



General
Osteopathic
Council

We know that many osteopaths are unable to provide care for patients given the unprecedented circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic and will be trying to manage the consequential loss of income and all the concerns and worries that will flow from that. In addition, the impact of the lock down on different members of society including osteopaths, their family and friends may well be impacting on osteopaths too.

To support the massive societal impact of COVID-19, the government has set out a measure of financial support. The government website is at: businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support. The Institute of Osteopathy is also providing advice and has provided this: iosteopathy.org/news/covid-19-update. This guidance is being continually updated. There is also specific support for the most vulnerable members of society available, for example: gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable. We recognise that osteopaths will be looking to reduce their expenditure and this will include consideration of their registration fee, amongst other things.

With regard to registration fees, these are set out in legislation and can't be changed without a change to that legislation. To make any changes we would need government time to support the necessary amendments to the rules. Changing legislation is not a straightforward and quick process as it also needs approval from the Privy Council and consultation with stakeholders is also expected. The priority of the Department of Health and Social Care in terms of health regulation is necessary changes to support the response to the COVID-19 emergency and the discharge of statutory duties.

We are actively working to identify what options there are (within the context of the required delivery of our statutory duties and our charitable objectives). To this end we are undertaking the detailed financial modelling (including review of estimated loss of income and necessary reductions in expenditure) required for detailed consideration by our Council, which is also required in law.

In the meantime, what we are saying to osteopaths now is that, if this suits their circumstances, there is the existing option to reduce registration fees if an osteopath is 'non-practising' (ie not seeing or speaking to patients) for three continuous months within their registration year. For example, if an osteopath has been registered for three years or more, their registration fee would be reduced to £320 rather than the full registration fee of £570. There is more information here: ozone.osteopathy.org.uk/my-registration/registration/non-practising

Finally, we would like to acknowledge that we very much appreciate you bringing this to our attention and sharing this petition with us in a constructive and helpful way and I hope you have found this reply helpful. We will provide further updates to osteopaths through our ebulletins.