



Council
20 July 2023
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	The paper presents our Annual Report to Council on the work we have undertaken on equality and diversity in the year 2022-23.
Recommendation(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To consider the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23.2. To agree that 2023-24 is used to develop the next EDI Framework which will cover the period towards 2030.
Financial and resourcing implications	The budget approved by Council includes funds for EDI activity. Council has also previously agreed to co-fund research into under-represented groups experiences of osteopathic education and training.
Equality and diversity implications	These are set out in the paper.
Communications implications	We ensure our communications reflect the diversity of the profession and wider society.
Annex(es)	A. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23
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Key messages from the paper:

- Council receives an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report, which is presented at Annex A. The report again reflects our activity which meets the actions outlined in the GOsC's first ever Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24.
- We met 4 out of the 7 actions agreed by Council last year, with two delayed by the work on the CRM upgrade and one action remaining outstanding.
- The Annual Report includes an update on the research project into the under-represented groups experiences of osteopathic education and training (UrGEnT) which Council is co-funding.
- The paper recommends that we use the remainder of the 2023-24 year to develop the next Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, towards 2030. This will align with the new GOsC Strategic Plan which will shortly be published for public consultation.
- We are suggesting we limit the actions to developing the next EDI Framework as we need to be realistic about what we can achieve at a time when there is a significant amount of work ongoing across our small staff team.

Background

1. The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) is a designated public authority and is subject to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.
2. Council receives an annual report on our activities over the last year relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. The annual report is set out at Annex A.

Discussion

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23

3. In the year, we have undertaken a range of activities which support, enhance and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across the full range of our business. We are collecting evidence to demonstrate that our activities are having a positive impact, for example, we have seen a large increase in the diversity of applicants for non-executive positions compared to previous campaigns.
4. The report this year includes our activity against the actions which were agreed by Council last year. We met 4 out of the 7 actions agreed by Council last year, with two delayed by the work on the CRM upgrade and one action remaining outstanding.
5. In relation to the outstanding action, which is to develop metrics for reviewing the progress of our EDI activity, I would welcome the opportunity to hear from

members of Council who may have expertise in this area and who would be willing to work with the Executive to make progress on this activity.

6. An update against the actions agreed in the report last year is set out in the table below:

Area	Comment
Developed metrics for reviewing the progress of our EDI activity	Outstanding: We need to develop metrics and will include this as a priority within our next set of EDI actions.
Ensured that our approach to EDI is more systemic across the organisation and that good practice is routinely shared.	Complete: While there will always be more that we can do to enhance our work in this area, we consider that matters of EDI are more pervasive throughout our work and that we are more systemic in our organisational approach and that this action should be removed from our future plans.
Improved the systematic monitoring of diversity data across the GOsC. This includes having completed a profession wide EDI survey and analysing the data that we have received in response.	Delayed: Council will recognise that this item was overtaken by events with the delay to the CRM project impacting on this activity. As we re-establish an approach to the CRM upgrade, this activity will be rescheduled accordingly.
Ensure that the upgrade of the CRM system to Cloud Engage takes into account matters relating to EDI, i.e. accessibility.	Delayed: The CRM project was subject to delay; however, as this work is rescheduled it will absolutely take into account matters relating to EDI, i.e. accessibility, data collection and extraction.
Ensure the development of the next GOsC strategic plan towards 2030 captures the importance of EDI.	Complete: While subject to public consultation, one of the key priorities for the GOsC Strategic Plan, towards 2030, is 'Championing Inclusivity'. The Plan also includes specific activities which have an EDI focus while recognising that EDI will be considered throughout all that we do to deliver on the ambition of the Strategic Plan.

Area	Comment
Review the EDI training needs for selection panels for non-executive positions ahead of a significant increase in non-executive recruitment in 2023.	Complete: We have identified an external, independent trainer who will provide training for our selection panels. The Human Resources Manager has spent time this year working with the trainer to develop a programme of training that incorporates a focus on inclusion.
Review the EDI training needs for staff and non-executives.	Complete: As part of the work to identify training needs for selection panels, the Human Resources Manager has been working with the trainer to identify training which can be provided across staff and non-executives, and this will be rolled out in the months ahead.

7. We are proposing that for the remainder of the year to 31 March 2024 we have two actions. These are:
- Develop the metrics for reviewing the progress of our EDI activity.
 - Developing a revised/refreshed/updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, towards 2030, which will support, complement and align with the new GOsC Strategic Plan.

Recommendations:

1. To consider the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23
2. To agree that 2023-24 is used to develop the next EDI Framework which will cover the period towards 2030.

