



Policy and Education Committee
6 October 2022
Transition into Practice

Classification	Public
Purpose	For noting
Issue	To scope out our plan for supporting new graduates (UK and Internationally qualified) making the transition into practice through better understanding of the barriers and enablers to building communities
Recommendation	To note the proposed plan for the transition into practice project
Financial and resourcing implications	All data sources are collected and analysed in house and so there is no budget cost internally beyond staff time.
Equality and diversity implications	Matters related to equality and diversity are being considered as part of this work, primarily gender, age and length of time spent on the Register.
Communications implications	The research findings will inform a detailed communications and engagement plan which will be developed in 2023.
Annexes	None
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Key Messages

- We are beginning work to explore how we can best support new graduates making the transition into practice, with the overarching aim and purpose of this work being to build communities of practice for new graduates.
- This paper provides a proposed schedule of research activities to inform us about what we don't currently know about this section of the Register, and a timeline for developing subsequent recommendations for potential resources, such as guidance, and communications (including changes to the GOsC website) in line with the findings of our research.
- We would like the Committee to note the proposed plan for the scope of this work and we will report on further details in due course.

Background

What we have been asked to do?

1. The current business plan 2022-23 asks us to do the following:

'Support new graduates (UK and Internationally qualified) making the transition into practice through better understanding of the barriers and enablers to building communities, including the development of appropriate resources.'

2. We have a series of secondary source information which will help us get so far with this task. These sources include:
 - iO Census report 2021 – The first time a specific section on new graduates was included in the Census
 - Boundaries report 2022 by Julie Stone
 - Initial focus groups findings which were undertaken with a group of new graduates in January/February 2020.
 - Registration data on leavers after certain period on the GOsC Register
 - GOPRE outcomes
3. We know from our own focus groups undertaken in 2020 that some of the issues are (1) Technical knowledge versus experience; (2) Building a business and setting up a client base and (3) Professional support networks

Technical Knowledge versus experience:

- Moving from supervised clinic to own practice was described as 'terrifying,' some felt isolated
- After four years of training technical knowledge is at its peak for new graduates, but experience is at its lowest.

- New graduates feel time pressures of practice life, especially when looking at previous osteopaths notes and there is no record of the diagnosis.
- Some reported difficulties in juggling all elements needed to bring into a consultation (e.g., ensuring safety, compliance with Osteopathic Practice Standards and developing a diagnosis of the patient). While juggling all these elements it was difficult to actually get a patient better. Yet new graduates were taught while training that the key to building up a patient base was to get them better quickly.

Building a client base and setting up a business

- Many of the OEIs have business modules, but to most graduates these were felt like add-ons, to make up the credits and did not prepare them for setting up a business adequately, focussing on business law and data protection rather than the practicalities of running a business. It was felt that the OEI's needed to provide students with more business skills.
- Many reported struggling to build up a patient base and/or maintain momentum with a client base
- Some reported issues of high costs of maintaining a business (and this was pre-pandemic).
- There were no discussions about money while studying to become an osteopath, it seemed like a taboo subject, which later leads new graduates to raise concerns about income capability.
- Osteopathy tends to attract people who want to help people as opposed to those who are good at business and marketing.

Professional Support networks

- Typical networks for new graduates included WhatsApp groups or Facebook groups with classmates, study groups from training, fellow alumni and colleagues in which they share advice on marketing, case-based discussions etc., as well as FaceTime calls to discuss cases or face-to-face catch ups when time allows. All participants reported that they found it helpful to discuss issues and scenarios that had cropped up in real life practice.
- Beginning work as an associate or working in multidisciplinary clinics can provide strong sources of support to new graduates. In contrast some associates reported being handed the keys to the practice and never seeing the Principal again, indicating experiences as an associate vary greatly.
- Downsides reported by those osteopaths working in multidisciplinary clinics were that there are no other osteopaths on site and so they have to go out and actively find them
- Some reported finding themselves a mentor, but had to pay for this privilege
- New graduates who were sole practitioners reported not feeling confident about certain techniques and had no one to practise on.
- CPD opportunities were reported as helping newly qualified osteopaths to build professional networks both within osteopathy and with other allied health professionals.

4. We know that the issues identified by iO Census 2021 included:

- Those who have been qualified for less than three years report that they see on average much the same number of patients (26.6 per week) as those who have been qualified for longer, despite working fewer hours (28.5 hours per week)
- New graduates work predominantly as associates, (starting salary of over £27,000 per year, but this salary still remains competitive compared to the NHS Band 5 in the UK, and the average UK salary overall (£28,132 in June 2021 according to the Office of National Statistics).
- The geographical distribution of OEIs predominantly in London and the South East, does have an impact on principals outside these areas, as they struggle to recruit associates despite greater patient numbers. Raising awareness amongst students of the benefit of travelling further afield to find work after qualifying, could support growth and improve access to osteopathic care with an increased and more even access by patients.
- 47% of respondents reported that they did not feel supported in their first three years of practice, with clinical reasoning (48%), business development (46%) and managing patient expectations and anxiety (45%) remaining the most common areas where support would have been appreciated. However, reassuringly, these gaps appear to be shrinking compared to previous census data.
- Those osteopaths that were younger and in the North were more likely to feel supported by their principal
- Principals believe they are giving more support than the associates perceive they are receiving, although belief in support is up in both groups compared to 2017.
- Opportunities for mentoring on clinical skills would be welcomed by a significant proportion of the profession (37%)

5. Issues identified by boundaries report include:

The [boundaries report](#) undertaken by Julie Stone identified several areas in relation to education and training which might impact directly on the transition into practice, and made recommendations for further consideration. These include:

