

Overview of COVID-19 emails, GOsC responses and output

Email subject	No. of emails	GOsC response	Output
Osteopathic practice: Should clinics remain open?	231 (Osteopaths, patients, other health professionals including physiotherapists and doctors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlined the latest version of the GOsC osteopathic practice statement • Signposted to legislation and government guidance, GOsC guidance (infection control/remote working) and iO guidance • When appropriate directed enquiries to the regulation team advising how to make a complaint about an osteopath’s practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement on osteopathic practice (24, 25, 27 March) • Video from Acting Chief Executive and Registrar providing an overview of the current status of osteopathic practice (27 March) • Dedicated e-bulletin on this topic • Infection control guidance • Remote working guidance • Government advice section on COVID-19 hub page • Promotion of mental health wellbeing advice in every e-bulletin • Item in e-bulletin on concerns about loss of income directing osteopaths to iO FAQ webpage and government advice for small business (24 March)
Reduction/suspension of registration fees	163 (The petition on the suspension of registration fees had 1005 signatures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlined that osteopathic fees are set out in legislation, and cannot be varied without a change to that legislation • Highlighted option to move to non-practising status • Signposted to iO coronavirus FAQs regards financial support /government advice for small business and self-employed • Directed profession to statement on deferral of registration fee direct debit payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item in e-bulletin on registration fees (24 March) • Updated registration status webpage • Statement of support from Chair of Council (2 April) • Statement on deferral of registration fee direct debit payments (15 April) • Acting Chief Executive and Registrar’s message in e-bulletin • COVID-19 hub page • Item in e-bulletin on concerns about loss of income directing osteopaths to iO FAQ

Annex E1

Email subject	No. of emails	GOsC response	Output
			<p>webpage and government advice for small business (24 March)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of mental health wellbeing advice in every e-bulletin
Key worker status	89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directed to government guidance on key worker status Highlighted principles of the guidance and advised osteopaths to consider the principles carefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article on key worker status in e-bulletin (24 March) Advice on COVID-19 hub page on key worker status
Registration queries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DBS checks PII Non-practising status How to return to the register after lockdown Direct debit cancellation 	85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directed to relevant guidance on the GOsC o zone website Passed email on to registration team when query required action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated non-practising webpage on o zone Articles in e-bulletins re PPI and how to register for non-practising status
Deferral of registration fees	49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed osteopaths requesting deferral that this applied only to May/June renewals, but that Council would keep this under review Shared repeated complaint emails with Acting Chief Executive Passed email on to registration team when the query related to switching from annual fee payments to direct debit payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair's message of support to osteopath (3 April) Statement announcing deferral of direct debit payments GOsC website homepage (15 April) Announcement of deferral of direct debit payments lead article in e-bulletin Updated advice on COVID-19 hub page re registration fees

Annex E1

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Working for the NHS	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided information to osteopaths on how to access information on NHS Jobs • Directed osteopaths to the NHS England and NHS Jobs websites, and advised private practitioners to contact their local providers • Referred osteopaths with queries on the application process to the iO for support and guidance • Advised osteopaths that they must maintain a registered status if they accepted roles in the NHS which had a clinical focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint statement from the health and care regulators (3 March 2020) • Article and advice on GOsC homepage: signing up to help the NHS (2 April) • Articles in e-bulletins highlighting number of osteopaths who had signed up to help NHS • Advice on COVID-19 hub page
Negative feedback	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged frustration • Reiterated role of the GOsC • Shared particularly abusive emails with SMT to support with drafting responses / when appropriate a member of SMT responded directly • Directed osteopaths to iO for financial support guidance where relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement on osteopathic practice (24, 25, 27 March) • Video from Acting Chief Executive providing an overview of the current status of osteopathic practice (27 March) • E-bulletin message from Acting Chief Executive addressing complaints and outlining the role of the GOsC (3 April)
Positive feedback	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged email and expressed gratitude for the positive feedback 	
Financial and business support	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explained role of the GOsC eg prohibited by law to lobby • Highlighted option to move to non-practising status • Signposted to iO coronavirus FAQs regards financial support /government advice for small business and self-employed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item in e-bulletin on concerns about loss of income directing osteopaths to iO FAQ webpage and government advice for small business (24 March) • E-bulletin message from Acting Chief Executive and Registrar addressing complaints and outlining the role of the GOsC (3 April) • Notice in e-bulletin regards government update on the self-employed

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Email subject	No. of emails	GOsC response	Output
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of mental health wellbeing advice in every e-bulletin PII articles in every e-bulletin Signposted to iO coronavirus FAQs regards financial support /government advice for small business and self-employed from Registration fees section on COVID-19 hub page
PPE, coronavirus testing and infection control	18	<p>PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explained role of the GOsC, prohibited in law to lobby and it is responsibility of osteopath to source PPE Directed them to iO regards their request to lobby government Shared our guidance on infection control <p>Coronavirus testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advised that our understanding was NHS and frontline staff were being prioritised Directed them to iO regards their request to lobby government Shared our guidance on infection control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infection control guidance Remote working guidance E-bulletin message from Acting Chief Executive and Registrar addressing complaints and outlining the role of the GOsC (3 April) Government and other agency advice section on COVID-19 hub page
False advertising / research on osteopathic treatment	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided reassurance that we are warning osteopaths not to claim or imply that osteopathic treatment could help boost the immune system in patients suffering from COVID-19 Shared links to Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) guidance Shared our statement advising osteopaths not to make false coronavirus claims (27 March) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement advising osteopaths not to make false coronavirus claims (27 March) News story promoting this statement Articles in e-bulletins (27 March and 3, 17, 24 April) COVID-19 hub page