Report on Activities in 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

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, easy to use, formats. We will post out 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>) We will explore whether can reach AA status as part of our future IT projects.</p> <p>We continue to seek to incorporate in our website high standards of accessibility and readability. We continue to have an increase in traffic to our website as a lasting result of the pandemic and osteopaths have benefited from the creation of our covid-19 hub which contained all of the information and resources we had created to support the profession. We ensure that our resources are 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>We have continued to ensured that we utilise images (photos and illustrations) to reflect diversity in our recruitment materials and through our social media, print publications and on our website. We are also diversifying how we communicate information, for example, through the use of animations and video clips, which are reflected on our websites. This ensures that information is available for osteopaths and others in different, accessible formats.</p> <p>This approach reflects a commitment we made as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 to update webpages.</p>

B. We will use a wide variety of channels to communicate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders.

We continued to utilise our own channels including our redesigned monthly news ebulletin, websites and social media. We have continued to engage with the profession and other stakeholders using online communications such as webinars (small and large scale). During the year we recommenced some engagement activities with osteopaths in-person e.g. through local regional meetings and at events being held by the Institute of Osteopathy.

We remain committed to communicating and engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders, for example, during consultations, so that we take their needs into account in order to maximise the interaction we have with them. During the year we also held an online recruitment webinar in order to demonstrate our commitment to inclusion within recruitment of non-executive positions. This was a well-attended event and led to a significant number of applications being received for our lay and osteopathic vacancies.

In the year we have positively promoted awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion through our social media which included LGBT+ history month featuring [a blog from the Chief Executive and Registrar](#); Pride month through changing our GOsC profile picture on social media to a temporary design of the GOsC logo featuring the rainbow flag; promoting Black History Month, and mental health awareness campaigns through the use of our email signatures. We have also recognised many religious festivals in the year so we can appreciate the diversity of the profession and of the stakeholders we work alongside.

While the event is outside of the reporting period, in the year we received confirmation that we were accepted to walk within the London Pride parade for the first time in the GOsC's history.

This approach is now significantly more systematic and reflects a commitment we made as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24.

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

We maintain an ongoing commitment to ensuring Osteopathy House is accessible for meetings and events, including a hearing loop for use in the Council Chamber. Osteopathy House has reopened for

meetings and in-person work following the pandemic and we continue to ensure that the headquarter building is secure for when staff and visitors have been in attendance. This has included: risk assessments, signage, office protocols, enhanced ventilation systems, additional cleaning materials and desk screens.

We remain committed to ensuring the safety of our visitors when working and visiting Osteopathy House.

D. We will ensure that complainants, witnesses and osteopaths 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/>

Guidance for registrants: <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/publications/guidance-for-osteopaths/>

In the year, we consulted on making our interim guidance, developed during the early stages of the pandemic, permanent, with the decision to approve the guidance as a permanent tool made outside of the reporting period. This was in relation to remote hearings.

During the reporting period we have continued to make available the Independent Support Service for complainants, witnesses and osteopaths which is run by Victim Support and to publicise its availability to the profession and to patients involved in fitness to practise. This service is free for any party of a fitness to practise process and ensures that in addition to the support GOsC can provide, there is an independent service for individuals to use. We ensure this service is known to all parties who are subject to a fitness to practise process and we have also communicated with the wider profession on the availability of the service. We will continue to raise awareness of this service.

	<p>Our website also reflects our approach to raising concerns and individuals may raise concerns by either sending the GOsC a hard-copy form or they can make use of the online concerns form. To supplement this, we have introduced a new Fitness to Practise ebulletin as well as running online webinars to explore and explain our approach to handling concerns. These new communication activities act as 'myth-busters' and enable the GOsC to demonstrate our approach is one that is accessible as well as fair and proportionate.</p> <p>We also started to consider a project to assess the EDI data collected through our fitness to practise processes, which will be developed further in the next business year (2023-24).</p> <p>These activities reflect a commitment we made as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 which to consider the ease and understanding of how people may raise concerns. Reflecting on the original commitment made, we would now widen this to reflect the support we are able to offer to all parties going through a fitness to practise process.</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 2022.</p> <p>In the reporting year, the Register included 35 practices where the Welsh language can be used with patients.</p> <p>In order to ensure the Welsh Language is treated as favourably as the English Language we amended our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure that any changes to existing policies/guidance, or the introduction of new policies/guidance, considers the Welsh Language. We have also ensured that our consultation approach includes reference to the Welsh Language. We have introduced these changes ahead of the new Welsh Language Standards coming into effect in 2023-24.</p>
<p>2. Policy development</p>	<p>A. We will assess the equality and diversity implications of all new policy development and operational activities.</p>

