



General
Osteopathic
Council

GOsC Osteopaths' Opinion Survey 2012

FINDINGS

Survey conducted independently for the GOsC by Opinion Matters
(www.opinionmatters.co.uk)

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Survey overview

- Osteopaths' Opinion Survey 2012 sent to all osteopaths on the UK Register.
- Survey period: 26 March to 30 April 2012.
- Response: 1,372 osteopaths; equivalent to 30% of UK registrants (4,586 at 26 March 2012).

A. About you

Q1. How long is it since you qualified as an osteopath?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Less than one year	90	6.6%
Between 1 and 5 years	270	19.7%
Between 6 and 10 years	228	16.6%
Between 11 and 20 years	382	27.8%
Over 21 years	396	28.9%
No Response	6	0.4%

Q2. In which of the following do you practise?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Independent/private practice	1338	97.5%
NHS/public sector	84	6.1%
Education sector	193	14.1%
Research sector	33	2.4%
No Response	6	0.4%
Other (please specify)	24	1.7%

- 6 (0.4%) mentioned the charity sector.
- 6 (0.4%) mentioned another medical service/body (e.g., sports governing body medical team).
- 7 (0.54%) were not currently working.
- 5 (0.36%) mentioned a PhD, non-osteopathic work and careers advice.

Q3. How large is your main practice?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Sole practitioner	626	45.6%
2-5 osteopaths	650	47.4%
6-9 osteopaths	74	5.4%
10+ osteopaths (please specify)	11	0.8%
No Response	11	0.8%

Clarifying the 10+ option, there were 11 responses, 3 of which were possibly anomalous.

- 4 of the 11 responses (0.3% of the entire survey) said their practice comprised 10 osteopaths.
- Another 4 (0.3%) said their practice comprised 11.
- The remaining 3 responses are outliers and are given as 60, 400, and 1027, possibly not relating to the number of osteopaths employed but to total number of colleagues in an NHS setting.

Q4. In which of these regions or countries is your current main place of work?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
North West	66	4.8%
North East	43	3.1%
Scotland	49	3.6%
East Anglia	95	6.9%
Midlands	119	8.7%
London	271	19.8%
South East	436	31.8%
South West	167	12.2%
Wales	38	2.8%
Northern Ireland	4	0.3%
Locum	3	0.2%
No Response	9	0.7%
Outside UK – Please specify:	72	5.2%

- Europe – 39 (58.2% of those working outside the UK): Republic of Ireland – 9 (12.5%); France – 8 (11.8%); Portugal – 5 (7.4%). Belgium, Channel Islands, Germany, Italy, Spain – 2 each (2.7%); Denmark, Gibraltar, Greece, Norway – 1 each (1.4%).
- North America – 10 (14.9% of those working outside the UK): Canada – 8 (9%); USA and Barbados – 1 each (1.4%).
- Asia – 7 (10.4% of those working outside the UK): Hong Kong and Singapore – 3 each (4.2%).
- UAE – 1 (1.4%).
- Australasia – 7 (10.4% of those working outside the UK): New Zealand – 4 (5.6%); Australia – 2 (2.7%); French Polynesia – 1 (1.4%).

Q5. Where did you complete your primary osteopathic qualification?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
UK	1350	98.4%
Europe	7	0.5%
Outside Europe	7	0.5%
No Response	8	0.6%

B. About regulation and the GOsC

Q6. Which of these do you think describes the purpose of the GOsC?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Registering qualified professionals	1271	92.6%
Promoting osteopathy	538	39.2%
Setting and maintaining standards of osteopathic practice and conduct	1151	83.9%
Developing standards of osteopathic practice and conduct	963	70.2%
Representing the interests of registrants	461	33.6%
Assuring the quality of osteopathic education	930	67.8%
Ensuring continuing professional development	957	69.8%
Protecting the title 'osteopath'	1103	80.4%
Providing legal and business advice	324	23.6%
Helping patients with concerns or complaints about an osteopath	1130	82.4%
Providing leadership for the osteopathic profession	484	35.3%
Other (please specify):	77	5.6%

77 respondents provided further information under the 'Other' option:

- The most common theme related to an opinion that the GOsC was over-regulating osteopathy and generally making life difficult for osteopaths. These comprised 22 (28.6%) of the 'other' section.
- A further 10 of the 'other' responses (13%) considered the GOsC to be motivated by self-interest (e.g., their own jobs and salaries). Overall, negative responses constitute 2.3% of the survey as a whole.
- 19 of the 'other' responses (24.7%) gave answers relating to the development of osteopathy as a profession in various ways.
- 6 responses (8.5%) mentioned support for osteopaths (not in the GOsC's remit).
- 6 responses (8.5%) mentioned support for patients.
- 5 responses (6.5%) suggested the GOsC should promote osteopathy to the general public.
- 4 (6%) suggested the GOsC purpose should include all of the options, but that it was, in fact, none of them.
- 5 respondents (6.5%) either disliked the question or gave unintelligible responses.

