

# Equality and Diversity Policy 2018

## Introduction

1. The General Osteopathic Council is the independent statutory regulator for the osteopathy profession in the UK. The over-arching objective of the GOsC is the protection of the public. This involves the pursuit of the following objectives:
  - a. Protecting, promoting and maintaining the health, safety and well-being of the public
  - b. Promoting and maintaining public confidence in the profession of osteopathy, and
  - c. Promoting and maintaining proper professional standards and conduct for members of that profession.
2. The GOsC believes that equality and diversity is integral to our work, and we recognise that taking account of different needs and perspectives to those we serve brings strength and opportunity to what we do.
3. We will behave consistently and fairly towards everyone we work with, valuing and respecting their views and interests, and we will seek to eliminate any activities that may result in discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics.
4. We expect our staff and non-executives to be committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, and meeting our equality duties and the objectives of this policy.

## Legal duties

5. The General Osteopathic Council is a designated public authority and is subject to the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act). In the exercise of its functions the GOsC must have due regard to the need to:
  - a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
  - b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic<sup>1</sup> and those who do not
  - c. Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
6. Having due regard means the GOsC must think consciously and carefully about these three aims in its day-to-day work, so that equality issues influence its decisions in developing policy, in delivering services, and in its role as an employer. It has to do this in a proportionate way, focusing more attention on functions that have the most impact on different groups of people. It has this duty even if a third party carries out the function on its behalf.

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<sup>1</sup> The relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. The protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnership are only relevant to (a) above.

7. Advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:
  - a. Remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
  - b. Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
  - c. Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
8. Complying with the duty may involve treating some people differently. The duty recognises that the needs of people who have a disability are different from the needs of others. This may mean making reasonable adjustments or treating people with a disability who are disabled more favourably than people who aren't disabled – for example, through positive action to help them participate more fully.
9. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
10. In addition to its duties under the Equality Act, as a UK-wide body, the GOsC has legal duties under the Welsh Language Act 1993, set out in our Welsh Language Scheme, which can be found at <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/about-us/our-work/welsh-language-scheme/>

## **Objectives**

11. The GOsC's objectives in respect of equality and diversity are to:
  - Ensure our regulatory activities are fair and free from unlawful discrimination
  - Ensure that promoting equality and valuing diversity are reflected in the standards we set for the osteopathy profession
  - Promote equality of opportunity and access to the osteopathy profession
  - Communicate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders in an accessible manner
  - Ensure high standards of in the recruitment, development and ongoing work of staff and non-executives.

## **How we will meet our objectives**

12. While the equality duty is relevant to all of our work, we have identified five key areas or 'themes' where we will focus our work on equality and diversity. These key themes and the associated activities are set out in the table below.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

13. The Chief Executive and Registrar is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and that equality and diversity is integral to the organisation's work.
14. Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that the GOsC meets its statutory duties under the Act. Council will consider a report on equality and diversity matters each year, including our performance against this policy and on specific equality and diversity projects undertaken within the previous twelve months.
15. This policy will be reviewed by Council at least once in the period of each Corporate Strategy.
16. In its Annual Report to Parliament, the GOsC will report on the arrangements that the GOsC has put in place to ensure that it applies good practice in relation to equality and diversity, as required by section 40A(1)(a) of the Osteopaths Act 1993.

<b>Equality and diversity theme</b>	<b>Main activities</b>	<b>Senior responsible owner(s)</b>
1. Service provision	A. We will ensure that information is available (or can be made available) in accessible formats, whether in hard copy or online.	Head of Communications and Engagement
	B. We will use a wide variety of channels to communicate and engage with a diverse range of stakeholders.	Head of Communications and Engagement
	C. We will ensure that Osteopathy House and any GOsC external events are accessible.	Head of Communications and Engagement and Director of Registration and Resources
	D. We will ensure that complainants and witnesses are effectively supported through the fitness to practise process.	Director of Fitness to Practise
	E. We will meet our duties under the Welsh Language Act.	Head of Communications and Engagement
2. Policy development and implementation	A. We will assess the equality and diversity implications of all new policy development and operational activities.	Chief Executive
	B. We will publish formal equality impact assessments on all major projects.	Chief Executive
	C. We will seek to ensure that our consultations, surveys and research projects address equality and diversity issues, and that there is an appropriate diversity of respondents.	Head of Communications and Engagement with all relevant policy leads

3. Data collection and analysis	A. We will collect and record relevant equality and diversity data systematically from new registrants in order to understand the profile of our registrants.	Director of Registration and Resources
	B. We will collect and record equality and diversity data from those we interact with including: respondents to consultations and research surveys; and complainants and others involved in fitness to practise proceedings.	Head of Communications and Engagement and Head of Regulation
	C. We will collect and record equality and diversity data on all applicants and appointees to non-executive and executive posts.	Chief Executive and HR Manager
	D. We will analyse data collected through these processes and ensure that it is used to inform the equality and diversity aspects of our work.	All senior responsible owners
4. Partnerships and the implementation/ promotion of standards	A. We will seek to work in partnership with others to ensure best practice in equality and diversity (for example, with the osteopathic educational institutions and others in the implementation of the <i>Osteopathic Practice Standards</i> ).	Director of Education, Standards and Development
	B. We will seek to ensure that equality and diversity considerations are taken into account in any projects undertaken jointly with others (for example, with our Osteopathic Development Group partners on development projects).	Chief Executive

5. Employment and governance	A. We will ensure that our HR policies are up to date and represent best practice in equality and diversity, and we will monitor their effects on staff recruitment and retention.	Chief Executive and HR Manager
	B. We will ensure that all non-executives and executives receive appropriate and regular equality and diversity training.	Director of Fitness to Practise and HR Manager
	C. We will seek to improve the diversity of applicants and appointees to non-executive roles.	Chief Executive and HR Manager
	D. We will keep ourselves up to date and share best practice in equality and diversity through our participation in the joint regulators' equality and diversity forum.	Director of Fitness to Practise