



COVID-19 Update

A message from Matthew Redford, Acting Chief Executive and Registrar

In my message to you last week, as the lockdown was extended to 7 May, I reflected that across the country there might be a heightened level of anxiety. There have been a number of reports this week about the need to maintain good mental health during lockdown. I wanted to begin this update by encouraging you to take a few moments to think about what support you have in place during this time. See the suggestions we have collated below for looking after your mental health.

Here at the GOsC, we are continuing to seek feedback about ways in which we can provide or signpost support and guidance to osteopaths and patients where possible during this extended period of lockdown.

I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight our guidance about practice in this current context for those osteopaths who are, or may be, considering continuing to see patients face-to-face.

Our [statement on osteopathic practice](#) recognises that there is no government prohibition on practice. We say in our statement that while '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 advise they should take account of our stringent [interim infection control guidance](#) which signposts government guidance for health professionals. The guidance also 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'.

The Institute of Osteopathy helpfully sets out what those limited urgent or emergency scenarios could be (see [iO guidance](#) for how these are being defined by the professional membership body) and you may find taking some time to reflect on those scenarios helpful.

In our email updates we will continue to provide useful links and information to help you with some of the challenges you may be facing, be that with undertaking your CPD remotely, signing up to help the NHS, or as I said at the beginning of my message, taking some time to look after our mental health during this period of uncertainty.

As the lockdown continues, I would encourage you to keep an eye on the COVID-19 section of our website for signposting to the latest guidance and updated information throughout this time. You can find this at osteopathy.org.uk/covid-19.

As always, I very much hope that you are continuing to stay as safe and as well as you can.

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 collated together on the [COVID-19 section of our website](#).

Osteopaths warned over COVID-19 advertising

The GOsC is 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](#)

Signing up to offer support to the NHS

More than 1200 UK osteopaths 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](#)

Learn with others and stay connected

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.

[Find out more](#)

Look after your own mental health

Taking the time to take care of your own 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](#)

PII: Don't get caught out!

You need Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) whether you're seeing patients or not. This legislation protects patients and ensures you're indemnified against liabilities. If you change your status to 'non-practising' (ie 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](#)

Updating your websites during lockdown

We've 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, individual osteopaths can apply for an 'I'm Registered' Mark, which includes your unique GOSc registration number, and if you're the principal osteopath of a group practice you can apply for a 'We're Registered' Mark. [Find out more 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 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.