Cross-tabulating responses indicates that the longer an osteopath has been qualified, the more likely they are to believe that the GOsC's purpose includes (1) 'to promote osteopathy', and (2) to represent the interests of registrants'.

Q7. How confident are you that osteopaths are well regulated by the GOsC?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Very confident	236	17.2%
Confident	383	27.9%
Fairly confident	488	35.6%
Not very confident	170	12.4%
Not at all confident	77	5.6%
No Response	18	1.3%

Q8. Overall do you think regulation has had a positive effect on osteopathy?

	Count	Percent
Yes	801	58.4%
No	237	17.3%
Don't know	303	22.1%
No Response	31	2.3%

Q9. What is that positive effect?

There were 663 substantive responses to this question, of which:

- 354 (53.4% of those who responded to this question) recognised the job that the GOsC does in maintaining standards. Many responses mentioned that regulation ensures the title 'osteopath' is protected and that all osteopaths must be of a certain standard. In addition, a large number of respondents also said that CPD as required by the GOsC ensured that osteopaths maintain high standards throughout their career.
- 153 (23.1%) said that regulation increased public trust and confidence in osteopaths and ensured that they knew they were being treated by a professional.
- 94 (14.2%) mentioned an increased standing of osteopathy in the perception of both the public and other medical professions.
- 51 (7.7%) said that regulation increased the standing of osteopaths specifically within the medical community and other medical professions.
- 22 (3.3%) said that having a single register created a more cohesive profession and helped to unite various factions.
- 16 (2.4%) gave more vague answers relating to increased awareness, recognition and representation.
- The last 11 (1.7%) would not fit into any other category or were actually talking about negatives.

Q10. What is that negative effect?

There were 225 substantive responses to this question. Of these responses:

- 71 (31.6% of those who responded to the question) said that they thought the GOsC out of touch with osteopaths. The majority of these comments said that this meant that the scope of osteopathy was being narrowed too much in an attempt to make it more medical. Many of these respondents

- said that the original 'essence', philosophy, or 'soul' was being ignored or lost.
- 60 (26.7%) said that the GOsC was too heavy-handed, too keen to prosecute, and over-regulated osteopathy. Many of these answers seemed to resent the fact that the GOsC was there for the purpose of patient protection.
- 25 (11.1%) felt that the GOsC was not doing enough to promote the fact that osteopathy is regulated, particularly to the rest of the medical community and the NHS. Almost all recognised the fact that it is not part of the GOsC remit to promote the benefits of osteopathy to the general public.
- 16 (7.1%) said that the registration fees were too high. Some said fees were too high outright, while others said that they were too high for the services provided.
- 12 (5.3%) listed numerous criticisms of the GOsC; these typically echoed the other themes highlighted in responses to this question.
- 11 (4.9%) gave answers to the effect that the GOsC simply was not doing its job properly, such as weak leadership or unethical performance.
- 6 (2.7%) thought that regulation had had neither a positive nor a negative effect.
- 7 (3.1%) were either positive comments, criticisms of the question, or very vague responses.

C. You as an osteopath

Q11. In what ways do you inform patients and the public that you are registered?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Verbally	710	51.7%
Practice leaflet	719	52.4%
Practice website	940	68.5%
Posters/flyers	286	20.8%
Registration certificate displayed in practice	921	67.1%
Other	113	8.2%

- 35 (31%) indicated their registration on their business cards.
- 25 (22.1%) said that they were rarely, if ever, asked, and so did not feel the need to tell anyone.
- 23 (20.4%) indicated registration within correspondence, such as within an email signature or on headed paper.
- 16 (14.2%) indicated some form of advertising highlighted their registration. Around half of these mentioned Yellow Pages.
- 10 (8.8%) said that they used their GOsC ID cards.
- 4 responses (3.5%) were not relevant to the question.

