



Council
14 May 2015
International activities annual report

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| Classification | Public |
| Purpose | For noting |
| Issue | The attached paper gives an update on current GOsC European and international activity. |
| Recommendation | To note the content of this paper. |
| Financial and resourcing implications | None arising from this paper. |
| Equality and diversity implications | None arising from this paper. |
| Communications implications | None arising from this paper. |
| Annex | Final Draft: European Standard on <i>Osteopathic Healthcare Provision</i> |
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Background

1. The GOsC has undertaken a wide range of international activity since it was established. This paper provides an update on the work we are undertaking with the various bodies and fora with which the GOsC is involved.

Discussion

Recognition of Professional Qualifications in Europe

2. A focus this year has been on preparing for the implementation of the revised professional qualifications Directive (2013/55/EU) which will be implemented into national law from January 2016. This new legislation will replace the current Directive (2005/36/EC) which governs the way we process applications to the Register from elsewhere in Europe.
3. We have held talks with fellow regulators (individually and also as part of the cross-regulatory Alliance of UK Health Regulators on Europe) as well as making representations to the Department of Health and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to raise issues and concerns. The introduction of an alert mechanism is a welcome development and should go some way to ensure that if an osteopath is removed or suspended from practice in one member state, this information is transmitted to other relevant competent authorities across Europe. However, there are a number of issues on which we are seeking further clarification.
4. We have conducted an extensive review of our registration processes for EEA-qualified applicants to ensure that we not only comply with the legislation, but also provide that applicants from Europe who are granted registration with the GOsC are appropriately qualified and fit to practise. This work is being overseen by the Education and Registration Standards Committee.
5. Work is already underway with the Department of Health regarding amendments to the *Osteopaths Act* to reflect this new legislation.

Engagement with individuals and organisations internationally

6. The Head of Professional Standards and Chief Executive both presented at last year's International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA) conference on professionalism and continuing fitness to practise respectively. This conference was an opportunity both to showcase the GOsC's work (which was well received) but also to learn from the experience of other regulators around the world.

7. We continue to build contact with our regulatory counterparts where appropriate, including issuing and receiving alerts on relevant fitness to practise issues. This year we started to use the European Commission's Internal Market Information (IMI) system to share intelligence with osteopathic regulators in Europe regarding the application of osteopaths qualified in the EEA wishing to work in the UK, and UK-trained osteopaths applying to practise elsewhere in Europe.
8. We are also approached regularly by officials and osteopathic communities outside the UK who are keen to establish recognition and regulation of osteopathy in their own country. Advice is also provided to registrants and students seeking guidance about practice outside the UK.

Gibraltar and the Isle of Man

9. Since July last year the Isle of Man's *Health Care Professionals Act 2014* has put osteopaths on the same footing as the Island's other healthcare professionals. All osteopaths working on the Isle of Man must now be registered with the GOsC. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding which came into effect in October 2014, supporting the exchange of information between the Island's Department of Health and the GOsC. This followed a meeting by the Chief Executive and Registrar with officials and osteopaths based on the Isle of Man.
10. We also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Gibraltar Medical Registration Board in January 2015. The Board is now responsible for registering osteopaths in Gibraltar who will also be required to be registered with the GOsC. The Head of Policy and Communications attended the formal signing ceremony and took the opportunity to meet local registrants to update them on our work and how the Memorandum will operate.

Development agenda

11. The GOsC is coordinating the international collaboration workstream of the UK Development agenda to build stronger international links and alliances to ensure that the UK profession shares good practice in promotional, clinical, educational and research activities with the osteopathic community around the world.
12. To date representatives from Osteopathic Development Group stakeholder organisations have been surveyed seeking information on their networks/alliances in order to help build an understanding of UK osteopathic activity internationally. This information is now being incorporated into an 'International collaboration' websites of key international contacts, networks and developments relevant to osteopathic practice in the UK.

Osteopathic International Alliance (OIA)

13. Last year's Osteopathic International Alliance's annual conference was held jointly with the Institute of Osteopathy (iO) in the UK. As part of this meeting the GOsC Chief Executive chaired an international regulatory forum and also presented on the GOsC's CPD proposals.
14. While our direct involvement in the work of the OIA has reduced since the Chief Executive left the Board, he continues to serve on the Board Nominations Committee and to contribute to various OIA projects.