and implementation	<p>Council commissioned an audit of our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in 2020 and this work led to the creation of the GOSc's first ever Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24. The Framework was informed by the views of members of the governance structure, osteopaths, patients and others before it was approved by Council and published in the reporting period. The Framework was promoted to the profession through our usual communication channels. This reflects a commitment we made as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 itself.</p> <p>In the reporting period we have undertaken a number of equality impact assessments and these have been reported in papers to the Policy and Education Committee, People Committee and to Council.</p> <p>All papers presented to Council and Committees take equality, diversity and inclusion issues into account, especially our CPD Evaluation papers with discussions at Council and Committee including a greater focus and attention on matters of EDI. Additionally, the budget for the year ahead has ensured that funds are available for activities which will help our commitment to making EDI pervasive throughout everything we do. This reinforces a commitment we made when establishing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 to consider whether the budget envelope had sufficient resources for EDI activity.</p>
	<p>B. We will publish formal equality impact assessments on all major projects.</p> <p>See response to A.</p>
	<p>• 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"> • Remote hearings protocol • Adjunctive therapies, non-osteopathic treatments or other work undertaken by osteopaths: Draft guidance on the application of the Osteopathic Practice Standards • Draft Practice Note for Questioning Witnesses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Fitness to Practise Publication Policy <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. The consultations have been conducted in accordance with our consultation principles. We have made a concerted effort this year for all our inhouse and outsourced research work to consistently take into account equality, diversity and inclusion issues (e.g., transition into practice, public and patient perceptions survey, predictive modelling of register, patient involvement in osteopathic education, strategic patient engagement, boundaries and of course the EDI Pilot).</p>
3. Data collection and analysis	<p>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.</p>

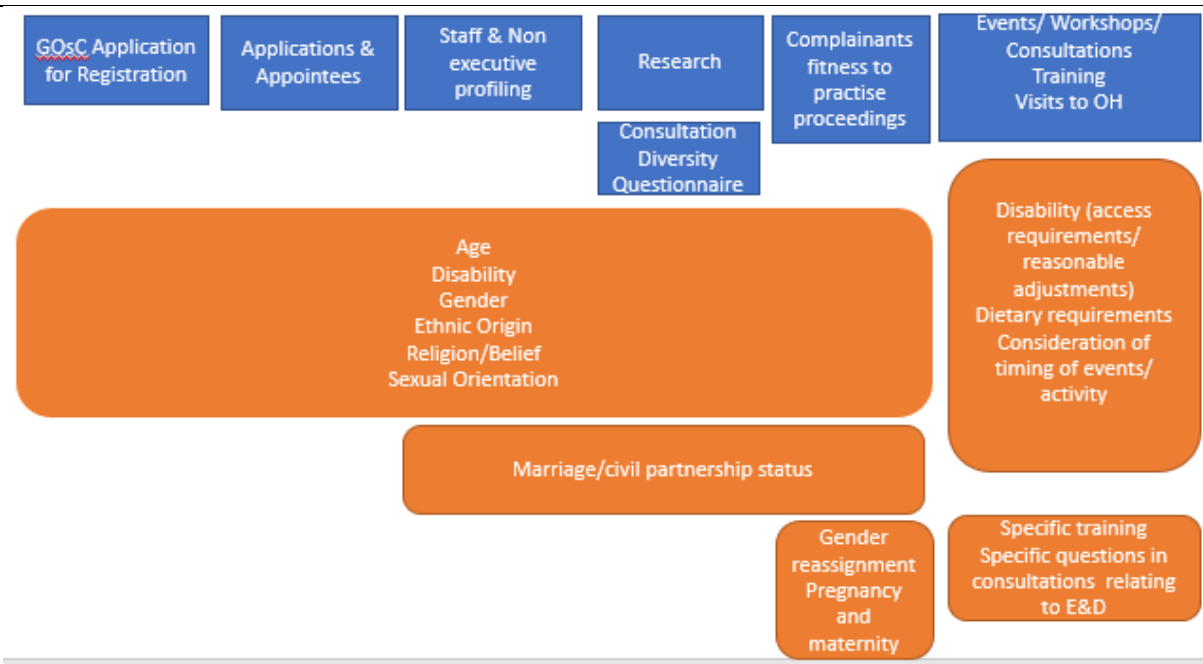


Figure 1: E&D Data Collection Process.

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.

In the previous year we reported that we were to undertake an EDI data collection pilot. This work was completed and reported to the Policy and Education Committee, and during March 2023 we published the findings of the EDI Pilot to the wider osteopathic sector.

The blog recorded progress made on the four recommendations identified by the pilot (see [EDI Pilot Blog](#).) We also produced an article for the iO Magazine for the development of the profession pages, entitled Working together on equality, diversity and inclusion in the osteopathic profession.

This activity reflects a commitment we made as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 towards developing and completing a profession wide EDI survey. While we have not fully completed this activity, we have enhanced our thinking and developed a more rounded approach which will mean we are better placed to meet our EDI needs in the medium to longer term.

B. We will collect and record equality and diversity data in relation to consultation responses and research surveys and evaluate the data where possible.

