

**GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL  
Business Plan  
April 2020 - March 2021**

**Monitoring report  
as at June 2020**

### GOsC BUSINESS PLAN 2020-21

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.

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**

<b>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.</b>				
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Continue to empower osteopaths to undertake the CPD scheme through a programme of ongoing supportive communication and engagement.	Professional Standards, Communications	Ongoing	●	Ongoing engagement with osteopaths to support the implementation of the CPD scheme. See COVID-19 Council paper.
Continue to support osteopathic stakeholders to support osteopaths to undertake the CPD scheme including peer discussion review.	Professional Standards, Communications	From April 2020	●	Online workshops in peer discussion review are ongoing.
Work with the profession and with others to increase the resources and support to osteopaths to undertake peer discussion review.	Professional Standards, Communications	October 2020	●	
Collect, analyse and report on data about activities undertaken by registrants in their CPD cycle and provide feedback to registrants and update materials/advice as necessary.	Registration, Professional Standards, Communications	From April 2020	●	Data about registration renewals is being collected and is due for analysis later in the year.
Begin verification and assurance activity for osteopaths who have completed year 2 of their first CPD cycle.	Registration	January 2021	●	Delayed due to COVID-19, but plans in place to restart
Update and review CPD equality impact assessment through the implementation period.	Professional Standards	All year	●	

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Undertake ongoing communications and engagement with all stakeholders towards the embodiment of the OPS.	Professional Standards, Communications	Ongoing	●	Ongoing: see COVID-19 Council paper.
Continue to explore need for guidance or resources to support osteopaths engaged in adjunctive/complementary therapies to understand the application of the Osteopathic Practice Standards.	Regulation, Professional Standards	September 2020	●	Draft guidance was considered by the PAC in March 2020. We are actively considering how best to hold a round table event in the current context and this activity is likely to extend beyond September 2020.
Analyse and report on the ongoing implementation and evaluation of the CPD scheme and the Osteopathic Practice Standards.	Professional Standards, Communications, Registration	All year	●	
Continue to develop diverse and accessible learning resources as required.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	●	Additional resources about holding online meetings have been developed and shared with regional leads for feedback.
Support new graduates making the transition into practice through better understanding of the barriers and enablers to building communities and consideration of next steps.	Professional Standards, Registration, Communications	From April 2020	●	Online graduate focus groups took place in February 2020. We are reflecting on findings in the current context to

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				consider next steps, this may include holding a further focus group in the autumn with new graduates from the 2020 cohort to explore their particular experience in transitioning to practice life, providing feedback and insight to the OEIs on new graduate experiences, and to utilise outcomes to inform other 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	●	The most recent ODG group took place on 16 June 2020 and which looked at the wider impact of COVID on all parts of our community. Our patients are continuing to attend the ODG group.

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Continue to foster sustainable professional networks and learning communities that support professional development and minimise practitioner isolation.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	●	Webinars continuing through current crisis to support registrants
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	●	We continue to work with NCOR (see below)
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	●	We held a joint workshop with NCOR involving insurers, patients, educators, other regulators to review and strengthen the classification system for concerns to strengthen the data analysis and also to explore the implications. An updated classification system is currently being shared with all attendees.
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	October 2020	●	

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To review and develop an updated data collection method to enhance consistency, validity and reliability of data collection for the prevalence of concerns report.	Professional Standards, Regulation	October 2020	●	See above – an updated draft classification system has been developed by NCOR for discussion with stakeholders.
Publish and disseminate findings from McGivern research 2020.	Professional Standards, Communications	July 2020	●	We have received the draft report from Professor McGivern. This will be discussed at PEC in October 2020 and at Council in November 2020.
Consider findings from McGivern research 2020 and identify next steps.	Professional Standards	January 2021	●	
Collect, analyse and report on generic learning points from fitness to practise hearings and consider implications and next steps with all stakeholders.	Professional Standards, Regulation	All year	●	
Undertake consultation on draft Guidance on Insurance Requirements for Osteopaths for Council approval and publication.	Regulation	May 2020	●	The final month of consultation was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, we are now planning to recommence a short period of consultation

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				(including focus group webinars) in September/October 2020, so we can report to Council in November 2020.
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	●	We are continuing to be involved in discussions about reform to health professional legislation. COVID 19 necessary legislation only is currently being proceeded with.