- Core ethics teaching for all students to instil and bolster their moral capacity, build moral character and embed moral courage
- Provide specific, tailored training for lecturers and Clinic Tutors on teaching boundaries
- Include the management of sexual attraction to and from patients as part of pre-registration training, drawing on training methods and concepts used in therapy training

- Substantially increase patient involvement in education and training, including voices of patients with lived experience of boundary breaches
- Roll out practice-based placements for final year students to expose them to real world practice
- Encourage recent graduates and early years practitioners to work as Clinic Tutors. to retain links with OEIs
- Research and implement a development programme for Osteopathic Clinical Supervision
- Review post-registration specialist training options and research effective strategies and best practice for teaching about boundaries at different stages of the osteopathic career”

6. Issues identified from Registration data on leavers in 2022

- Leavers data from the GOsC Register suggests that moving overseas cases feature more significantly among those that left the Register after spending less than four years on the Register (a total of 51 registrants) and, even more precisely, in those with more than two years and less than three years on the GOsC Register (22 of the 51 registrants). This latter point might be explained due to younger osteopaths facing difficulties starting up a new practice in the UK and deciding to look for new opportunities abroad or osteopaths deciding to work here for a few years post-graduation, then returning to their home nation.

7. GOPRE

- In developing the updated [graduate outcomes](#), we considered the reference to preparedness for practice within the former outcomes, and felt (in conjunction with the Stakeholder Reference Group) that it was appropriate to broaden the scope of the outcomes so as to apply to wider range of postgraduate careers – for example, working in the NHS rather than making the assumption that everyone will work in private practice. The updated reference within the Graduate Outcomes includes:

(13) Osteopathic practice is often delivered within the independent sector. The outcomes in this guidance focus on safe, effective and ethical clinical practice within whatever context or setting the osteopath delivers care. Osteopaths must be conversant with the demands and challenges faced by practitioners (including the challenges of establishing, marketing, managing and maintaining a new business) and develop strategies for managing these before graduation. Failure to do so could distract from patient care during the first years of practice and beyond.

- And the specific outcomes:

(48) Demonstrate ways of establishing a viable, safe and effective practice, including:

- a. knowledge of and ability to comply with relevant legislation and associated guidance, including in the areas of health and safety, data protection, equality diversity and inclusion², and financial and accounting requirements.*
- b. ability to employ appropriate and legal methods of marketing and advertising.*
- c. an understanding of the issues in relation to the use of social media appropriately, legally, safely and ethically, in relation to professional practice.*
- d. knowledge and understanding of the regulatory requirements in their intended locality, including the roles of the relevant local authority, the Care Quality Commission (England), Healthcare Improvement Scotland, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (Northern Ireland) and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales.*
- e. ability to develop appropriate, clear, inclusive and accessible patient information in a variety of formats and approaches to provide patient information that individual patients can understand in advance of an appointment.*

- We have further included the following as an outcome, rather than as advice (as it was in the previous outcomes):

Understand the need to take steps to integrate into the professional community, and the professional support available from a variety of sources to help with the transition into practice life, including:

- ***Institute of Osteopathy*** (the professional body for osteopaths)
 - ***Regional groups and communities***
 - ***Special Interest Groups and associations***
 - *Resources provided by GOsC to support professional development and engagement*
 - *with **CPD requirements**.*
 - ***National Council for Osteopathic Research hubs***
- We asked in the consultation on updated outcomes whether respondents thought that a more specific outcome in relation to business skills and knowledge should be included within the outcomes. Responses on this point were limited and mixed. It was considered following the consultation by the Stakeholder Reference Group which reflected that the outcomes as updated already relate to the running of a business, including marketing legally and ethically, and felt that the existing wording was sufficient.

Discussion

8. Given the information we know from these sources, (see Point 3 to Point 7), we aim to approach this activity by the following key steps, with an indicative timeframe also included:

Steps	Timeframe
<u>Step 1:</u> Recruit new graduates (those that have been on the Register for 6-12 months with key demographics) for a series of focus groups	November to December 2022
<u>Step 2:</u> Run a series of focus groups with new graduates (those that have been on the Register for 6-12 months with key demographics) to explore the current enablers and barriers they face with building communities of practice e.g. identify things we don't know	January to February 2023
Report to PEC on focus group findings (Step 2)	March 2023
<u>Step 3:</u> Telephone interviews with special interest groups and discussions with iO: involving large osteopathic clinics involved in Evolving Careers Framework and other organisations in the sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish what works well • What works less well • What could be done differently • What more could be done, and which of these would be most helpful 	March to May 2023
<u>Step 4:</u> Alongside the research-based stages of this project, we will simultaneously be doing the following activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review touch points we currently have with new graduates/joiners of the GOsC Register b) Review of information currently available on GOsC websites for new graduates/new registrants c) Seeking engagement and communication collaboration opportunities with new graduates/new registrants. 	January to May 2023
<u>Step 5</u> On the basis of the findings offer some solutions which might include development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance or Principles (e.g. we are aware of the NMC transition into practice principles¹) • Resources • Advice 	May to June 2023

¹ NMC Transition into Practice Principles <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/guidance/preceptorship/>

Steps	Timeframe
<u>Step 6:</u> Using the research findings and outcomes of review of touch points and information on GOsC websites, develop a proposal for changes to the GOsC public website (pulling all relevant information together in one place for new graduates/new registrants, including new resources and guidance developed as a result of the research findings). Also develop a long-term communications and engagement plan targeting this audience with the aim of providing support and promoting the information available to them to support with the transition to practice.	May to June 2023
Report to PEC on proposals (incorporating steps 3, 4, 5 and 6)	June 2023
<u>Step 7:</u> Publish findings of report, including solutions to be implemented.	July 2023

Recommendation: To note the proposed plan for the transition into practice project.