We collect and record equality and diversity data in relation to consultation responses, the CPD Evaluation survey and focus group activities now include each participant completing a short survey before joining a focus group, which includes recording equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring information.

In the reporting year we ran 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 and transition into practice papers considered by Council and its committees.

We also work with our education stakeholders to provide student enrolment data for the osteopathic profession as whole on the following protected characteristics: age, sex, ethnicity and race (which also includes country of origin) and disability.

C. We will collect and record equality and diversity data on all applicants and appointees to non-executive and executive posts.

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 People Committee for the appointments made in year.

With our recruitment campaigns we took specific steps to enhance the diversity of the applications we received. This included a review and changes to the recruitment materials to make them more inclusive and welcoming; we were more active with our social media promotion, and we ran an online recruitment

	<p>webinar. Last year we expanded the EDI monitoring data we collected from applicants through our new online application process and this has continued in the reporting period. This new online process has meant that it has been much easier to review the EDI data we collect and to analyse the findings, particularly in terms of completed, incomplete and shortlisted applications.</p> <p>This activity reflects a commitment we made as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 towards reviewing our recruitment materials to ensure they are accessible, friendly and do not introduce barriers that may prevent applicants from applying and to ensure we had systems in place to better review the EDI data we were collecting on non-executives.</p> <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 and transition into practice papers considered by the Policy and Education Committee and by Council.</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><i>Under-represented Groups Experiences of osteopathic Education and Training (UrGEnT):</i></p> <p>In 2020-21 we were approached with a proposal to co-fund research into undergraduate experiences of osteopathic education and training. Council approved this funding proposal in May 2021. The project had the following aims and was split into four phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to explore and describe minority groups’ educational experiences during their education in osteopathic education institutions (OEIs); • to identify solutions minority groups feel could support their learning journey and improve their attainment;

- to evaluate osteopathic students perceived cultural competence to work with minority groups;
- to enhance the professions' and OEIs awareness of the challenges faced by students from underrepresented groups alongside recommendations to enhance experience and attainment.

Phase 1: Focus groups reports and systematic review manuscript submission in open access journal

Phase 2: Ethical approval for the research

Phase 3: Survey and focus groups and submission of manuscripts to open access journals

Phase 4: Running dissemination workshops

Phases 1 and 2 have been completed and we reported on this in the EDI Annual Report last year.

We have asked Jerry Draper-Rodi to attend the November 2023 Council meeting to provide a fuller report to the Council on the research work.

This activity reflects a commitment we made as part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24 which was to participate in, and to report to Council, on the progress of the research into the experiences of under-represented groups in osteopathic education and training.

Signposting resources:

We have taken steps to ensure that we have provided signposts to resources for registrants to support them. Through the GOsC ebulletin and social media we have provided signposts around matters such as looking after one's mental health, and through the fitness to practise ebulletin and webinars we have referenced the support provided by the Independent Support Service for those who are subject to a fitness to practise process.

	<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 and the development of its strategy.</p> <p>In the reporting year we have also discussed with the Council for Osteopathic Education Institutions (COEI) matters related to EDI, and while outside of the reporting period, we anticipate there will be further activity/workshops to this end between GOSC and COEI to consider relevant issues around educational training.</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 policies in place to ensure that staff are provided with equal opportunities to undertake their work. The People Committee monitors staff recruitment and retention and are made aware of any new flexible working arrangements which have been introduced, particularly around reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>We have maintained our hybrid working patterns ensuring 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>We have maintained a focus this year on our employees mental health and their awareness of mental health which has been of particular importance.</p> <p>All new non-executives and new members of staff are required to undertake online training on equality, diversity and inclusion and we will continue to consider what further training might be required. We have</p>

	<p>been developing plans for a data collection of EDI data from those who work within our Governance model and intend to roll that out in 2023-24.</p> <p>With the significant non-executive recruitment to be undertaken in 2023-24, we have spent part of this year identifying and developing a training programme for the selection panels. We identified an external, independent trainer and will be rolling out the training in the coming months. We have also been working with the trainer to roll out training across the staff team too.</p>
	<p>C. We will seek to improve the diversity of applicants and appointees to non-executive roles.</p> <p>In addition to the response we have set out at Section 3C, this year saw the continuation of our Council Associate Programme. The newly created roles have allowed the GOsC to offer development opportunities to osteopaths who have considered applying for governance positions, but who perhaps do not yet have the full set of skills. The Council Associates position will shadow Council and its Committees.</p> <p>In the reporting year we considered how we might ensure the patient voice is also captured more fully within the governance model with options under consideration by the Policy and Education Committee.</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.</p> <p>Within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2021-24, we set out a commitment to sharing good practice more routinely across the organisation and to ensuring our approach is more systemic. While we believe we have made some excellent progress in a number of areas, we think this is something we can to more on in the future.</p>