Q12. Do you inform patients that they can check your registration status by contacting the GOsC directly or via the online Register?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Always	47	3.4%
Sometimes	156	11.4%
Only if asked	589	42.9%

Rarely	168	12.2%
Never	405	29.5%
No Response	7	0.5%

Q13. Do you use your GOSc identity card?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes	315	23.0%
No	1048	76.4%
No Response	9	0.7%

Q14. Do you use the GOSc 'Safe in your Hands' certification mark in your practice information, e.g. on a website or in leaflets?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes	633	46.1%
No	722	52.6%
No Response	17	1.2%

Q15. We are planning to allow registrants to use the GOSc logo to signify their regulated status. Would you use the GOSc logo in your practice information?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes	634	46.2%
Yes, possibly	594	43.3%
No	137	10.0%
No Response	7	0.5%

Q16. What action would you take if you knew someone was calling themselves an osteopath when not registered?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Report them to the GOSc	1155	84.2%
Report them to the British Osteopathic Association or another osteopathic group	280	20.4%
Report them to Trading Standards	224	16.3%
Take no action	48	3.5%
No Response	6	0.4%

Other (please specify): 70 5.1%

- 28 (2% of the total surveyed) said that it would depend on the circumstances as to whether or not they reported the practitioner, including whether they were doing a good job or not and whether they knew them personally.
- 9 (0.7%) practiced outside of the GOsC's geographical remit (eg. overseas).
- 14 (1%) suggested an alternative form of action (e.g., reporting them to the police, spreading the word locally).
- 8 (0.6%) considered the question was irrelevant, vague, or hypothetical.
- 10 (0.7%) gave answers to the effect that they did not trust the GOsC.

D. Registration and renewal process

Q17. In Spring 2011 we introduced online renewal of registration. If you have used this new process how did you find it?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Very Easy	345	25.1%
Quite Easy	406	29.6%
Slightly Difficult	78	5.7%
Extremely Difficult	17	1.2%
I have not used it	497	36.2%
No Response	29	2.1%

Q18. How would you prefer to be reminded about your GOsC registration renewal?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Email	988	72.0%
SMS (text message)	154	11.2%
Post	860	62.7%
Phone	33	2.4%
Don't want to be reminded	7	0.5%
Other (please specify):	11	0.8%
No Response	6	0.4%

- 7 (0.5%) said that they would like two forms of reminder so that if one was missed, they had an extra layer of security.
- The other 4 (0.3%) were complaining about the registration fee.

E. Standards of practice

Q19. How do you find the CPD declaration process overall?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Very Easy	419	30.5%
Quite Easy	725	52.9%
Slightly Difficult	159	11.6%
Extremely Difficult	39	2.8%
No Response	29	2.1%

Q20. The GOsC is consulting on changes to the current CPD scheme. Are you aware of the CPD Discussion Document published in August 2011?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes, I am aware	748	54.5%
No, I don't know about it	617	45.9%
No Response	7	0.5%

Q21. New *Osteopathic Practice Standards* will come into force from September 2012. Are you aware of these new standards?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes, I am aware	985	71.9%
No, I don't know about it	379	27.6%
No Response	7	0.5%

F. Fitness to practise

Q22. How well do you understand the GOsC's process for handling complaints made against osteopaths by patients and the public?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Very well	130	9.5%
Fairly well	534	38.9%
Not very well	514	37.5%
Not at all well	132	9.6%
Don't understand it at all	55	4.0%
No Response	7	0.5%

Q23. How confident are you that the GOsC's Fitness to Practise procedures produce fair outcomes?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Very confident	79	5.8%
Fairly confident	760	54.4%
Not very confident	391	28.5%
Not at all confident	117	8.5%
No Response	25	1.8%

Q24. Have you ever had concerns about another osteopath's ability to do their job?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes	423	30.8%
No	942	68.7%
No Response	7	0.5%

Q25. What aspects of their behaviour were you concerned about?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Attitude and behaviour	256	42.8%
Clinical knowledge and skills	245	41.0%
Health	43	10.0%
Rather not say	21	4.9%
No Response	10	2.3%
Other (please specify):	23	3.8%

- 16 had concerns with bad business practices. Common examples included selling the patients short on time and a lack of cleanliness.
- 2 related to unregistered practitioners.
- 5 were unclear responses.

Q26. What action, if any, did you take?*(Please tick one box)*

	Count	Percent
Reported them to the GOsC	36	8.4%
Reported them to their employer	18	4.2%
Spoke to the osteopath in question	100	23.3%
Didn't take any action	223	50.7%
No Response	11	2.6%
Other:	52	11.8%

- 15 had either discussed the person with other osteopaths or given advice to a patient who had received poor treatment from another osteopath.
- 14 reported the practitioner to another authority, such as their college tutors or the Advertising Standards Authority.
- 12 were aware that the practitioner was already under investigation.
- 11 decided that the issue was either not serious enough or not credible enough for further action to be taken.

