



# COVID-19 Update

## **A message from Matthew Redford, Acting Chief Executive and Registrar**

With an extension to the lockdown arrangements to continue into May, I am very aware there will be a continuing level of anxiety within the profession, and indeed across the country. Some of that anxiety will naturally relate to financial pressure and the GOsC has been busy exploring how we can provide support to the profession. So I am pleased that this week we were able to announce a change in direct debit arrangements in relation to registration fees.

Many of you had been in touch with us directly asking how the GOsC might be able to support osteopaths. Council was keen to help, as the new Chair of Council, [Dr Bill Gunnyeon, made clear in his message of support to registrants on 2 April.](#)

Council met for an emergency virtual meeting just before the bank holiday, in recognition of the need to offer assistance set against the constraints of our legislation. Council needed to ensure that its approach offered support to the profession and was deliverable within our legislative and charity framework, while at the same time being workable for the organisation both financially and on a practical level.

We know this has been a challenging time for many of you, and we have worked as hard and as quickly as we can to identify how we might help. You can read about the new system of direct debit payment deferral, initially for those about to renew, below.

We continue to work closely with the professional body, the Institute of Osteopathy (iO) as well as other health professional regulators. There are some areas that are best considered by the iO so you will find that we sometimes point to the iO website for certain information. But be assured, the iO has committed to making this key advice open to all and not just to their members.

It just remains for me to say that I continue to hope that you stay as well as possible during this time.

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### **GOsC switches direct debit payment-free months**

Just under half the profession are about to renew their registration so their payments will be due shortly. For those who pay by direct debit and are about to renew, the payment-free months will now fall at the start, rather than at the end of the registration year. So, the payment-free months would begin during this challenging period.

We have written to those registrants who are due to renew their registration in May and June 2020, to explain the changes in more detail.

These will be the first osteopaths to have their direct debit payments deferred and Council has agreed to keep this deferral system under review and will consider at a later stage whether this can be rolled out for those who renew their registration later in the year. [Read the news story](#)

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### **GOsC warns osteopaths over COVID-19 advertising**

We are warning osteopaths not to claim or imply that osteopathic treatment could help boost the immune system in patients suffering from COVID-19.

Claiming in any promotional material or online content that osteopathy has a part to play in the frontline care of patients with COVID-19, is likely to breach [Advertising Standards Authority \(ASA\) guidance](#) or trading standards law (which is enforced by local councils). [Read the news story](#)

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### **Osteopaths offer support to the NHS**

More than 1200 osteopaths across the UK have already signed up to show their interest in helping the NHS. The available roles may vary, from clinical to administrative, but there will be value in however you might be able support the NHS at this unprecedented time. [Find out more](#)

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### **All the latest COVID-19 guidance from the GOsC**

You can find all our latest updates plus key advice from government and other useful information in relation to COVID-19 collated together on the [COVID-19 section of our website](#).

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## **A reminder about how to report your CPD**

For a large number of osteopaths it's getting to be that time of year when you start thinking about submitting your annual renewal forms and a number of you have been in touch with us asking us to remind you how to do it this year.

Unlike the previous CPD scheme, 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 of CPD activities you have completed on your [Renewal of Registration form](#) (which will be available on the [o zone](#)) and say which features of the scheme you have completed within the past 12 months. Remember, this CPD should be recorded and reflected upon.

You might want to have a look at [the March/April issue of The Osteopath](#) which has a detailed article about keeping CPD records.

[More about the CPD requirements](#)

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## **Keeping in touch with each other through CPD**

We have been asked by a number of osteopaths about how they can do their CPD and especially 'learning with others' during the current situation. We are keen to help you keep in touch with others in this time of social isolation. Indeed engagement, support and community are key features of the CPD scheme and there are lots of ways to continue to do CPD, with others and for free, for example:

- think about joining or setting up a [virtual CPD group](#)
  - carry out a [case-based discussion](#) on the phone or via video call with colleagues
  - try out a practice [Peer Discussion Review](#) with a colleague
  - explore the free CPD resources on the GOsC's [CPD site](#), including a [series of CPD workbooks](#)
  - make use of your free access to the International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine and other [research journals via the o zone](#)
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## **HEE provides free COVID-19 e-learning**

Health Education England (HEE) has created a free-to-access e-learning programme for UK health and care workers responding to COVID-19. It includes essential guidance from the NHS, Government and the World Health Organization, plus resources for staff being up-skilled or redeployed. Also available to international users. HEE will continue to add more content in the coming days and weeks. [Find out more](#)

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### **Take care of your own mental health**

Looking after your mental health and wellbeing is always important, but especially during these challenging circumstances. We have collated some free resources that you might find helpful. [Read more](#)

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### **Don't forget your Professional Indemnity Insurance**

You need to have Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) whether you're seeing patients or not. This legislation is there to protect patients and ensures you're indemnified against liabilities. If you change your status to 'non-practising' (which means you're not seeing or speaking to patients), you need to have 'run-off' cover. You'll need to discuss this with your insurance provider.

[Find out more](#)

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### **Updating your websites during lockdown**

We have had requests for Registration Marks from a number of osteopaths who are planning on updating their websites during the lockdown. If you want to promote your GOsC registration online, you can apply for:

- an 'I'm Registered' Mark, which is for individual osteopaths and includes your unique GOsC registration number
- a 'We're Registered' Mark, if you're the principal osteopath and wish to use this in a group practice

Registration Marks are available in English and Welsh.

[Find out more and request your Registration Mark via the o zone](#)

### **If you need to get in touch with us**

If you have any COVID-19 related queries, you may find the answer on the [COVID-19 section of our website](#). If you still can't find the answer you are looking for, please email: [covid19@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:covid19@osteopathy.org.uk) but please note, the inbox will not be monitored over the bank holiday weekend. Our staff are continuing to work remotely and it may take us a little longer to respond at present. All your questions are important to us and our staff are working hard to respond as quickly as they can.