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When appropriate directed enquiries to the regulation team advising how to make a complaint about an osteopath's practice 	
CPD	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted the inbuilt flexibility of the CPD scheme to do CPD over the three years Process of verification and assurance has been put on hold Advice on the process for annual renewal of registration Advice on how to do CPD remotely Shared CPD microsite URL More detailed queries directed to registration team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcement in e-bulletin that the process of verification and assurance has been put on hold (24 March) CPD articles on how to report CPD and keeping in touch with other in e-bulletin (17 April) CPD article on how to learn with others and stay connected in e-bulletin (24 April) Delivering workshops with regional group leads providing guidance on how to host CPD sessions online Relevant pages on CPD site updated COVID-19 hub page
Treating the elderly	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighted government advice on treating 'vulnerable groups' and in particular, that anyone in this group should be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures Outlined social distancing measures Shared GOsC osteopathic practice statement, remote working and infection control guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infection control guidance Remote working guidance Government advice section on COVID-19 hub page
Professional judgement	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared GOsC osteopathic practice statement, remote working and infection control guidance Highlighted government legislation and advice on social distancing measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infection control guidance Remote working guidance Government advice section on COVID-19 hub page Acting Chief Executive and Registrar message e-bulletin (24 April) Articles in e-bulletin sharing the latest COVID-19 guidance from GOsC

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Email subject	No. of emails	GOsC response	Output
Suspected coronavirus	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised osteopaths to contact their patients and highlighted Standard D3 of the Osteopathic Practice Standards • Directed osteopaths to NHS guidance which advises that 'it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear' • Advised osteopaths to highlight the NHS COVID-19 information to patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement on fitness to practise activities highlighting that patient safety remains the key priority (26 March) • NHS advice on COVID-19 hub page
Patients struggling to access osteopathic care	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed to GOsC Register and provided guidance on how to search for an osteopath (if patient shared their location a search was done for them and then the results URL shared) • Shared osteopathic practice statement and infection control guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided dedicated patient information on GOsC COVID-19 hub page • Updated GOsC Register search and visiting an osteopath web pages • Note added to homepage Register search box

Sample of email queries received in the COVID-19 inbox and sample GOsC response:

Closure of clinics

- Please can you urgently communicate the GOsC's position on whether it is safe to continue practising given the government's latest advice on avoiding unnecessary social contact?
- I am a GOSC registered osteopath and I'd like some clearer guidelines regarding whether it's safe or advisable to treat at present. I don't have any symptoms of coronavirus, nor does anyone I have been in contact with. However, the conversation about social distancing and avoiding non-essential contact is unclear with respect to osteopathic treatment.
- Please do not send me the link to government websites as I have already read them, and my question is regarding the fact that government policy is not adapted to us. Can osteopaths still practice?
- As osteopaths we help people in agony, disk injuries, wry neck, sprained ankles, neck related headaches., etc. Many of our clients find no relief from other therapies and need us. We need them too. With ibuprofen and similar being accelerators of the coronavirus, we are an important part of the health system. What is the Osteopathic Council doing to lobby for our clinics to continue helping people in need?
- I have received an email from the CHNC saying we are to cease hands-on practice. Why have I heard nothing from the GOsC? This has massive implications from stopping the spread of coronavirus to osteopaths losing their livelihoods. We have close contact with all our patients, so I understand. Some of our patients see our care as essential. Please let us know where we stand as a matter of urgency.
- When is the GOsC going to face the evidence on how this Coronavirus spreads and ask all registered osteopaths to stop face-to-face consultations? It is unethical and dangerous for osteopaths to continue practicing face-to-face.
- Regardless of present government policy. I am very concerned that we as a profession have a duty of care to our patients and communities to close. I understand that other comparable professions were closed yesterday (eg Sports and massage therapist). They have a similar or less contact than we do? Despite the new hygiene policies, I believe we pose a very high risk of a very high amount of community transmission. Either from inter-patient transmission or via practitioner. The latter being inevitable if we continue to work. Please would you take some very much needed action and protect us as a profession and us as a nation.
- Please may I have clarity on whether my clinic can remain open? I have patients booked for today, tomorrow and next week.
- We need some clarity on the current situation. Your current guidelines suggesting we follow PHE and government updates is inadequate. Many other

regulators and associations are ceasing all hands on and face to face appointments of their registrants for risk of spreading the infection either directly or indirectly to vulnerable members of the public. The main function of the GOSC is to protect the public, which leads me to reluctantly agree with the above and suggests that we need an instruction and not guidance from our regulator. At the moment as a profession we have some registrants stopping their clinics and others carrying on anxiously, as we continue with the moral dilemma of protecting our patients or our families. We subsequently look potentially incompetent as a profession which harms both osteopaths and patients in the long run - as there is no doubt our services are needed more than they are used, and this is potentially harming the credibility of the profession.

- Guidance please. Do we HAVE to close clinics? I think it's the right thing to do but some guidelines from our governing body would be appreciated.
- In view of the PM announcement tonight what is GOSC position on osteopaths continuing to practice? The PM stated quote not to work unless "absolutely necessary and if you cannot work from home" Now I feel that my work as an Osteopath to my patients is absolutely necessary and have treated today three patients who are on the critical worker list namely intensive care nurse and police officer. Secondly If the Osteopath worked from a home clinic they meet the criteria and therefore could continue to work!
- Do we as a profession open or close our practices in these COVID 19 circumstances?
- I am still at a loss to know whether to continue to treat patients or not. What is your latest advice as patients are still desperate to come in?
- Before you tell us osteopaths to close, consider that we are regulated Healthcare Professionals. Medical treatment is allowed. As a minimum we should be able to treat Key Workers to keep them at work.
- Following the new restrictions from the PM yesterday, could you advise please as to whether attending an Osteopathic appointment is included in "leaving the house for medical need". Currently I am only seeing acute patients, but I am keen to know now whether the advice should be to shut my practice completely?
- Is the profession going to guide us as members as to whether we should continue to treat patients in our practices Seeing 20 Patients a day is a great way to spread the virus esp as many of our patients are old.
- There was no mention of closure for clinics by the government or for patients to stop seeing their health care professionals. Can I, as an osteopath still keep working? Whether I do home visits, or the patient comes to me?
- Why are you NOT closing ALL osteopath clinics, in the present situation?
- With respect to your primary role to "protect the public" I wish to protest strongly on your decision to NOT tell osteopaths to close their clinics to ALL face-to-face contact.

