



Council
22 November 2023
**Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for
Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers - consultation**

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education – consultation on reviewed guidance.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To agree to proceed to consultation on the 'Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers', in accordance with the strategy outlined.2. To agree the Consultation Strategy and Consultation document.3. To note the Equality Impact Assessment.
Financial and resourcing implications	Consultation and engagement costs are included in our 2023/24 budget.
Equality and diversity implications	Equality and diversity issues are a key component of this work. We sought advice from an EDI consultant to inform the review process and we will further explore this as part of the consultation. An equality impact assessment has been developed and is included as Annex D.
Communications implications	The consultation will be communicated through our usual channels as outlined in the consultation strategy.
Annexes	Annex A - Draft Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education Annex B – Consultation strategy Annex C – Consultation document

Annex D – Equality impact assessment

Authors

Steven Bettles and Banye Kanon

Key messages from the paper

- On the 4 October 2023, the Policy and Education Committee (PEC) agree to recommend 'Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers', for consultation in accordance with the strategy outlined.
- This paper seeks Council's approval to proceed to consultation with the draft updated guidance.
- A draft consultation strategy and a draft consultation document is presented for consideration and approval.
- An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the consultation.
- In October 2022 we outlined plans to the PEC to update various Quality Assurance Policies, including that relating to student fitness to practise.
- A draft was presented to PEC in October 2023.
- Feedback has been sought from osteopathic educational providers students and staff as well as guidance from an EDI consultant. We have reflected feedback in the draft guidance.

Background

1. The current guidance in relation to professional behaviours and student fitness to practise was published in 2016, and is available on our [website](#)¹.
2. We reported to the Policy and Education Committee at its [October 2022](#) meeting on plans to update various Quality Assurance Policies, including that relating to student fitness to practise. A draft of the updated guidance subsequently developed was reported to the Committee at its [October 2023](#) meeting. The Committee agreed to recommend 'Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers', for consultation in accordance with the strategy outlined.
3. This paper seeks Council agreement to consulting on the updated draft updated guidance (Annex A) in accordance with the attached strategy (Annex B) and consultation document (Annex C) and further includes the Equality Impact Assessment (Annex D).

Discussion

4. As part of the review process, we sent a preliminary questionnaire to osteopathic educational providers for distribution to students and staff. The aim was to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to give initial feedback on the current guidance, including what worked well, what might be enhanced, and any other

¹ <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/training-and-registering/becoming-an-osteopath/student-fitness-to-practise/>

feedback. We received a small number of responses (16) but it was useful in highlighting some areas that we might enhance, particularly around language and the ways in which case studies might be improved.

5. We also sought initial feedback on the current guidance from an EDI consultant, to further explore which aspects we might need to take into account in updating the guidance. Issues raised included:
 - Greater clarity around the focus on professional behaviours and health and disability issues
 - Reference to behaviours that might be sexist, homophobic, ageist, disablist.
 - References to gender in the case studies not being helpful – suggest that these be made neutral unless a specific case requires gender to be referenced.
 - Reference to neurodivergence.

6. The suggestions made have been reflected in the updated draft included as Annex A. Other changes include:
 - Combining the guidance into one document aimed at both students and education providers. There is a degree of cross-referencing between the two current documents (one aimed at students, and one at education providers) and we are keen to explore the impact of combining these into one document. Combining the documents in this way has enabled us to reduce considerable repetition between the documents.
 - Ensuring the guidance reflects the 2019 version of the Osteopathic Practice Standards. We have further developed the professional behaviour aspect of the document, and replaced the table in the current version with a more integrated reference to the standards in each theme of the OPS , with examples of what is expected, as well as types of behaviours which might raise concerns in relation to each.
 - A review of the procedural section regarding the management of fitness to practice cases, including the context within which they take place, and placing this in an Annex rather than in the main body of the guidance. The aim is to focus more on professional behaviours than on process, but to retain this as an Annex to support institutions and students.

Consultation

7. A draft consultation strategy has been developed and is included as Annex B to this paper. The consultation document draft is included as Annex C.

Equality Impact Assessment

- An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed and is included as Annex D. This will continue to be updated as the project develops.

Timetable

- The indicative timetable for the consultation as set out in the strategy document is as follows:

Month	Activity
November 2023	Council approval of draft guidance for consultation and consultation approach
Early January 2023 – End March 2024	Consultation
April – May 2024	Analyse feedback and finalise draft guidance
June 2024	Report to PEC
July 2024	Report to Council
Following Council approval	Publish and publicise guidance

Recommendations

- To agree to proceed to consultation on the 'Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers', in accordance with the strategy outlined.
- To agree the Consultation Strategy and Consultation document.
- To note the Equality Impact Assessment.