further consideration and dissemination.</p> <p>Our standard contracts with partners include obligations relating to our equality and diversity duty.</p> <hr/> <p>B. We will seek to ensure that equality and diversity considerations are taken into account in any projects undertaken jointly with others (for example, with our Osteopathic Development Group (ODG) partners on development projects).</p> <p>We continue to work with ODG partners including on the importance of recognising equality and diversity aspects of ODG projects.</p>
<p>5. Employment and governance</p>	<p>A. We will ensure that our HR policies are up to date and represent best practice in equality and diversity, and we will monitor their effects on staff recruitment and retention.</p> <p>We have a range of flexible working policies in place to ensure that staff are provided with equal opportunities to undertake their work. Remuneration and Appointments Committee monitor staff recruitment and retention and are made aware of any new flexible working arrangements which have been introduced, particularly around reasonable adjustments.</p>

	<p>In the reporting year, and as a direct consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, we have converted our staff to home working. We have ensured that staff who required reasonable adjustments in the office have been able to work from home without any difficulties.</p>
	<p>B. We will ensure that all non-executives and executives receive appropriate and regular equality and diversity training.</p> <p>In 2018-19, new fitness to practise panellists undertook mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias training which is a mandatory requirement before they can undertake any work on a fitness to practise panel.</p> <p>All members of the executive and non-executive undertook online equality, diversity and inclusion training and training in wellness/wellbeing (this is rolled out for all new joiners). In January 2020, Council received a half-day training on unconscious bias as part of a Council training day.</p>
	<p>C. We will seek to improve the diversity of applicants and appointees to non-executive roles.</p> <p>The Remuneration and Appointments Committee actively discusses how to ensure a diverse range of applicants at the start of each recruitment campaign. In the reporting year we have advertised for non-executive appointments in Diversity Jobs.</p>
	<p>D. We will keep ourselves up to date and share best practice in equality and diversity through our participation in the joint regulators' equality and diversity forum.</p> <p>Members of the executive continue to attend the regular meetings of the joint regulators' equality and diversity forum. A member of the executive also attends the LGBT+ inter-regulatory group.</p>