CEN standard

15. Some six years after the GOsC initiated the idea, the European Standard on *Osteopathic Healthcare Provision* has been approved by national members of the European Committee for Standardisation (www.cen.eu). 18 CEN members voted in favour, with one against. Based on a similar voting system to the EU institutions, the Standard received a 'weighted percentage approving' of 96.17% (the threshold was 71%).
16. This marks the end of three years' determined effort on the part of osteopathic organisations across Europe to develop, for the first time, pan-European standards of osteopathic education, training and practice. While a CEN Standard will not impact on the *Osteopaths Act 1993*, it will provide a benchmark of training standards and ultimately care that patients should expect from osteopaths in those countries currently without any regulatory mechanisms.
17. The UK delegation, appointed by the British Standards Institute, included the GOsC's Chief Executive, Charles Hunt as the representative of the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions and Marina Urquhart-Pullen from the Institute of Osteopathy (iO).
18. This Standard will now be prepared for publication, before coming into force in early 2016. A copy of the final draft standard can be found at the Annex.
19. Discussion is now underway with our European colleagues to plan a high level EU event early next year to promote awareness of the implementation of the CEN Standard among EU officials, national representatives and relevant health and patient/public organisations. Public information leaflets based on the Standard are also planned.

Forum for Osteopathic Regulation in Europe (FORE)

20. The GOsC initiated FORE in November 2005 to bring together osteopathic organisations across Europe to develop a consensus on standards of osteopathic

education, training and practice in order to protect patients and the reputation of UK standards. 10 years later FORE has 20 members from 16 countries, who continue to fund the Secretariat based on the size of their membership.

21. Since the last update report, FORE meetings have been held in Vienna (7 June 2014) and in Egham, as part of the Institute of Osteopathy's (iO) convention (3 October 2014), and included speakers from the Austrian Standards Institute and the UK's Quality Assurance Agency. The next meeting of FORE is scheduled for 16-17 May in Milan, with a focus on the development of a new FORE Strategy 2016-19, the implementation of the now approved European Standard on *Osteopathic Healthcare Provision* (the CEN Standard) and drafting of European public information leaflets based on the CEN Standard. External speakers include representatives from the Italian Society of Medical Education and the Center for Osteopathic Medicine Collaboration.
22. As well as supporting individual countries seeking legal recognition for osteopathy, FORE is a partner with the European Federation of Osteopaths (EFO) in the development of the CEN Standard. Work has progressed on building stronger alliances also with the Osteopathic European Academic Network (OsEAN) and the European Register of Osteopathic Physicians (EROP) manifesting in a joint seminar on the future of European osteopathy, as part of the iO's annual convention last year – the first time representatives from the major European osteopathic organisations had shared the same platform.
23. Since its inception, the GOsC has provided the secretariat function, providing support for individual member organisations, coordinating bi-annual meetings, drafting FORE position statements and developing and maintaining a dedicated website (www.forewards.eu). We have also for a number of years promoted the idea of a merger between the European Federation of Osteopaths and FORE which may once more be considered by the two organisations over the coming year. We have indicated to the two organisations that should a merger take place that we would not seek to provide the secretariat of the new organisation. In addition we have indicated that the fact that we do hold the secretariat of FORE should not be seen as any barrier to merger.

Latest international developments

24. Since the last annual report to Council:
 - France: new regulations have been published by the French Government, setting out the legal framework for osteopathic training in France, including accreditation criteria for osteopathic educational institutions and benchmarks on osteopathic training. As from September 2015, osteopathic courses will be five years, and students will have to complete 4,860 teaching hours to include a number of mandatory elements, including 1,500 hours clinical practice.

- Luxembourg: we understand that the Luxembourg Government has announced its intention to regulate osteopathy. We are in dialogue with osteopathic colleagues in Luxembourg, with a view to providing any assistance.
- Turkey: we understand that a new law regulating 'Traditional and Complementary medicine practice', including osteopathy has been approved by the Turkish Government. We are seeking further details.

Budgetary information

25. In 2014-15 net expenditure on international activities (excluding staff time and travel to meetings) was as follows:

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| GOSc contribution to FORE budget | €8,700 |
| OIA membership | \$500 |

Recommendation: to note the content of this paper.