Q27. Why did you not take any action?*(Please tick one box)*

	Count	Percent
Issue was resolved	22	10.1%
Another individual took action	22	10.1%
Didn't know what to do	27	12.4%
Too busy	7	3.2%
Didn't want to get involved	57	30.9%
Advised not to take action by colleagues	20	9.2%
No Response	14	6.5%
Other (please specify)	38	17.5%

- By far the most common theme was a feeling that the problem was not serious enough – 21 responses.
- 7 respondents decided that they should leave the problem to sort itself out rather than getting involved (e.g. hoped they would improve, thought that being a bad osteopath would mean they would go out of business eventually).
- 4 decided that reporting the problem would be a waste of their time as nothing would come of it.
- 6 answers had nothing to do with the question, were from practitioners abroad, or highlighted problems with the GOsC.

G. Communicating with the GOsC

Q28. How effectively do you think the GOsC communicates with osteopaths currently?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Very effectively	146	10.6%
Fairly effectively	842	61.4%
Not very effectively	249	18.1%
Not at all effectively	81	5.9%
Don't know	45	3.3%
No Response	9	0.7%

Q29. What do you think of the language and tone of GOsC communications?

Of the 1,372 completed surveys, there were 1,116 responses to this question, of which:

- 256 (19.7%) were returned with no comment or answer given.
- The majority of responses, 426 (31%), were happy/very happy with the language and tone of communications and had no problems with it.
- 252 (17.4%) did not like GOsC communications. Common adjectives used in this group were 'authoritarian', 'dictatorial', 'cold', or 'intimidating'. These responses were characterised by a general hostility towards the GOsC as a regulator. Around 10% of these responses used the analogy of being talked down to by a head teacher at school. Around 20% of this group thought the GOsC's functions included representation and promotion of osteopaths as opposed to regulation.
- 219 (16%) used words like 'professional', 'appropriate', 'formal', or 'legalistic'. These responses tended to recognise that as a regulatory body, the GOsC was limited in the language and tone that could be used, and were broadly satisfied with GOsC communications.
- An almost identical number, 218 (15.9%), described communications as 'bureaucratic', 'verbose', 'officious', or 'pompous'. These responses frequently complained that *The Osteopath* was dry, both in subject matter and tone. Many complained that communications used 'buzz-words' or 'jargon', or that they were simply too 'wordy'. A high number of people in this category asked for short summaries of news stories and reports.

Q30. If you have contacted the GOsC in the last 12 months, what was this for?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
CPD query/submission	425	31.0%
I have not contacted the GOsC	389	28.4%
Registration query	335	24.4 %
Requesting information	267	19.5%
Payment of fees	239	17.4%
Revalidation	167	12.2%
Ethical question	55	4.0%
A colleague's fitness to practise	12	0.9%

Your fitness to practise	10	0.7%
No Response	18	1.3%
Other (please specify):	60	4.4%

- 15 answers related to contacting the GOsC to change personal details on the Register.
- 12 reported an unregistered osteopath or someone practicing without qualifications.
- 9 were to do with queries about the GOsC website.
- 9 wished to make some kind of complaint about the GOsC.
- 6 were to do with the GOsC in any other way (e.g. an application for a job, an expert witness).
- 9 responses would not fit in any other category (e.g. 'usually contact the BOA', 'to arrange meetings').

Q31. How did you last contact the GOsC?

	Count	Percent
By telephone	566	57.6%
By email	309	31.4%
By post	55	5.6%
By personally visiting the GOsC's office	11	1.1%
By fax	0	0.00%
No Response	15	1.5%
Other (please specify)	27	2.7%

- 10 used the website (primarily the **o** zone, including for CPD submissions).
- 4 said they talked to someone in person at an event or conference.
- 4 could not recall how they had contacted the GOsC.
- 9 were responses that either used more than one method and used the 'other' option instead of ticking more than one box, or simply wanted to complain.

Q32. How far do you agree with the following statement?

