



General
Osteopathic
Council

NEWS

In Council: brief report of the April Council meeting

17 May 2010

Reciprocal registration arrangements with Australia and New Zealand

The Council was updated on the progress of GOsC talks with the osteopathic regulatory bodies in Australia and New Zealand to identify and agree arrangements for registering individuals from all three countries on terms that enable each regulator to meet their statutory duties, whilst removing unnecessary obstacles in the way of migrating osteopaths.

A Memorandum of Understanding had been drafted, setting out the commitment of the three regulators to work together (see the Feb/March issue of [The Osteopath](#)). Council agreed to direct the Chair to sign the MoU. To take this forward each regulator would be compiling and sharing information on their respective regulatory regimes, as well as reviewing reciprocal arrangements in place in other relevant professions. Key elements for discussion would be the need to share full, relevant information on registrants, CPD cycles, and in due course, revalidation. In addition, the position of non-UK graduates from EU countries would also have to be considered.

The overall aim is to have the arrangements in place from January 2012. Any changes to current GOsC registration processes would go out to consultation, before coming into effect.

Business Plan and Budget for 2010/11

The Council received and approved the draft Business Plan and Budget for 2010/11. Regular reports on its implementation will be made to the Council at each meeting.

Transparency of costs

Following a recommendation by the Remuneration Committee, the Council agreed to publish annually the following information in respect of non-executives and the Chief Executive:

- Annual fee of Chair of the Council
- Annual fee of Council members

- Annual fee of Chair of the Finance Committee (Treasurer), Audit Committee and Chair of Education Committee;
- Daily rates paid to non-Council committee members;
- Amounts paid in expenses to individual Council members and committee members;
- Total employment costs of the Chief Executive - salary, pension and National Insurance.

National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR)

Annual Report 2008/09

Council noted NCOR's Annual Report for 2008/09, which included an overview of the status of key projects, along with research reports from each of the Osteopathic Educational Institutions.

Future relationship with NCOR

Council considered the conclusions of the Research Strategy Working Group's review of the GOsC's relationship with NCOR in light of the Council's own research priorities. Council fully acknowledged the very significant contribution made by NCOR since its inception in 2003; in particular, the potential of both the Standardised Data Collection and Adverse Events projects and the very valuable role NCOR plays in acting as an information resource for the media, the public and the profession. Although Council felt the GOsC's financial support of NCOR to date had been justified, it concluded that it could not continue to support NCOR indefinitely and that the time was right to signal an end date for this.

Council therefore decided that funding should continue until the expiry of the current Chair's term in 2012 to avoid an abrupt withdrawal of funding. The GOsC and NCOR will continue to agree the nature of work to be undertaken until then. Funding for NCOR's operational costs for the year 2010/11 was also agreed.

Patient expectations research

The Council received a report on the progress of the research project commissioned by the GOsC into patient expectations of osteopathic care. At the date of the meeting, 1,606 questionnaires had been returned and the data was being inputted ready for analysis. A full report will then be submitted to the GOsC. Although this is later than expected, the Council accepted the need to allow a little extra time for receipt of a sufficient number of completed questionnaires and to produce a comprehensive report.

Revalidation

The Council noted the progress of the revalidation work programme and received a presentation from KPMG on their proposals for undertaking an evaluation and impact assessment of the draft revalidation scheme. Council also received an update on the work of the Revalidation Standards and Assessment Group and the recruitment of external experts to develop an assessment criteria for revalidation.

Fitness to practise committees' reports

The Chairs of the Investigating Committee and Professional Conduct Committee presented reports which covered the first year of the committees appointed in April 2009.

Investigating Committee (IC)

The 33 complaints considered by the IC during the year raised a wide range of issues relating to allegations of unacceptable professional conduct and professional incompetence, including case history taking; diagnosis and treatment; post-treatment evaluation; referral decisions; communication; record keeping; consent; and complaints handling. A small number of cases involved concerns about the registrant's health, practising without insurance, and allegations involving possible breaches of sexual boundaries.

The Council agreed to the appointment of two more osteopath members to the Investigating Committee: Miles Crook and Yvonne McNiven.

Professional Conduct Committee (PCC)

The Council noted the summary of the 10 full hearings and six other hearings by the PCC, covering issues of communication (including failure to obtain valid consent, explaining intended treatment, and inadequate responses to complaints); inadequate practice (including patient modesty, case history taking, failure to justify continued treatment and excessive treatment); and inadequate record keeping. The Committee raised a general observation that some osteopaths may become 'routinised' in their practice and, as a result, were not recognising that habitual practice may fall short of the standard expected of a registered osteopath.

Fitness to Practise Policy Committee

The Council agreed the establishment of a Fitness to Practice Policy Committee to act as a forum for consideration of fitness to practise policy matters.

Remuneration in fitness to practise matters: cancellation of hearings

The Council agreed a policy for the reimbursement of panelists and legal assessors where their attendance was no longer required because a hearing had been cancelled at short notice or a hearing had 'run short':

- To pay the attendance fee to panel members where notice of cancellation is given seven days or fewer before a hearing, with the seven day interval to include weekends.
- To pay the attendance fee to panel members for all days booked for a hearing, even if a case concludes in fewer than the scheduled number of days.
- To reimburse expenses incurred by panel members before the cancellation of a hearing where such expenses cannot be recovered by the panel member
- To pay the legal assessors one additional day's payment where a case completes before the allotted time.

Remuneration in fitness to practise matters: reading time for Investigating Committee (IC) panelists

The Council agreed a policy for payment of a £75 flat fee to IC panelists for reading material in connection with casework, in addition to the daily rate of £300. IC panelists will be required to make a claim for this flat fee as it will not be paid automatically.

Stakeholder engagement

As a statutory regulator, the GOsC has a specific duty to engage actively with all relevant stakeholders. This ensures the GOsC has proper regard for the interests of registrants and osteopathic patients. The GOsC is committed also to working with those concerned with the education, training and employment of osteopaths, and with the regulation of healthcare professions and provision of health services, in the interests of promoting patient safety and high standards of osteopathic practice.

The Council receives an overview of stakeholder engagement activities at each of its meetings and a copy of the report can be obtained from the GOsC's Communications Department on 020 7357 6655 ext 242 or by emailing info@osteopathy.org.uk.

Appraisals of members of the governance structure

Following the development of a new appraisal scheme and completion of their first year, all members of the governance structure will be undertaking their first appraisals during the next couple of months.

Minutes of previous meetings and future meetings

The full minutes of this meeting will be available after the next Council meeting, which is on 13 July. The minutes for previous meetings are available, along with the dates for future Council meetings, on our [Meetings](#) page.