

## An introduction from Matthew Redford, Chief Executive and Registrar

I'd like to begin our latest ebulletin by discussing why the issue of osteopathic advertising remains as important as ever.

Under the terms of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 it is considered 'unfair' to falsely claim that a product or service is 'able to cure illness, dysfunction or malfunctions'. The regulation of this law is carried out by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) which is an independent body that has a remit covering

all areas of advertising activity. This includes healthcare, and therefore, osteopathic advertising.

So what does this mean for osteopaths? Put simply, you need to ensure that your marketing and advertising is ASA compliant. This includes:

- website content
- entries in service directories
- posters
- practice leaflets
- social media promotions

I encourage you to take some time to review what your advertising and marketing materials say. You can contact the Committee of Advertising Practice's (CAP's) [Copy Advice Team](#) where their experienced advisers can provide you with an informed view of the likely acceptability of your non-broadcast marketing communications under the CAP Code, which is administered and enforced separately by the ASA.

You could also speak with a colleague, or talk to those who work within your practice and review the guidance available on the [ASA website](#). This activity, if undertaken well, can help you provide greater clarity to patients about your practice and the evidence-base underpinning the treatment you provide. And the time spent doing this can count towards your CPD under Theme D:

Professionalism of the Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS).

We are aware that there is interest from the public in how osteopaths advertise their services and it is possible that a patient or a member of the public might raise a question or a concern with you directly about your advertising or marketing materials. This should not be seen as a threat and, in the same way that if a patient were to ask a question about the treatment they had received, we would expect the question or the concern to be handled in a respectful and professional manner.



Our approach to regulation is one based on partnership working and collaboration, and this is no different with regards to advertising. We have worked to raise awareness of the need to be ASA compliant for a number of years, and we have ensured that advertising remained a key pillar of the OPS 2019 under Theme D: Professionalism, and we will continue to raise awareness of the steps you need to take to remain compliant.

In conclusion, we have no plans to step into the role of regulating advertising – that is the remit of the ASA – but we will talk about advertising and seek to raise awareness, and this will continue to be done in a prudent, consistent and proportionate way.

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## Updated guidance and information

In light of recent changes to the government guidance for those who were shielding, we have published updates to the [infection control measures](#) we issued as a result of the pandemic, as well as our [updated statement on osteopathic practice](#). You can find these, along with other guidance and advice, on the [COVID-19 section of our website](#).



## Remote hearings guidance published

To assist all those participating in our remote hearings, which we have been holding for the past month, we have produced an [interim remote hearings protocol](#) and a [practice note on questioning witnesses](#). The purpose of the guidance is to make the remote hearing process accessible to all parties and ensure that hearings run as smoothly as possible. It will also ensure that our approach to remote and blended hearings (where some attend in person at GOsC's hearing rooms while others attend by video conference) is more fully understood which will enhance the transparency of our procedures. [Read more](#)



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## Capturing patient feedback during COVID-19

With greater numbers of osteopaths beginning to reopen their clinics following lockdown, we have developed a patient feedback survey template to help those of you who want to capture your patients' experiences of and attitudes towards osteopathic treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey template is divided into three main sections: pre-treatment, experiences of osteopathy appointments during COVID-19, and after care/self-help during COVID-19.

You may choose to use the entire template or select sections that are most relevant to your practice at the moment. [Download the patient feedback survey template](#)

If you would like to learn more about patient feedback and how to apply it in your practice as part of your CPD, we will be running introductory patient feedback webinars on Tuesday 11 August 2020 at 1-2pm. For more information and to book your place, please contact Stacey Clift at: [sclift@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:sclift@osteopathy.org.uk)



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## Requesting registration certificates and ID cards

Currently, with our staff working remotely, we are unable to provide a paper copy of your annual certificate and ID card. If you are seeking a copy for verification purposes, we encourage you to provide your GOsC Registration number instead of the paper copy along with a link to the Register: [osteopathy.org.uk/register-search](https://osteopathy.org.uk/register-search). The Register is updated daily and your inclusion on the Register is proof of your status as an osteopath.



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## Reminder: Renewing your registration

If your renewal is already due or will be due in August, you can go online and [renew your registration](#) at any time. If your registration status is non-practising, you will still need to renew your registration. If you are now returning to practise, remember to inform your insurance provider and contact us at [registration@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:registration@osteopathy.org.uk) to update your status. [Log on to the o zone for more information on renewing](#)



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## Don't forget your insurance

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. Also, you will need to make sure that you update all your insurers about your intention to return to practise and how you will practice, if you make this decision. [Find out more](#)



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## Read the latest issue of The Osteopath

The latest summer issue of The Osteopath magazine includes a focus on COVID-19. We hear from two osteopaths about adapting to new ways of practising, and we look at how you can carry out your CPD remotely. Our Chief Executive Matthew Redford helps explain the distinctions between the roles of the GOsC and the professional membership body, the Institute of Osteopathy. [Read the latest issue now.](#)



## GOsC Council holds virtual summer meeting

The GOsC's Council held its third virtual Council meeting since the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. At the meeting, which was chaired by Dr Bill Gunnyeon and held on Thursday 9 July 2020, Council approved: an interim practice note on questioning witnesses; interim guidance for remote hearings; the GOsC Annual Report and Accounts for 2019-20; the Recognised Qualification renewal for Plymouth Marjon University; and the extension of the direct debit deferral scheme for those osteopaths who are due to renew their registration in August 2020. [Read more](#)



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## Learn with others and stay connected

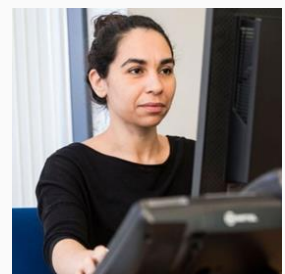
We are keen to help you keep in touch with others in this time of social isolation. Engagement, support and community are key features of the CPD scheme and there are lots of ways to continue to do CPD, with others and for free. [Find out more](#)



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## Reporting your CPD

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; you now just need to declare the number of hours you have done on your Renewal of Registration form (available on the [o zone](#)) and say which features of the scheme you have completed that year. Remember, this CPD should be recorded and reflected upon. [Read more](#)



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

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## Looking after your mental health

Taking the time to take care of your own mental health and wellbeing is always important, and even more so during these challenging circumstances. We have collated some free resources that you might find helpful. [Read more](#)



## Updating your websites

We've been getting a large number of requests for Registration Marks from osteopaths who have been using this time to update their websites. 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](#)



## Any queries or feedback?

If you have any COVID-19 related queries, you may find the answer on the [COVID-19 section of our website](#). If you can't find the answer you are looking for, or if you have suggestions or feedback for us, please email: [covid19@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:covid19@osteopathy.org.uk). For other queries or feedback not related to COVID-19, you can contact us via [info@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:info@osteopathy.org.uk)