'The staff were knowledgeable and competent in dealing with your query'

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	521	53.0%
Slightly Agree	287	29.2%
Slightly Disagree	84	8.5%
Strongly Disagree	63	6.4%
No Response	28	2.8%

Q33. How far do you agree with the following statement?
'The staff handled the query with courtesy and professionalism'
(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	606	61.6%
Slightly Agree	241	24.5%
Slightly Disagree	66	6.71%
Strongly Disagree	42	4.3%
No Response	28	2.8%

Q34. How would you prefer to receive important information from the GOsC?
(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Email	956	69.7%
Letter	898	65.5%
<i>The Osteopath</i>	508	37.0%
e-bulletin	226	16.5%
• zone alerts	119	8.7%
SMS/text message	108	7.9%
Web updates, e.g. RSS feeds from GOsC public website	64	4.7%
Telephone	43	3.1%
Don't want to receive	10	0.7%
No Response	10	0.7%
Other (please specify)	10	0.7%

- 8 wished to complain either about the • zone or the GOsC (e.g. 'a Ouija board').
- 2 were not applicable or suggested an online forum.

Q35. Do you read the GOsC's bi-monthly magazine for registrants *The Osteopath*?
(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
All of it	272	19.8%
Most of it	549	40.0%
Select articles I am interested in	478	34.8%
Don't read it	62	4.5%
No Response	11	0.8%

Q36. How would you rate *The Osteopath* in terms of the following?

Question:	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Response
Language	22.40% (294)	56.00% (733)	18.20% (238)	1.90% (25)	1.50% (20)
Content	9.60% (126)	41.40% (542)	39.30% (515)	8.00% (105)	1.70% (22)
Relevance	12.10% (158)	44.50% (583)	35.80% (469)	6.10% (80)	1.50% (20)
Layout and design	12.80% (168)	55.80% (731)	25.40% (333)	4.20% (55)	1.80% (23)
Frequency	14.70% (193)	59.00% (773)	22.00% (288)	2.70% (35)	1.60% (21)

Q37: How could *The Osteopath* magazine be improved?

There were 742 substantive responses to this question, of which:

- 373 (50.3%), by far the largest group, wanted a greater focus in the magazine on osteopaths themselves. In particular, respondents asked for more articles on CPD and practical problems, more case studies and research, and articles about good business practice and development. There was a general feeling that the magazine was not written by osteopaths or for osteopaths.
- 92 (12.4%) specifically said that they thought *The Osteopath* was too focused on the work of the GOsC and was to some degree negative towards osteopathy. Many of these responses called for more balance.
- 68 (9.2%) did not like the magazine layout. Many thought that the text was printed on backgrounds that made it difficult to read. A common suggestion was for the most important points to be highlighted or put at the beginning of the articles.
- 57 (7.7%) thought that *The Osteopath* is fine as it is and does not need changing.
- 25 (3.4%) asked for it to become a monthly publication. 6 (0.8%) suggested it could be published less frequently.
- 23 (3.1%) called for the magazine to be available online or at least in PDF format, so that it could be read on an e-reader or iPad. (Both of these options are already available.)
- The remaining 1.9% (25) were responses with no relation to any other theme (e.g., "include horoscopes", print on recycled paper, close down the magazine, provide binders for display purposes).

Q38. Currently a hard copy of *The Osteopath* is sent out to all registrants. Would you prefer to receive this electronically?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes, instead of hard copy	195	14.2%
Yes, sometimes	148	10.08%
No	1018	74.2%
No Response	11	0.8%

Q39. How would you rate the GOsC public website in terms of the following?

Question:	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A	No Response
Language	15.40% (211)	52.80% (725)	18.10% (248)	2.00% (27)	3.50% (48)	8.20% (113)
Content	11.00% (151)	48.70% (668)	24.00% (329)	4.30% (59)	3.60% (50)	8.40% (115)
Relevance	12.00% (164)	49.80% (683)	22.80% (313)	3.60% (49)	3.50% (48)	8.40% (115)
Layout and design	10.00% (137)	43.20% (593)	28.00% (384)	6.90% (95)	3.50% (48)	8.40% (115)
Ease of use	9.30% (127)	39.60% (543)	23.50% (323)	6.60% (90)	3.70% (51)	17.30% (238)

Q40. How could the public website be improved?

There were 492 substantive responses to this question, of which:

- 192 (39%) suggested the website layout and appearance should be changed or modernised. Many also said that the structure of the website should be changed to make navigation easier.
- 84 (17%) wanted more information on osteopathy to be available, including what to expect at an osteopathic appointment and a clear definition of osteopathy. (This information is already available on the public website.)
- 78 (15.9%) thought that the website was fine and did not require any changes.
- 65 (13.2%) called for improvements to the "Find an Osteopath" search function. Many suggested being able to search with more than one criteria, or a view more similar to Google maps.
- 36 (7.3%) misunderstood or misread the question and offered comments relating to the osteopaths' section of the website (the o zone).
- 14 (2.8%) suggested that the GOsC should take more active steps to promote awareness of the organisation. Some suggested improving the GOsC 'Google search' ranking.
- 10 (2%) suggested that that this question should be directed at the public, not osteopaths.
- 9 (1.8%) gave answers that did not fit in with any other theme (e.g. 'close it down', 'angry birds', 'look at the general chiropractic council website').