- Please can you follow the lead of the dentists and physiotherapists and close down our private practices? Whilst it is fantastic that our role as front line medical practitioners has been recognised, working in our private practices is not working on the front line. Nor is it lessening any load or burden being placed on the NHS at this time. Indeed, it is probably increasing the load as each time I greet and treat a patient I am putting myself at risk and, subsequently at least 3 of my patients.
- If your role is to protect the public, why have you not shut down all the private osteopathic clinics? Why are you allowing osteopaths to practice?

GOsC response

I want to assure you that we are discussing and continually updating our position about practice in line with that of government, which is very much subject to change.

The guidance that has been issued by government to date has not prohibited osteopaths from continuing to open and provide care for patients. Indeed, the latest government guidance which came into force on 26 March 2020 includes osteopaths in the 'seek medical assistance' category which allows osteopaths to carry on with their practice and keep their business open. You can read the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 in full at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/350/made The information relevant to the osteopathic profession is included in paragraph 37.

So, although the latest government guidance allows osteopaths to continue to open their clinics and provide care for patients, we are urging osteopaths to consider carefully the guidance about staying home and saving lives and to consider seeing patients by video call or speaking on the phone instead. We have issued strengthened infection control guidance which is available at: www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/practice-guidance/interim-guidance-on-infection-control-in-osteopathy-during/

We are focusing on providing as much information as possible to enable osteopaths to exercise their professional judgement within the framework of government guidance and the Osteopathic Practice Standards. We talk regularly to the other health and care regulators to ensure our response is consistent, and also with the Institute of Osteopathy.

The Institute of Osteopathy, the professional association for osteopathy, has also issued the following professional guidance which is consistent with that issued by the Physio First. See [iO guidance](#) and www.physiofirst.org.uk/resources/coronavirus-covid-19.html. These guidance notes highlight video and phone consultation and only in highly limited circumstances face to face treatment.

We are in regular contact with the four UK Health Departments, other statutory health professional regulators and the Institute of Osteopathy about this matter. Should the government position change we will act quickly to update the profession.

Remote working

- Under the present circumstances with Coronavirus restricting continued care of our patients, what are GOSC's views on Osteopaths using Skype/Zoom to offer consultations and sessions? Pls can you advise.
- We currently provide a platform for customers to access therapists digitally and just want to check if the General Osteopathic Council ensure its therapists to diagnose conditions on a digital platform?
- If and when clinics are compelled to close for an indefinite period, what is the GOSC's policy concerning telephone or online Skype type video consultations and remuneration for same (if any)? We are looking to try and continue to provide care to patients via Video calls, we will be able to assess function via orthopaedic and clinical tests, see sites of pain, go through rehabilitation in terms of stretches and exercises, and offer ergonomic advice to those working from home. We have discussed this with our insurance providers who are happy with this for existing patients. I would like to know if you are offering any guidance on how to structure this in terms of cost. Obviously the patient not will not receive hands on work but will be benefiting from our expertise. I am also keen to know if there is a preferred method of doing this to be in keeping with GDPR. I.e. platforms such as Zoom and skype over facetime which can be done from a mobile device.

GOSc response

Many thanks for your email. All consultations need to take into account the requirements of the Osteopathic Practice Standards and we have issued a statement on remote consultations see: www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/about-the-gosc/statement-on-remote-consultations/.

The iO have produced specific guidance about online consultations www.iosteopathy.org/news/io-issues-guide-on-telephone-and-video-consultations/

We have also issued our infection control guidance which supports appropriate telephone consultations. See www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/practice-guidance/interim-guidance-on-infection-control-in-osteopathy-during/

Patient concerns

- I am a patient of osteopathy and I am disgusted that you have not issued any guidance to your members regarding closing their practices. Following the government guidance issued last night, which was clear and unambiguous, I would have expected you to issue a statement. You have not and some of your members are still practising. This is irresponsible! While the whole country is working towards a common goal, the GOC evidently is not!
- I have worrying concern about a registered osteopath, that works from home with her elderly father residing in the same property. My concern is that she says that she has permission from the osteopaths governing body to carry on

practising urgent cases during this covid-19 outbreak, from home as usual while her elderly father which also has heart condition, is residing in the home. The main concern I have is that these patients enter through the same front door that the father and family use, they wait in the kitchen/dining area that the father and family use and also use the same bathroom facilities that the father and family use.

I'm amazed that the osteopaths regulators allow her to practice from home especially with a vulnerable individual residing in the property.

Can you please clarify if this is allowed, and if not to whom this must be reported to so this osteopath follow the covid-19 rules as set by the government.

- I am contacting you to express my disappointment at your response to the current global pandemic. The current legislation clearly states that your profession is one that is valued and needed at this difficult time. Therefore the decision by most practitioners to close their doors to the public and to offer video consultations, may be viewed as a somewhat cowardly position to take.
- Remote working by telephone is absolutely no substitute for long term osteopathic treatment. These videos for self-treatment have been online years for patients. Most of this information is well known and carried out by most patients anyway. If you think this is a sufficient way of delivering osteopathy, then the sector could essentially be shut down and start up online? You cannot just stop treatment of care as this will further burden the NHS unnecessarily and put us all at further risk. It is totally non-sensical. All forms of healthcare carry risk. You are the only sector who completely shut down offering no triage service or emergency care using professional assessment criteria to measure risk versus value.

GOSc response

Whilst we cannot see prohibitions for osteopathic practice within the current guidance [and indeed the legislation across the four countries of the UK refers specifically to osteopaths being allowed to practise], we urge osteopaths to consider carefully the guidance about staying home and saving lives, and to consider seeing patients by video or on the phone if necessary. Our statement about osteopathic practices can be found on our website at: www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/policies-and-procedures/qosc-updated-statement-about-osteopathic-practice.