<b>Goal two: We will develop our assurance of osteopathic education to produce high-quality graduates who are ready to practise.</b>				
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Work with the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions to identify sector challenges and to support them with their own organisational development.	Professional Standards	All year	●	Ongoing – in partnership with COEI and also the Institute of Osteopathy. We held GOsC/OEI meetings on 14 May 2020 and 2 June 2020. We are due to meeting again in July 2020. We are also meeting regularly with the Chair of COEI and individual OEIs to support them in the current context.
Conclude tender to procure quality assurance services from 2020 to 2025.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Professional Standards	July 2020	●	The standstill period has now concluded, and contracts have been finalised in June 2020.
Review current external quality assurance environment, with reference to the regulation of higher education in the four UK countries and the roles of other health professional regulators.	Professional Standards	March 2021	●	
Review levels of assurance provided by the existing quality assurance method and explore mechanisms for enhancing assurance and informing QA activities.	Professional Standards	March 2021	●	

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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	March 2021	●	
Removal of RQ dates and publication of conditions and action plans for eligible osteopathic education providers.	Professional Standards	All year	●	Ongoing. Privy Council approval for the removal of two RQ expiry dates has now been received.
Continue to monitor and enhance the quality of osteopathic education.	Professional Standards	All year	●	Ongoing. The PEC agenda for June and October 2020 contains updates on relevant conditions.
Publish consultation draft of Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education and Training (including Standards for Training).	Professional Standards	January 2021	●	
Publish consultation draft of updated Handbook (alongside updated GOPRE (including Standards for Training).	Professional Standards	January 2021	●	
Publish and disseminate findings from public and patient involvement in osteopathic education.	Professional Standards, Communications	June 2020	●	We have completed a survey and prepared a first draft analysis on the outcome of that survey which has been shared with our OEIs. The planned joint seminar with GCC disseminating

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				those provisional findings to our respective sectors and patients has been delayed at present due to the current context.
Work with educational providers, patients and others, to understand and develop further patient participation in education and training.	Professional Standards	June 2020 onwards	●	As above.
Continue to embed OPS (2019) within educational provision and quality assurance framework.	Professional Standards	All year	●	This is ongoing in the current context.
Continue to embed the OPS (2019) within the student community through our ongoing engagements with students at all stages of their training.	Registration, Professional Standards, Communications	From January 2020	●	Face to face sessions with students have taken place throughout 2019/20. They are currently on hold. We will explore online sessions when the new terms start in September / October 2020.
Work with the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions and educational providers to support the development of osteopathic educators and education sector.	Professional Standards	March 2021	●	

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Identify any external issues relating to education and training that impact on current objectives and review plans accordingly.	Professional Standards	All year	●	The May 2020 COVID 19 Council paper and the June 2020 PEC papers outline in further detail the impact of the current pandemic on osteopathic education and the way in which we are assessing and managing the impact of the pandemic.

<b>Goal three: We will build closer relationships with the public and the profession based on trust and transparency.</b>				
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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	From April 2020	●	We held an online focus group on 4 June 2020 with patients to better understand the patient perspective on osteopathic care as a result of the pandemic.
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	●	We are working with David Gilbert, Patient Director to explore and develop our thinking in patient and public involvement.
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	March 2021	●	
Increase the numbers within our patient and public reference group including the diversity of patients.	Professional Standards	October 2020	●	Whilst osteopathic practice is limited at the moment, this should not necessarily delay efforts to reach out to osteopathic patients now. We are considering