Q41. What are the main reasons you access the o zone?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
CPD submission	1096	79.9%
Renewal of registration	676	49.3%
News	239	17.4%
Course information	180	13.1%
Practice guidance	176	12.8%
Don't use the o zone	165	12.0%
Regional news	56	4.1%
No Response	19	1.4%

Q42. How would you rate the o zone in terms of the following?

Question:	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Response
Language	14.70% (178)	57.60% (695)	21.50% (259)	1.20% (14)	5.10% (61)
Content	11.60% (140)	51.90% (627)	28.90% (349)	2.70% (33)	4.80% (58)
Relevance	12.80% (155)	52.70% (636)	26.80% (324)	2.70% (32)	5.00% (60)
Layout and design	11.00% (133)	47.00% (567)	30.70% (371)	6.60% (80)	4.60% (56)
Ease of use	10.10% (122)	43.20% (522)	26.50% (320)	5.50% (66)	14.70% (177)

Q43. How could the o zone be improved?

There were 442 substantive answers to this question, of which:

- 236 (53.4%) were unhappy with the current layout and navigation of the o zone. Most thought that the website was too cluttered and difficult to navigate. Many asked for a simpler layout with clear links and headers. The CPD submission facility was also highlighted, with requests for the ability to input all the necessary information on one screen rather than having to repeat steps.
- 104 (23.5%) were happy with the o zone as it is and did not want any changes.
- 74 (16.7%) wanted more resources for osteopaths, such as free access to more research papers and journals and content relevant to CPD. Some of these respondents also asked for some kind of online community, such as a notice board, a place for advertisements, or an online forum.
- 28 (6.4%) gave answers that would not fit in with anything else (e.g., 'this is taking too long', 'I'm getting bored now', 'see answer to question 40').

Q44. Do you read the GOsC's monthly news e-bulletin

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
All of it	120	8.2%
Most of it	223	16.3%
Skim it	452	32.9%
Read selected articles	112	8.2%
Don't read it	291	21.2%
Don't receive it	154	11.2%
No Response	20	1.5%

Q45. How would you rate the GOsC news e-bulletin in terms of the following?

Question:	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Response
Language	12.40% (115)	52.10% (483)	27.80% (258)	1.60% (15)	6.00% (56)
Content	10.10% (94)	46.00% (426)	34.80% (323)	3.00% (28)	6.00% (56)
Relevance	10.60% (98)	45.20% (419)	35.90% (333)	2.30% (21)	6.00% (56)
Layout and design	10.60% (98)	47.40% (439)	33.20% (308)	2.80% (26)	6.00% (56)
Frequency	10.60% (98)	50.60% (469)	30.50% (283)	1.50% (14)	6.80% (63)

Q46. How could the news e-bulletin be improved?

There were 277 substantive responses, of which:

- 96 (34.7%) were happy with the e-bulletin as it is.
- A further 43 (15.5%) were happy with the content, tone, and language, but wanted the layout and format to be changed. The most common suggestion was for a list of bullet points to be included at the start of the newsletter, hyperlinked to the articles. A few also suggested a PDF version so it could be read on e-readers and iPads.
- 48 (17.3%) did not like the content. There were a lot of requests in this section for articles with more relevance to osteopaths' day to day practice, such as case studies or research articles.
- 46 (16.6%) did not like the tone or the language. As with Q.29 ('what do you think of the language and tone of GOsC communications?'), there were some complaints that the tone was 'intimidating' or 'dictatorial', although these were in the minority.
- 11 (4%) said they did not like reading online and would rather not receive e-bulletins.
12 (4.3%) wanted the bulletin less often; 9 (3.2%) wanted to receive it more often.
- 12 responses (4.3%) would not fit in with anything else (e.g., a request for an online archive, 'see question 40', 'do I need to spell it out again?', and 'I'm getting bored now').

Q47. Do you read the GOsC's Fitness to Practise bulletin?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
All of it	209	15.2%
Most of it	276	20.1%
Skim it	402	29.3%
Read select articles	123	9.0%
Don't read it	213	15.5%
Don't receive it	120	8.7%
No Response	29	2.1%

Q48. How would you rate the Fitness to Practise bulletin?