Osteopaths will need to balance the risk of transmission of this virus to their patients, themselves and others, amongst other things, in exercising their professional judgement. And if an osteopath exercises their professional judgement to see patients, they should take account of our stringent interim infection control guidance which is available at: www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/practice-guidance/interim-guidance-on-infection-control-in-osteopathy-during/

Elderly patient concern

- I have a routine (3 monthly) appointment with my Osteopath due in 2 weeks. Fortunately, I currently do not have any back pain. I am 76 and have a minor "underlying" health condition, so I am advised to stay at home. I live rurally and would have an 18-mile drive into an urban area where the Osteopath is located. All my other routine appointments - with my GP surgery, Podiatrist, Optician and even my local NHS outpatients hospital - have been put "on hold". I telephoned my Osteopath to suggest that I postpone my appointment for 3 months. His view was that in 2 weeks it will be OK to go ahead with the appointment, but I remain concerned about that. What advice can you offer me please? (concerned patient)

GOSc response

Thank you for contacting us. The current situation is that osteopaths may continue to see patients in certain circumstances. Many have closed their practices or are offering remote consultations, but the guidance is that for urgent or emergency cases, osteopaths may exercise their judgement in deciding whether see a patient in person. Should they do so, then the guidance is that stringent infection control measures should be implemented.

Our own statement on osteopathic practice on the COVID-19 page of our website (www.osteopathy.org.uk/standards/guidance-for-osteopaths/coronavirus-covid-19/#oei), includes the following:

'Whilst we cannot see prohibitions for osteopathic practice within the current guidance, we urge osteopaths to consider carefully the guidance about staying home and saving lives, and to consider seeing patients by video or on the phone if necessary.'

We are unable to provide clinical advice, but I would suggest, if you haven't done so already, that you look at the NHS advice for those at higher risk, which would include those in your age range: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/. Our role is centred on protection of the public, and I would be remiss if I didn't strongly urge you to continue to abide by the NHS guidance.

We don't know what the situation will be in two weeks' time, but have seen nothing so far to indicate that the current restrictions will be lifted by then, especially for those over seventy.

I'm glad that you are not currently in any pain, nor in need of urgent osteopathic care.

Other healthcare practitioner concerns

- I am a physio in private practice and due to COVID-19 have closed my practice. Whilst out doing my 30 mins exercise I came across a private osteopathy practice still operating. Could you please advise me as to your stance on this please. Dependant on your response and delay in response my next email will be to Matt Hancock Secretary of State for health.

- Why have you not advised osteopaths to stop practising? I am a previous GOSC member and current intensive care doctor and I think it is completely irresponsible for manual therapists to be practising at this point.

GOSc response

Our [statement on osteopathic practice](#). recognises that there is no prohibition on practice. However, 'whilst we cannot see prohibitions for osteopathic practice within the current guidance, we urge osteopaths to consider carefully the guidance about staying home and saving lives, and to consider seeing patients by video or on the phone if necessary. 'In exercising their professional judgement, osteopaths are required to consider:

- Government guidance about social distancing and shielding
- Triaging patients over the phone, acting within the limits of competence and referring if necessary
- Being aware of what to do in the event of contact with someone with suspected COVID-19
- Ensuring stringent infection control procedures in line with current guidance

If osteopaths exercise their professional judgement and continue to see patients, we have advised they should take account of our stringent [interim infection control guidance](#) which signposts government guidance for health professionals and highlights the importance of the discussion with the patient stating that 'If you and your patient are satisfied that a physical appointment is necessary and appropriate in accordance with this guidance, and the benefits and risks are explained, you should ensure that you have fully implemented appropriate infection control procedures at this time.'

Patients looking for osteopathic treatment

- I am desperately seeking help. Due to COVID, many physiotherapy and osteopathy clinics are closed.
- Please let me know where I can go to get help
- I live in Blackburn Lancashire and am suffering with my lower back. I cannot find an osteopath still working in my area due to COVID 19. Do you have any advice
- Are you able to recommend any osteopathy clinic that is still seeing patients?

GOSc response

We are the regulatory body for osteopaths in the UK but we are not able to offer clinical advice. As you can appreciate, many osteopaths have currently closed their clinics due to the COVID-19 crisis. Some will be offering remote consultations, and you may be able to find someone in your area able to do so by using the 'Find and osteopath' page on our website: www.osteopathy.org.uk/register-search/

You might also seek advice from [NHS 111](#).

I hope that you're able to get the help that you need.

Reduction/suspension of registration fees

- In light of the fact that the number of people attending my practice is falling (and may well stop for a while) - would it be possible for the GOsC (and indeed the IO) to consider freezing our monthly payments for a while?
- Will you be making any concessions for fees for those of us that have to close. I am self-employed with my own clinic so do not come under the remit of small businesses. I will financially struggle because of this.
- Please Immediately suspend membership fees, and for those who have paid in full issue a credit. You cannot expect Osteopaths who are sole traders in the main, to struggle to overcome the vagaries of the free market, and then to be faced with the possible removal from the register for non-payment of fees, due to lack of income as a result of this Pandemic.
- Are the GOSC able to suspend Registration Fee's for a couple of months to assist Registrants please?
- I'm writing to ask about registration fees. I will likely be closing my clinic at the end of this week for the next month maybe more. My husband is also self employed and in the tv industry which has now all but stopped. We will have no income after this week. It is a frightening thought with two young children to feed and a mortgage to pay. Will you be able to offer a fee reduction over this period?
- Will GOsC be deferring our fees? Osteopath's are reporting a 70% cancellation rate and being self-employed and with no financial help from the government at this time, most Osteopath's are living hand to mouth, we cannot afford to pay our fees at this time.
- With the current climate of COVID-19, many of us are closing down our practices. With this in mind, I would like to ask for a 'registration holiday' as I am no longer earning or currently practising.
- As all of us I have been affected by the COVID and wondering what my best options are in re to cancelling my membership, what are the holiday options etc? I can't afford to pay this not working as I am a single parent with no income at the moment. Do you have any special considerations around this?

