



**Council**  
**5 May 2016**  
**Equality and Diversity Annual Report**

**Classification** Public

**Purpose** For noting

**Issue** A report on work relating to equality and diversity in 2015-16

**Recommendation** To note the content of this paper.

**Financial and resourcing implications** None

**Equality and diversity implications** Contained in the report

**Communications implications** None

**Annexes**  
A. Equality and Diversity Policy 2015  
B. Report on key activities in 2015-16

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**Background**

1. In May 2015 Council agreed a new Equality and Diversity Policy which can be found at Annex A.
2. The policy includes a requirement for an Annual Report to Council on equality and diversity.

**Discussion**

3. The Annual Report for 2015-16 is attached at Annex B and sets out in broad terms the major activities relating to equality and diversity that have taken place during the year.

**Recommendation:** to note the content of this paper.

## **Equality and Diversity Policy 2015**

### **Objectives**

1. The GOsC's objectives in respect of equality and diversity are to:
  - Ensure our regulatory framework is fair and free from discrimination
  - Promote professional values that protect a diverse public
  - Promote equality of opportunity and access to the osteopathy profession
  - Ensure a system of governance for the GOsC that supports equality and diversity
  - Ensure high standards in the recruitment and employment of our staff.

### **Legal duties**

2. The General Osteopathic Council, as a body that exercises public functions, is subject to the equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

In the exercise of its functions it must 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<sup>1</sup> and those who do not
- c. Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

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. It has to do this in a proportionate way, focusing more attention on functions that have the most impact on different groups of people. It has this duty even if a third party carries out the function on its behalf.

Advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- a. Remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- b. Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people

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<sup>1</sup> The relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. The protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnership are only relevant to (a) above.

- c. Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Complying with the duty may involve treating some people differently. The duty recognises that the needs of people who are disabled are different from the needs of others. This may mean making reasonable adjustments or treating people who are disabled better than people who aren't disabled – for example, through positive action to help them participate more fully.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

3. In addition to its duties under the Equality Act, as a UK-wide body, the GOsC has legal duties under the Welsh Language Act 1993, set out in our Welsh Language Scheme, which can be found at <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/about-us/our-work/welsh-language-scheme/>

### **Our commitment to equality and diversity**

4. The GOsC believes that equality and diversity is integral to our work, and we recognise that taking account of different perspectives brings strength and opportunity to what we do. Our staff and non-executives are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, and meeting our equality duties and the objectives of this policy.
5. We will behave consistently and fairly towards everyone we work with, valuing and respecting their views and interests, and we will seek to eliminate any activities that may result in discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics.

### **How we will meet our duties**

6. While the equality duty is relevant to all of our work, we have identified five key areas or 'themes' where we will focus our work on equality and diversity. These key themes and the associated activities are set out in the table below.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

7. We will report annually to Council on equality and diversity matters, including on our performance against this policy and on specific equality and diversity projects undertaken within the previous twelve months.
8. We will ensure that our Annual Report to Parliament meets the requirement to report on the arrangements that the GOsC has put in place to ensure that it applies good practice in relation to equality and diversity.
9. This policy will be reviewed by Council at least once in the period of each Corporate Plan.

**Report on Activities in 2015-16**

<b>Equality and diversity theme</b>	<b>Main activities</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
1. Service provision	A. We will ensure that information is available in accessible formats, whether in hard copy or online.	This is an ongoing commitment and we ensure that all documents intended for external use are offered in accessible formats.
	B. We will ensure that Osteopathy House and GOsC's external events are accessible.	This is an ongoing commitment and premises and accessibility for the premises is maintained, including a hearing loop for use in the Council Chamber.
	C. We will ensure that complainants and witnesses are effectively supported through the fitness to practise process.	We have worked with Victim Support and others to develop a new witness guidance leaflet and supporting video content for the GOsC public website. These materials will be launched in spring 2016.
	D. We will meet our duties under the Welsh Language Act.	The Welsh Language Commissioner's annual monitoring report was received in October 2015 and all necessary actions were complied with within the required timescales.
2. Policy development and implementation	A. We will assess the equality and diversity implications of all new work.	This is an ongoing activity in which review of new policy proposals is undertaken to assess whether equality and diversity implications are reflected in the proposals, and additional equality impact assessment is undertaken if required (see below).