Question:	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Response
Language	12.30% (128)	49.70% (516)	27.40% (285)	2.30% (24)	8.30% (86)
Content	11.10% (115)	48.60% (505)	29.20% (303)	3.10% (32)	8.10% (84)
Relevance	12.40% (129)	47.90% (498)	28.30% (294)	3.30% (34)	8.10% (84)
Layout and design	9.70% (101)	49.30% (512)	30.10% (313)	2.50% (26)	8.40% (87)
Frequency	9.90% (103)	47.00% (488)	29.10% (302)	2.50% (26)	11.50% (120)

Q49. How could the Fitness to Practise bulletin be improved?

There were 282 substantive replies, of which:

- 106 (37.6%) of respondents to the question were happy with the Fitness to Practise bulletin and did not see any need for changes.
- 49 (17.4%) wanted the layout to be changed. As with Q. 46 ('how could the news e-bulletin be improved?'), it was commonly suggested that a list of hyperlinked bullet points should be offered at the start of the bulletin. Similarly, a few also suggested PDF versions for mobile devices.
- 40 (14.2%) resented the role of the GOsC as a regulator. These comments tended to accuse the GOsC of being 'dictatorial', 'threatening', and generally out of touch with osteopathic practice.
- 29 (10.3%) said that they wanted more and clearer examples of case studies, specifically of what had been done wrong, so that they could avoid the same mistakes.
- 26 (9.2%) thought this bulletin too "verbose" and too 'legal'.
- 33 (11.7%) were responses that would not fit in elsewhere (e.g., 'see question 40', 'burn it', 'cartoons').

Q50. If the GOsC were to move solely to electronic communications for financial and environmental benefit, would you be happy with this?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes, very happy	207	15.1%
Yes, quite happy	487	35.5%
No, (please tell us why)	635	46.3%
No Response	43	3.1%

50.6% of respondents answered that they would be either 'very happy' or 'quite happy' with this option.

46.3% (635) opposed any move to solely electronic communications, for the following reasons:

- 340 (53.5% of this group) gave answers to the effect that they simply preferred a hard copy to an electronic one. The majority of these responses said that they either preferred reading a hard copy or didn't like reading on a screen. Many also said that having a hard copy to hand meant that they could read it anywhere, when it was convenient for them, instead of having to set time aside to do so.

- 228 (35.9% of this group) felt that hard copies were more secure than electronic ones. There was a strong feeling amongst this group that emails tended to get overlooked, viewed as unimportant, or deleted; hard copies were harder to ignore. A proportion of these respondents also said that their access to a computer or to the internet was infrequent or was hindered by limited computer literacy or by living in a rural area with poor internet service.
- 49 (7.7%) answered that they would only accept this if it meant a reduction in the registration fees (which the majority thought would be unlikely).
- 14 (2.9%) of the responses did not fit in elsewhere (e.g., 'void', 'see previous answer').

H. GOsC consultations

Q51. How often do you take part in GOsC consultations?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
In the last year (please specify in months)	256	18.7%
In the last 1-5 years	536	39.1%
Over 5 years ago (please specify in years)	43	3.1%
I never take part GOsC consultations	470	34.3%
No Response	67	4.9%

Q 52: If not, why not?

There were 390 substantive responses to this question, of which:

- 130 (33.3%) said that they did not participate because of a lack of time or other commitments.
- 61 (15.6%) said that they did not know what a GOsC consultation was or had simply never heard of them.
- 55 (14.1%) equated consultations with GOsC consultation meetings (eg regional conferences), responding that the consultation (venues) were too far away or otherwise difficult to get to. More than half of these responses were comments from osteopaths who lived and practised abroad.
- 54 (13.8%) thought that their views would not be listened to or that the GOsC entered into consultations with a predetermined agenda of their own.
- 53 (13.6%) were newly qualified and had not as yet had the opportunity to participate in a consultation. Most of these seemed to indicate that they would probably participate in the future.
- 27 (6.9%) said that a general lack of interest prevented them from participating.
- 12 (3%) were other responses (e.g., 'pass', 'void', 'what will be, will be').

Q53. Do you think the GOsC consults osteopaths well?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes, very well	108	12.0%
Yes, quite well	511	56.7%
Not very well	194	21.5%
Not at all well	58	6.4%
No Response	31	3.4%

Q 54. What could we do to improve the timing, clarity or format of our consultations?