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				appropriate ways of doing this in the current climate.
Contact Healthwatch Southwark to advertise for more osteopathic patients to get involved in our work.	Professional Standards	October 2020	●	
Hold a training seminar for our patients to increase knowledge about who we are and what we do.	Professional Standards	October 2020	●	
Continue to improve, modernise and promote coherence across our communications channels to ensure that they are accessible and engaging.	Communications	All year	●	
Review visibility of information to support participants in hearings and publication of decisions.	Regulation, Communications	All year	●	While this has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this is part of a wider discussion around the communications and engagement strategy. An initial workshop was held online on 18 June 2020 to explore the development of a strategy.
Continue to collect witness feedback and arrange to evaluate this feedback to enhance our FtP processes.	Regulation	November 2020	●	
Pilot tools to explore effective decision making and whether the tools provide ways of embedding standards in practice.	Professional Standards, Communications	All year	●	This is our values work which he had planned to issue an

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				invitation to tender to secure external research expertise to explore the value of our tools to support patients to make more explicit what it important to them in a consultation. They were designed for face to face practice and so this work is on hold in the current context. We will review again later on in the year. However, although this specific activity is delayed, we have made progress in having chapter accepted for publication in a book about values. This chapter brings to life examples of good osteopathic care and making explicit what is important to patients. The current publishing timetable is Autumn 2020.

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Work with educational providers to understand and develop best practice for the involvement of patients in osteopathic education.	Professional Standards	June 2020	●	As above: We have completed a survey and prepared a first draft analysis on the outcome of that survey which has been shared with our OEIs. The planned joint seminar with GCC disseminating those provisional findings to our respective sectors and patients has been delayed at present due to the current context.
Work with patients and osteopathic education providers to continue to support the further development of patient participation in education and training.	Professional Standards	October 2020	●	As above
As a registered charity, develop greater links with our local community for example, via a work placement scheme.	Chief Executive and CSR working group	All year	●	COVID-19 delay
Participate actively across the inter-regulatory forums to gather intelligence and build relationships to enhance our approach to regulation.	Chief Executive and Registrar and all departments	All year	●	We are attending a side variety of inter-regulatory meetings to ensure we bring insight to our business.



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Ensure compliance with the Osteopaths Act 1993 and the underpinning Rules.	Chief Executive, Registration, Regulation and Professional Standards	All year	●	The GOsC Coronavirus (Amendment Order) was laid before both Houses of Parliament in June 2020.
Prepare an Annual Report on activities undertaken in year and submit to Parliament and publish; submit Annual Report to Charity Commission, plus inform registrants about the contents of the report.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Communications	By end September 2020	●	Annual Report and Accounts presented to Council for approval in July 2020.
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	●	Final hearings have been postponed until 3 July due to COVID-19 impact. However, we have produced interim remote hearings guidance for use by all participants in hearings and have been listing suitable cases for substantive hearings using online technology from 3 July onwards.
Develop expert witness competences working with other relevant bodies and stakeholders.	Regulation, Professional Standards	Ongoing	●	Working group being planned for July 2020 following

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				consideration by PAC in March 2020.
Communicate case learning points, PSA advice, relevant case law and regulatory developments to GOsC Committee members.	Regulation	All year	●	
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	All year	●	We arranged a virtual training day which took place on 22 June 2020 for the PCC on remote hearings, the interim questioning witnesses practice note and the remote hearings protocol.
Update and review existing information and support to osteopaths under investigation in our FtP procedures to ensure alignment with the changes made to KPIs/targets.	Regulation	May 2020	●	COVID-19 delay
Develop and consult on guidance for the PCC on questioning of witnesses.	Regulation	November 2020	●	COVID-19 delay; however, interim guidance is presented to the July 2020 Council meeting.
Update and consolidate the guidance to Screeners.	Regulation	July 2020	●	COVID-19 delay. However, the guidance to screeners has been updated and consolidated and formed part of the