	<p>B. We will publish formal equality impact assessments on all major projects.</p>	<p>Three major areas of work involved significant consideration of equality impact.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reconstitution of Council – an equality and diversity impact assessment was undertaken for the recruitment process. In addition, we provided input to the Department of Health’s impact assessment.</li> <li>2. Student Fitness to Practise and Health and Disability guidance – equality impact assessments have been undertaken and have informed the consultation strategy and consultation questions.</li> <li>3. CPD scheme – equality impact assessments are undertaken at key stages of this project. Equality and diversity considerations incorporated into the CPD consultation in 2015 and responses arising from this consultation will inform further equality impact assessments.</li> </ol>
	<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>There were four main consultations in 2015-16.</p> <p>The most significant was in relation to the proposed new CPD scheme (see above). This consultation asked a series of specific questions about how the scheme might impact on individuals with protected characteristics. Consultation responses were sought in a number of different ways to maximise participation. Equality and diversity implications were collated and will be addressed as implementation of</p>

		<p>the scheme progresses.</p> <p>In the remaining three consultations on fitness to practise matters, equality and diversity matters were considered as part of the consultation process.</p>
3. Data collection and analysis	A. We will collect and record relevant equality and diversity data systematically from new registrants in order to understand the profile of our registrants.	This is an ongoing activity in relation to new registrants.
	B. 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>This is an ongoing commitment in relation to consultation responses and research surveys.</p> <p>Historic diversity data in relation to registrants is incomplete, therefore in 2015 we commenced a process of requesting completion of an equality and diversity questionnaire from registrants at the opening of a complaint. This data will be used to develop our understanding of any equality and diversity issues arising in the fitness to practise process.</p>
	C. We will collect and record equality and diversity data on all applicants and appointees to non-executive and executive posts.	<p>This exercise was completed in relation to the nine appointments to Council and nine appointments to fitness to practise committees that were made in 2015-16.</p> <p>All of this information was analysed and reported to the Remuneration and Appointments Committee.</p> <p>We continue to collect equality and diversity data on all applicants and appointees to posts.</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.	A particular focus has been on diversity in non-executive appointments. We noted a more positive gender balance among appointees than in previous campaigns and a slight improvement in the age profile of candidates. While we were successful in attracting a higher number of applicants from BME groups in 2015-16 campaigns, the quality of applications was not high enough to make a significant impact on final appointments.
4. Partnerships and the implementation/promotion of standards	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 <i>Osteopathic Practice Standards</i> ).	There are no specific actions to report in 2015-16. Case studies used in presentations to students in some osteopathic educational institutions during 2015-16 have focussed on aspects of protected characteristics as part of the discussion. The student fitness to practise guidance has also been adapted to incorporate better awareness of mental health. The Guidance for Health and Disability has been enhanced with case studies to make the guidance more accessible for all.
	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 partners on development projects).	Two projects that are currently at the research stage (Advanced Clinical Practice and Mentoring) are incorporating equality and diversity issues into their structures.  It was pleasing to note the very positive gender balance in the recruitment to the 2015-16 Leadership Programme, with 70% female participation.



5. Employment and governance	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.	Recruitment in 2015-16 has successfully maintained the strong diversity profile within the GOsC staff team.
	B. We will ensure that all non-executives and executives receive appropriate and regular equality and diversity training.	No training took place in 2015-16. Further training for staff and non-executives will take place in 2016-17.
	C. We will seek to improve the diversity of applicants and appointees to non-executive roles.	Best practice advice was sought from other regulators on recruitment and vacancies were advertised/promoted through a range of new channels. As noted above, some aspects of the diversity profile of appointees improved.  The Remuneration and Appointments Committee is planning further work in this area for 2016-17 appointment processes.
	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.	Members of the Executive continue to attend the regular meetings of the equality and diversity forum.