GOsC response

Many osteopaths are concerned about the prospect of loss of income during these difficult times with the constantly changing situation concerning the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In terms of specific clinical and business advice, the professional body the Institute of Osteopathy has provided practical advice which is available here:

iosteopathy.org/news/covid-19-update.

The government has issued advice for small businesses at:

[gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19) and the self-employed at: [gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme).

This guidance is also being continually updated.

With regard to registration fees, these are set out in legislation, and cannot be varied without a change to that legislation. At the moment, what is in place is the existing option to reduce your registration fee if you are non-practising (ie not seeing/speaking to patients) for three continuous months within your registration year. For example, if you have been registered for three years or more, your registration fee would be reduced to £320 rather than the full registration fee of £570.

If you wish to take this route, you can download a 'Non-practising Application' form from the **o** zone. Log in to the **o** zone and visit this page for more information: ozone.osteopathy.org.uk/my-registration/registration/non-practising

Once you have completed the form, if possible please scan it or take a photo of it if you have a smart phone and email it to: registration@osteopathy.org.uk. If you are unable to do this, you will need to post the form to us at the usual address. We have put plans in place for post to be forwarded to staff but this will be a slower process in the current situation.

You should also contact your insurance provider immediately to advise them that you are now non-practising.

Please remember that you're required by law to have Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) whether you're seeing patients or not. However, if you change your status to 'non-practising', you need to have 'run-off' cover in place. You will need to discuss this with your insurance provider.

PII is there to:

- protect and assure patients and the public
- ensure that you're indemnified against liabilities
- Run off cover will protect both you and your patients should a claim be made against you retrospectively. You can find out more about the insurance requirements at: osteopathy.org.uk/insurance

Finally, and importantly, we would like to strongly encourage you to familiarise yourself with the latest advice and to remain up to date with the public health statements and guidance that are being issued to ensure that you, your patients (if you're still seeing patients) and the public are protected. Our website brings together published information including links to advice from the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, Health Protection Scotland, Public Health Wales and the Department of Health Northern Ireland. You can find this information here: osteopathy.org.uk/covid-19.

Unhappy about non-practising suggestion

- I think you are aware that this is not going to work in most instances. We still require you to lobby the government for a temporary ease of fees. None of us wish to be non-practising and definitely not for 3 months but if we are forced to close we will need help financially, and it may not be for 3 months. I feel this response does not take that into consideration. If the mortgage companies can offer a reprieve then why can't you?
- I don't consider myself to be non-practising as I am offering an online and telephone service for my patients to help continue their care during this time should they also find the need to self isolate. I'm not asking to stop my payments, but I would be very grateful for a pause for the time being and to pay back what I owe once I am back up and running in clinic. Please reconsider your stance on this matter and offer some flexibility and leniency for us self-employed osteopaths who do not have any financial security during this difficult and uncertain time.
- If I go to a non-practising status - as you suggest - then I will still have to pay a fee, but more importantly, I won't be able to offer my patients care and support via online or telephone arrangements - as I will be non-practising and not covered by insurance. Please help me and many other osteopaths who wish to continue to work - in a responsible way.

GOsC response

We understand that in these unprecedented and difficult circumstances, many osteopaths are unable to provide care for patients given the unprecedented circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic and will be trying to manage the consequential loss of income and all the concerns and worries that will flow from that.

Registration fees are set out in legislation and cannot be quickly or easily changed without a change to that legislation. To make any changes we would need government time to support the necessary amendments to the rules. Changing legislation is not a straightforward and quick process as it also needs approval from the Privy Council and consultation with stakeholders is also expected. The priority of the Department of Health and Social Care in terms of health regulation needs to be the necessary changes to support the response to the COVID-19 emergency and the discharge of statutory duties.

That said, you may have seen Dr Bill Gunnyeon, the new Chair of Council, said in his message featured in the ebulletin sent out on the 3 April - that 'we are actively working to identify what options there may be for support in relation to registration fees in particular. This requires detailed financial modelling, which is being undertaken at pace, and as soon as we are in a position to say more, be assured we will do so.'

Key worker status

- I'd be most grateful if you could let me know, or tell me where I can find out, whether osteopaths statutorily designated as "key workers". e.g. can their kids go to school?
- I am trying to ascertain following these evenings announced 'lockdown' whether Osteopaths are legally considered to be essential workers and whether we can continue to practice during the next 3 weeks.
- You may already have this in hand but colleagues and I feel that it is essential that osteopaths are listed as Keyworkers in the list produced by Government
- Are we a key worker under the title therapist or providing medical treatments to our patients
- I am emailing you to clarify the Government's classification on key workers in regards to COVID-19 and whether we as Osteopaths are classed under primary healthcare professions.
- Following the government's list of key workers published today, can you please advise ASAP whether we are considered included as key workers!

GOsC response

The government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. These are children who are vulnerable and 'key workers' who are critical to the COVID-19 response.

- Key worker status for osteopaths

The government has advised that schools are closed. The guidance (www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision) states that a key worker includes:

- 'Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.'

The Department of Health and Social Care have advised us that osteopaths can 'make a decision for themselves based on the guidance that has been published'. If you are an osteopath and you consider that the work that you are doing falls into this definition as 'frontline health and social care staff... required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector' then you can regard yourself as a key worker for the purposes of this guidance.

In this case, please follow the principles in the guidance closely:

'Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors ..., and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision'

Please note that there is no guarantee of educational provision as that will depend on the decisions taken by the school, nursery or education authority.'

