



General
Osteopathic
Council

General Osteopathic Council: updated statement on fitness to practise activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

Patient safety remains our top priority. We are continuing to focus attention on triage of concerns and risk management activity, and we are prioritising high-risk investigations wherever possible.

At the start of lockdown, on 26 March 2020, the GOsC took the decision to postpone all final hearings that had not yet commenced until after 3 July 2020. This followed government advice on COVID-19 and is in line with the other healthcare regulators. This decision was taken to help protect the health of osteopaths, witnesses, and all parties who were scheduled to attend our hearings at Osteopathy House in London.

To continue to meet our public protection duties we identified those hearings which needed to take precedence, throughout this period and we have been managing urgent hearings remotely, including hearings of interim suspension orders, reviews and some part-heard cases. This has worked well.

As part of our evolving approach to our adjudication function and remote hearings, we have been exploring how we can progress cases given some form of social distancing measures may be in place for an extended period of time. We have observed that the civil courts and other regulators have also made effective use of virtual or remote hearings. We have reviewed all cases awaiting consideration by the Professional Conduct Committee and have identified those which can be heard at virtual hearings. It is therefore our intention to expand our use of remote hearings to substantive hearings from 3 July onwards. We are also considering whether some cases might be suitable for 'blended' hearings (hearings in which some people attend virtually and others are present at Osteopathy House).

We remain committed to ensuring our adjudication function continues to be discharged in a fair, effective and transparent manner.

This statement was agreed on 12 June 2020 and is subject to change. We will continue to review the measures in place and work collaboratively with all our stakeholders

General Osteopathic Council: this is an updated version of the Interim Statement of 26 March 2020.