



COVID-19 Update

A message from Matthew Redford, Acting Chief Executive and Registrar

I do hope you are all continuing to keep as well as you can during what is, and will continue to be for some time, a challenging period for everyone with the effects of the global pandemic being felt across all parts of our everyday existence.

A number of registrants have been in touch with us recently suggesting the GOsC should be doing more to lobby government or intervene in matters of clinical responsibility. I therefore wanted to take this opportunity to set out our role as a statutory regulator.

Central to 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.

What we cannot do is provide clinical advice as to how osteopaths should implement those standards in specific circumstances. And we are not permitted in law to lobby for the profession.

A core part of every osteopaths' training is about how to deal with complexity and uncertainty in practice, and to use your professional judgement. This means weighing up the evidence and making decisions, taking into account the specific circumstances, a range of perspectives, relevant guidance, the needs of your patients and the public, and being able to justify these decisions. As primary contact practitioners (and in England also Allied Health Professionals), like all other registered health professionals this is not only expected of you, it is your area of expertise.

In the past two weeks, much of this decision making has been around deciding whether practices should close or perhaps offer a scaled-down service, taking into account the stringent infection control guidance referenced on our website and government guidance.

Our role means we cannot make this decision for osteopaths and nor should we. I recognise this will be frustrating for some of you, and may feel uncomfortable for others, but our role is to highlight the expected standards, the guidance provided by the government and its agencies across the four UK nations, and to enable your expert professional judgement.

We do not work in a vacuum though – the profession is represented by its professional body, the Institute of Osteopathy (iO), with which we are in regular close contact, as well as other health professional regulators, in these challenging times. When we respond to queries by saying an issue may be best considered by the iO, we are doing so because we acknowledge that our organisations' roles and areas of expertise are different. One key difference between us is that the Institute of Osteopathy is permitted to lobby for osteopaths.

We recognise the enormous challenges that the profession is facing right now, and the tough decisions that have been and are being made. Closing one's practice or moving to remote consultations instead of the hands-on care, which is at the heart of osteopathy, is not just a financial challenge, but an emotional one for many. During these difficult times we will all continue to put the interests of patients at the heart of what we do.

GOsC's new Chair sends message of support

Dr Bill Gunnyeon CBE, took up the role of Chair of the GOsC on 1 April, and has written a message of support for registrants, outlining what the GOsC is doing during the COVID-19 crisis. He explains that the GOsC will continue to refine and clarify guidance, and is actively looking at options for support in relation to registration fees. [Read Chair's message](#)



GOsC publishes statement on remote working In light of the COVID-19 virus situation, many osteopaths are undertaking remote consultations with patients over the phone or by video call, perhaps for the first time. As a result, the GOsC has developed this policy statement setting out ten high level principles that are expected to apply to osteopaths providing remote consultations. [Read full statement](#)

Latest guidance and useful links

You can find useful links to advice and the latest guidance on the [COVID-19 section of our website](#).

NHS welcomes osteopaths

Osteopaths are being welcomed by the NHS in a range of roles during the current crisis in all four countries of the UK. 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 however you are able support the NHS at this unprecedented time, your experience and expertise will be highly valued.

[Find out more](#)

Government update for the self-employed

Last week the Chancellor announced details about a self-employed income support scheme which could see self-employed workers apply for grants of up to 80% of their average profits, subject to individuals meeting qualifying criteria. The government has published information about the self-employed income support scheme, and other business support. [More information](#)

Health Education England offers free COVID-19 e-learning

Health Education England (HEE) has created an e-learning programme for the UK health and care workforce to help them respond to Coronavirus. It is free to access and content includes:

- essential guidance from the NHS, UK Government and World Health Organization
- infection prevention and control
- personal protection equipment

HEE will add more content in the coming days and weeks. [Sign up](#)

Free resources to help with your mental health and wellbeing

Taking care of your mental health and wellbeing is important for everyone during this unprecedented situation. Many organisations are making resources such as apps, audio guides and videos available for free to help with this.

[Read more](#)

GOsC warns osteopaths over 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.

[Read the news story](#)

Reminder about Professional Indemnity Insurance

Remember you're required by law 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](#)

If you need to get in touch

Our staff are continuing to work remotely and have limited phone access. If you have any COVID-19 related queries, please email: covid19@osteopathy.org.uk. Please note that it may take us a little longer to respond at present, but please bear with us during this time. All your questions are important to us and our staff are working hard to respond as quickly as they can.



Visit the GOsC website at osteopathy.org.uk

The GOsC is a charity registered in England and Wales (1172749).

GOsC's ebulletins contain important information for registrants on maintaining high standards of practice.

Make sure you don't miss out - let us know if you are changing your contact or practice details by emailing: registration@osteopathy.org.uk

The below is a standard MailChimp feature, but as a registrant of the GOsC, we have a duty to supply you with the information you need, therefore we would ask that you don't unsubscribe.

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).