Registration queries

- I'm letting you know I've stopped treating patients from today and for the foreseeable future. Please can I be moved to a non practicing status.
- My registration fees only restart mid May so can I wait a month or so and take the appropriate action then? Would it be retrospective?
- I recently filled in the form for renewal of my registration fees. I have signed to pay in full by direct debit. Please can you cancel this form and send me another, so that I can arrange to pay monthly?
- Once three months have passed and I begin to practice again, what do I need to do?
- I was informed by a colleague lately that General Osteopathic Council provides Osteopath ID cards and I thought that this could come very helpful in the current situation where travelling must be done only for essential workers.
- I would like to stop being an Osteopath. Please take me off the register and stop my fees.
- I am an Osteopath and I would like to get a DBS Enhanced Disclosure Certificate.
- Would the non-practising have to last at least 3 months if for instance I found that the situation had changed before the 3 months was over? Would I be able to go self-practising retrospectively ie in 3 months time and receive a rebate on my registration fee?

GOSc response

Thank you for your email and I have passed your query onto my colleagues in the Registration Team who will contact you directly regarding your query.

Deferral of registration queries

- I paid my years registration renewal early? Before we realised the situation. It starts in May. I cannot see that I will be back working within 3 months. Can I apply for the reduced rate of fees even though I have paid?

GOSc response

Many thanks for your email and for sharing information on your current situation. I have passed your email onto the GOSc Registration team who are handling queries regards registration fees. They are going to contact you directly regards your query. I hope that is helpful, please do let me know if there is anything else I can help you with.

Unhappy that deferral doesn't apply to them

- I pay mine yearly when do we get the same payment free months?
- I'm hoping you will be able to help me. My direct debit payment went out today which is not helpful as I'm not earning any money. You release details re deferment however my renewal is not till December I pay monthly but I would be grateful for the deferment from this month. I have no income at all so to have the amount come out today has put a real strain on me. You talk about only people who's renewals fall in next month or so so where does that leave me? All in all, I am feeling very stressed and not knowing what your willing to do to help
- I would urge you to review your policy. It is discriminatory and unfair.

GOSc response

Thank you for your email. I am very sorry to hear the difficulties you are facing during this challenging time. I note your concerns and I have shared your email with senior colleagues.

At this stage the direct debit deferral is only for osteopaths renewing their registration in May and June 2020. However, Council is keeping this under review and may roll this out for osteopaths who renew later in the year. I know this doesn't apply to you at the moment but as I say it is under review and we will keep the profession updated on this matter.

I don't know if this suits your circumstances, but there is the existing option to reduce registration fees as you are 'non-practising' (ie not seeing or speaking to patients) for three continuous months within the registration year. For example, if you have been registered for three years or more, your registration fee would be reduced to £320 rather than the full registration fee of £570. If this is an option you want to explore further information is available on the o zone.

In terms of specific advice on financial support, the Institute of Osteopathy has created a practical guide as well as additional information which is available here: iosteopathy.org/news/covid-19-update. I also wanted to flag that the iO have recently launched a hardship fund and you can find information on their website to check criteria and the application process: www.iosteopathy.org/news/io-launches-hardship-fund/

With regards your query on lobbying, the Institute of Osteopathy as the professional body has been lobbying government on behalf of osteopaths regards the matter of financial support. The General Osteopathic Council, however, is not permitted in law to lobby for the profession.

As the statutory regulator our role is public protection, the health and wellbeing of patients and maintaining public confidence in the profession. We do this by setting standards of proficiency and a code of practice (the Osteopathic Practice Standards), setting and monitoring standards within osteopathic education, and by dealing with concerns and complaints raised about osteopaths.

Working for the NHS

- Can we offer to help out the NHS as a group or individually?
- Is there any way that GOsC could approach the NHS to get us involved in assisting frontline staff?
- Unfortunately, the NHS links require HCPC registration. Will this be addressed so we will be able to register under Allied Health Professionals
- I have today tried to register with NHS as an allied health professional following the link you provided. Unfortunately, our Registration body I.e. GOsC does not appear in the fields to be filled in and thus prohibits the application
- I have been looking for paid roles on a temporary basis with NHS to help them during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Has the GOsC has made any approaches to the NHS regarding whether they would welcome Osteopaths volunteering to help out in hospitals, perhaps in Physiotherapy depts, to take some of the load off existing staff at this time?

GOsC response

There are a number of ways osteopaths can apply to really help make a difference to assist frontline staff: Further information is available from the Institute of Osteopathy at www.iosteopathy.org/covid-19/

1. Complete this NHS survey: Health Education England is running this survey asking for expressions of interest to help the NHS (www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/returning-clinicians/faqs-ahps/). The aim of the survey is to help identify suitable roles by capturing the areas and locations where people have previously worked, and your personal preferences if called upon for example if you are willing to work face-to-face or via the phone. If you are based in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, your responses to the survey will be passed on to the relevant NHS body. This survey asks for previous NHS

experience. But NHS experience is not essential and just helps with prioritisation. Osteopaths with no NHS experience can still apply.

2. Apply through the NHS locum Bank (www.nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk/en/Joining-NHSP/Our-NHS-our-Bank): It's best to wait a week or so before trying this route. This survey supports applications to the NHS locum Bank but it asks for an HCPC registration number as HEE is initially prioritising those with A&E and acute care experience (who will all be HCPC registered). This requirement is due to be relaxed in the next week or so, so that all osteopaths and other Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) will be able to use this route.
3. Contact your local NHS trust or board: Before you get in touch and offer to assist, you can find out what roles they have and consider how you can help through the NHS Jobs website. Search for COVID-19 when you visit: www.jobs.nhs.uk/www.jobs.nhs.uk. You might find it helpful to refer to the joint letter from GOSc's Acting Chief Executive Matthew Redford together with the four UK allied health professions officers when you offer your skills and services (www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/letter-supporting-allied-health-professionals-and-allied-health-professional-support-workers-during-the-covid-19-epidemic-in-the-uk/). The letter outlined the support that the AHP workforce can give.

The available roles may vary, from clinical to administrative, for example, so there may be some need for flexibility according to what's needed. But in whatever way you are able support the NHS at this unprecedented time, your experience and expertise will be highly valued.