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				training day that took place with the IC in February 2020. This consolidated guidance will need to be consulted on.
Continue to explore a performance review scheme for legal assessors and expand the existing pool of legal assessors.	Regulation	January 2021	●	COVID-19 delay
Consult on changes made to the PCC bank of conditions.	Regulation	September 2020	●	COVID-19 delay
Develop guidance for the PCC/HC and osteopaths on the approach to be taken at review hearings.	Regulation, Professional Standards	January 2021	●	
Explore the development of guidance related to individuals who have been suspended from the Register	Regulation, Professional Standards	October 2020	●	
Identify any external issues relating to fitness to practise that impact on current objectives and amend plans accordingly.	Regulation	All year	●	The management of fitness to practise hearings during the lock down and moving forward with social distancing is being explored.
Continue to review the international registration application pathways to ensure compliance with relevant legislation post	Registration, Professional Standards	All year	●	

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the UK's EU-Exit and communicate changes to applicants and other interested stakeholders.				
Ensure the quality of registration assessments, including engagement, training and appraisal of GOsC registration assessors and return to practice reviewers.	Professional Standards, Registration	All year	●	All assessments are proceeding. The only exception to this is a delay in assessments of clinical performance which are not taking place during the lockdown period.
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 system.	Registration, Professional Standards, Communications	All year	●	Ongoing except through assessments of clinical performance.
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	●	COVID-19 delay
Ensure that the GOsC continues to meet its duties under the Equality Act.	Chief Executive and Registrar	All year	●	
Undertake an Equality and Diversity audit to inform the development of actions we should take to further enhance our work in this area.	Chief Executive and Registrar and all departments	April 2020 to December 2020	●	COVID-19 delay. Audit plan agreed, but start date deferred as financial resource implications.

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In-conjunction with our fellow healthcare regulators, attend London Pride 2020.	Chief Executive and Registrar	June 2020	●	London Pride cancelled
Undertake a range of communication and engagement activities with a focus on diversity and inclusion.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Communications and engagement	All year	●	
Conduct a recruitment campaign to appoint a permanent Chief Executive and Registrar.	HR	From April 2020	●	Completed.
Commence and conclude a review of governance arrangements with the new Chair of Council.	Chief Executive and Registrar	April 2020 to October 2020	●	COVID-19 delay. Had identified GMC colleagues to assist; however, timing delayed.
Support Council in implementing its ongoing development.	Chief Executive and Registrar	All year	●	
Provide Council with the information needed to make appropriate resourcing decisions connected to the ongoing financial stability of the GOsC.	Chief Executive and Registrar	All year	●	Monthly reports being provided from June 2020.
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 Registrar	All year	●	
Monitor revisions to the Welsh Language Act and implement existing and potential new requirements as required.	Communications	All year	●	

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Develop our capacity for enhanced research including data collection, analysis and insight.	Chief Executive and Registrar and all departments	From May 2020	●	Activity remains valid; however, start date will be delayed due to focus on COVID-19.
Continue to review our approach to communication and engagement so we use resources effectively to listen, learn and respond to our stakeholders.	Chief Executive and Registrar, Communications and engagement, Professional Standards, Regulation	July 2020	●	
Complete any new appointments to the governance structure, including where necessary using the appointments procedure approved by PSA.	Chief Executive and Registrar	All year	●	
Provide induction and ongoing training for new and existing Council members and other non-executives.	Chief Executive and Registrar	All year	●	Induction meetings held with new members of Council.
Present a business case to Council for investment in technology, specifically CRM, to ensure (a) GOsC better uses data and (b) for the introduction of more streamlined and cost-efficient processes.	IT	May 2020	●	COVID-19 delay; however, IT and business development paper presented to Council in July 2020.
Implement IT proposals to enhance and streamline our work.	IT	From May 2020	●	COVID-19 delay; see above
Ensure our systems continue to remain safe and secure and implement any arising actions.	IT	June 2020 to	●	

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		December 2020		
Develop GOsC approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by benchmarking our work against other organisations.	Chief Executive and Registrar, CSR working group	All year	●	COVID-19 delay
Review and report on CSR activities undertaken and identify actions to enhance our work.	Chief Executive and Registrar, CSR working group	All year	●	COVID-19 delay as staff focus on activities with greater importance.