Business support

- I just found out that my clinic is not covered for a grant from Camden Council Therefore after 16 years my clinic must close. Not a good day. Any thoughts would be welcome.
- Is there any clear guidance on whether as an owner of a practice that occupies premises the rateable value of which exceeds £15,000 (15,750 in fact) I am eligible for government help with my business rates of over £7,900pa. The practice remains closed under Government guidelines.
- We came across governmental plans and would like to know whether there will be GOSc guidance on how to best avoid hefty tax liabilities for businesses with self-employed Osteopaths.
- I wonder if there is any link where we can claim any loans or grants for losing the income. Please don't send me to another link for advice!
- What about the osteopaths who do not own business premises? I rent a room in a Dental surgery; would I be able to claim the £3 000 government grant?
- I have phoned MIC and they confirm that I am covered "IF my business is forced to close". They advised that I must phone GOSc, and you would tell me to close, and then the insurance claim would start. Is this correct?

- Maybe you are already lobbying for the same Business Rates twelve-month holiday as the Hospitality, Leisure and Retail sector. Are you in conversation with other governing bodies on the matter? It would make a potentially game changing difference to the survival of my own business, and I'm sure many others.
- My practice is based in London and I read that we are not part of the groups of retailers who are able to claim a 12-month rates holiday. This is granted to opticians, hairdressers, estate agents and a large range of groups but unfortunately does not include Osteopaths or Chiropractors vets or dentists etc. Can you help?
- What is the governing body doing to help us claim with our business interruption insurance?

GOsC response

In these unprecedented and difficult circumstances, we know that many osteopaths are unable to provide care for patients given the unprecedented circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic and will be trying to manage the consequential loss of income and all the concerns and worries that will flow from that.

The Institute of Osteopathy (iO) may be able to provide some helpful advice about business support and perhaps discussions with local authorities. They have produced specific clinical and business advice which can be found at: / iosteopathy.org/news/covid-19-update. The government has issued advice and support for small businesses at: gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19 and the self-employed at: gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme. This guidance is also being continually updated.

I know this response might be frustrating for you, but these issues may be more appropriate for the iO as opposed to GOsC because our organisations' roles and areas of expertise are different. As you may already know, central to our role is public protection, the health and wellbeing of patients and maintaining public confidence in the profession. But the iO, as the professional membership body, work to support, unite, develop and promote the osteopathic profession for the improvement of public health and patient care.

PPE, coronavirus testing and infection control

- Your duty is to protect the public, and as we have no protective gear some osteopaths, maybe many, will be infecting the public and the public will unknowingly be infecting osteopaths as I send this.
- There was also the point raised that if no clear guidance from the regulator was available based on PPE information regarding practice then arguably GOsC is not fulfilling its primary role of protecting the public.
- We are told we can stay open but those of us that are quickly running out of PPE. Surely you could petition the Government to make PPE available to us. Let's face it, if one member of the general public makes a complaint that they were

treated without adequate PPE you're going to remove them from the Register aren't you?

- As well as screening patients for their symptoms and history of contact, correctly used PPE has an important role to play. If osteopaths had access to purchase facemasks, thin nitrile gloves and safety glasses and were advised on their correct use (this is not difficult, dentists work this way already), it would serve to protect and reassure our patients that as a profession, we are doing our utmost with respect to infection control.

GOSc response

Our role as the regulator is not to procure PPE for the profession, nor to 'lobby' government on behalf of the profession. The issue you have identified would be better addressed to the professional body, the Institute of Osteopathy, which represents, and can lobby for, the profession on matters it considers appropriate. If there is a shortage of such equipment, it will be because it's being prioritised for front line care.

Coronavirus testing

- I understand that you are exploring the options for accessing Covid-19 tests. Please could you update me urgently on where we, as osteopaths, now stand as I see that testing is being rolled out currently across the board for hospital and other staff in the public sector.
- Are the GOSc going to push for us Osteopaths to get antigen AND antibody tested?
- Please could you update me urgently on where we, as osteopaths, now stand as I see that testing is being rolled out currently across the board for hospital and other staff in the public sector.
- I read that the government is rolling out COVID-19 testing to a wider group of practitioners and health care workers - any chance this may include us?

GOSc response

Our understanding is that the priority focus of testing for government is with the NHS and frontline workers at the moment to deal with the current health emergency.

We are not exploring availability of COVID-19 tests for osteopaths; however this might be something that you would wish to raise with the Institute of Osteopathy which is the professional association for osteopaths.

False advertising and research

False advertising

- I've been seeing loads of posts from U.K. Osteopaths using the 1918 Spanish flu as a reference and this on Facebook Trying to promote themselves and treatment. Osteopaths could land themselves in trouble with the ASA and we could face public criticism in this climate of fear. I wouldn't want us to get criticised in the current climate, we do so much good it will be easy to come

unstuck. The chiropractic governing body last week put out a nationwide statement regarding false claims in order to protect the public. I'll leave it in your capable hands and I appreciate you returning my email.

- I found this message by an osteopath on LinkedIn. I am concerned by the statement. What are the communication policies in GeOsc?
- I think it maybe a good idea for the GOsC to follow suit of the GCC in the U.K. and other governing bodies across the world by stating that osteopaths can't boost the immune system or claim to treat lung infections or Covid-19 with Osteopathy.

GOsC response

Thank you for bringing this to our attention and we have released a statement which can be found on our website at: www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/news/covid-19-gosc-warns-osteopaths-not-to-make-false-claims/ reminding osteopaths what they can and cannot advertise.

I have passed your details onto my colleagues in the regulation department who will look into the matter.

Research

- I have attached a paper that I have written regarding professional judgements required regarding face-to-face treatment, what constitutes an emergency and the risk mitigating actions that are required. It is "rather rough around the edges" and is far from complete but is a balance between making it more comprehensive and getting the "facts" to the profession when they need them. I would be grateful for the team's thoughts as to whether it deserves wider distribution but, as it has such a short "shelf life" of relevance in a rapidly evolving situation. , have already sent it to the iO and NCOR, and also posted it on "Let's talk osteopathy".

GOsC response

Thank you for your email and the paper, which was an interesting summary of your reading around this subject, and the development of your thinking as to how to proceed in the current crisis. We can't endorse or promote clinical advice, as such, ourselves, but you've already published this on the Lets Talk osteopathy forum, and others may well find it helpful in informing their professional judgement.

I would generally also suggest that you seek some feedback from the National Council for Osteopathic Research and the iO, but again, you've done this already.

CPD

- I graduated in June 2018 and was wondering if my CPD would be due in this year (2020) or in 3 years' time. Also with the current pandemic, would this year's CPD be delayed.
- Is there is any additional allowance for CPD as many CPD events have been cancelled and notified me that they will be held later in the year.

- I was wondering what is the situation with CPD? We are obviously disadvantaged this year: I have been and will continue to be unable to attend any CPD under the 'working with others' heading. The clinical audit I had just started (needing new patients) will very likely be ruined, and I will not be able to complete my 'objective activity' as planned. Surely you are going to give us more time?
- I am writing to inquire about any changes to the CPD requirements due to the COVID19 outbreak, in particular, the learning with others module.

GOSc response

The requirement of the CPD scheme is to complete 90 hours of CPD over the three years of your cycle, so there is flexibility built into the scheme already.

However, given the unprecedented and difficult circumstances we all face concerning the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the process of verification and assurance has been put on hold. We will no longer be contacting a sample of osteopaths at the end of their CPD year for the time being.

At the time of your annual renewal of registration, you will be asked to declare on your Renewal of Registration form (which will be available on the o zone) how many hours of CPD activities you have completed within the past 12 months and which parts of the new CPD scheme you have covered. This CPD should be recorded and reflected upon.

Unlike the previous CPD scheme (if you were on that), there is no longer a need to submit an annual CPD summary form with all the details of your CPD activities, with regard to CPD you now just need to declare the number of hours you have done and which features of the scheme you have completed that year.

In the current circumstances, there are lots of ways that you can do CPD remotely and for free to support you to connect with others at this time and also to keep up to date, for example:

- a case-based discussion on the phone or via Skype or a similar system with colleagues
- a practice peer discussion review
- you can do reading to keep yourself up to date
- there are plenty of sources of online learning

Further information about the CPD scheme and resources to support you to complete CPD are available at cpd.osteopathy.org.uk and, for example, here's a case study from a group of osteopaths who set up a virtual group: cpd.osteopathy.org.uk/learn-from-others/stories/1268

Treating the elderly

- Can you comment on whether over 70s will be able to come out for osteopathic consultations if there is a lockdown situation please?

- Are we allowed to carry on practising during the latest restrictions? I work in an Osteopaths as a receptionist and feel vulnerable with the current situation. Elderly people and people with health conditions are still coming in for treatment and also one who had cold symptoms. The osteopathic is still advising them that it is safe to treat them. Could you clarify if this is the case?
- What is the guidance for registered osteopaths aged 70 years and over?
- can you comment on whether over 70s will be able to come out for osteopathic consultations if there is a lockdown situation please?

GOSc response

With the constantly changing situation concerning the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we find ourselves in completely unprecedented and difficult times, and we appreciate the need to support osteopaths while protecting patients and the public. Thank you for your understanding of this fluid situation.

The Government is advising that people aged 70 and over, along with those who have certain underlying health conditions, are in a 'vulnerable group' and so at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

The Government advice is that anyone in this group should be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. These social distancing measures include:

1. 'Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport when possible
3. Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to [employer guidance](#) for more information
4. Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together.
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services'

You can find more information on this at: [gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults)

Infection control

The GOSc has also written interim guidance on infection control, which specifically refers to patients in this 'vulnerable group' who are aged 70 and over and those with certain underlying conditions. It says:

'You may wish to consider offering phone consultations during this time to these groups of patients, acting within the limits of your competence and referring if necessary.'

We would recommend that you read the full version of the Interim guidance on infection control in osteopathy during the COVID-19 pandemic at: osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/news/covid-19-gosc-publishes-interim-guidance-on-infection-control

Professional judgement

- Central to our role is public protection, the health and wellbeing of patients and maintaining public confidence in the profession` indicates this is the one time you should step in to give practitioners your advice!
- I would have thought that giving guidance on the matter of whether or not to work during the COVID19 pandemic is exactly what G OsC should be doing
- i feel very strongly that as a regulatory body, you should be advising us as practitioners, how we should be caring for our patients.(The Public)
- The GOsC are not looking after patients or protecting osteopaths legally, by taking a neutral position
- Strange how my brothers professional body sent them all an email with clear guidelines for not only whether they are considered key workers but also on those best to treat.....and he's a podiatrist! The lack of the above, despite saying we should use our professional judgement, is appalling in this current time when osteopaths are seeking guidance from their own regulator.

GOsC response

We issue guidance on our website at www.osteopathy.org.uk/covid-19 to support osteopaths to exercise their professional judgement in specific circumstances.

If there was a specific issue that you wanted to discuss, please let me know. Whilst we can't tell you what to do in a particular scenario, we can try to signpost you to relevant considerations to support you.

Suspected coronavirus

- Could you please advise if there is a recommended amount of time that must pass between a person arriving home from abroad and presenting to my clinic for treatment even if they are showing no symptoms?
- I developed a high fever yesterday so am self-isolating in accordance with government guidelines. My question is do I need to inform my patients?

GOsC response

NHS guidance advises that 'it can take 14 days for symptoms to appear': www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/what-to-do-if-you-or-someone-you-live-with-has-coronavirus-symptoms/

You may like to highlight the following information to patients:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/.

In relation to informing your patients, yes, we would advise you to contact your patients. Standard D3 of the Osteopathic Practice Standards provides that: 'You must be open and honest with patients, fulfilling your duty of candour'. The associated guidance provides that: 'If something goes wrong with a patient's care which causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress, you must tell the patient, offer an explanation as to what has happened and the effects of this, together with an apology, if appropriate, and a suitable remedy or support.'