There were 410 substantive responses to this question, of which:

- 151 (36.8%) thought that the GOsC would not listen to osteopaths’ opinion and therefore consultations were pointless, unless this situation changed. As with Q.52, there was a general feeling that the GOsC approached consultations with a pre-determined agenda, using these exercises only to promote the GOsC position.
- 55 (13.4%) called for a greater degree of clarity in consultations. For example, more clarity in relation to the issues, and clearer language.
- A number of responses (54 – 13%) again equated consultations with GOsC regional events, remarking that there ought to be more GOsC regional conferences. In line with this, 23 (5.6%) asked for the timings to be changed.
- 52 (12.7%) thought that consultations were fine as they are now.
- 22 (5.4%) gave answers directly relevant to this survey, rather than in relation to consultations in general (eg. this survey should be shorter). 17 (4.1%) wanted more online surveys and consultations.
- 18 (4.4%) were other responses (e.g., ‘pay me to miss work so I can afford to listen to you,’ ‘I’m getting bored’).

Q55. Which of the following do you think is the best way for the GOsC to consult on issues with registrants?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
Online polls	802	58.5%
Written consultation	642	46.8%
Registrant focus groups	408	29.7%
More information about consultations in the GOsC news e-bulletins	306	22.3%
Online consultation response forms	611	44.5%
Ability to comment via social media platforms	180	13.1%
More information through professional body channels	251	18.3%
Regional events	609	44.4%
None of these	17	1.2%
No Response	52	3.8%
Other (please specify)	30	2.2%

- 10 were of the opinion that the GOsC would not listen anyway, so the question was pointless.
- 13 offered suggestions. These were: telephoning osteopaths more, consulting in conjunction with the BOA, more anonymous surveys, free events at the GOsC building, linking it to CPD credits, practice visits, more regular national osteopathic conferences, surveys conducted through *The Osteopath*, and detailing any changes brought about as a result on consultations.
- 7 were criticisms of methods they did not like.

I. Regional communications

Q56. Are you a member of a regional society or a local osteopathic group that meets on a regular basis?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes	638	46.5%
No	716	52.2%
No Response	18	13%

Cross-tabulating with time in practice indicated that the longer an osteopath has been qualified, the more likely they are to be a member of a regional group.

Q 57: Is there a particular reason you are not a member of a regional society or a local osteopathic group that meets on a regular basis?

There were 576 responses, of which:

- 194 (32.6%) said there was no group that met locally. About half of these responses gave the impression that if there was a local group, they would attend it.
- 159 (26.7%) said that they either did not have the time to go to local events, or that meetings were held at a time that was inconvenient for them.
- 67 (11.3%) simply wrote 'no reason'.
- 58 (9.7%) do not attend because their local group/s were poorly organised, met infrequently, or they did not like the other people who attended the group.
- 53 (8.9%) saw no reason to be a member of a local group: they had enough contact with other osteopaths, found the meetings boring or of no use, or they simply had no desire to attend.
- 39 (6.6%) were newly qualified or had recently moved to a new area and had not yet got around to joining a regional group. A large proportion of these comments said that they would probably join a group in future.
- 6 (1%) thought that the cost of joining their local group too high.

Q58. What does membership of a regional society or a local osteopathic group give you?

(Please tick all that apply)

	Count	Percent
CPD	606	44.2%
Professional support	383	57.3%
Information from the GOsC	223*	33.8%
Practice updates	149*	22.6%
Research support	130*	19.7%
Social gathering	430*	64.6%
Other (please specify)	12*	4.9%
No Response	17	2.6%

- 4 gave other reasons, such as 'ability to treat insurance patients in Ireland', or 'access to a web forum'.

- 8 were responses not relevant to the question, or gave reasons such as 'GOsC bashing', or 'everything that GOsC fails to do'.

Q59. Have you ever attended a GOsC regional conference?

(Please tick one box)

	Count	Percent
Yes	665	48.5%
No	699	50.9%
No Response	8	0.5%

Q60: Please specify when you attended a GOsC regional conference.

There were 601 valid responses to this question. Where respondents offered responses like 'around 3 years ago', this was taken as 3 years ago.

- 1.8% (11) attended a conference in 2012.
- 13% (79) attended a conference in 2011.
- 20% (120) attended a conference in 2010.
- 13.6% (82) attended a conference in 2009.
- 6% (36) attended a conference in 2008.
- 6% (36) attended a conference in 2007.
- 4.3% (26) attended a conference in 2006.
- 2.2% (13) attended a conference in 2005.
- 2.3% (14) attended a conference in 2004.
- 3.7% (22) attended a conference in 2003 or earlier.
- 11.8% (71) simply named a location which made it impossible to tell which year it was in.
- 9.8% (59) said they could not remember when they had attended a conference.
- 5.3% (32) said that they attended a conference every time it was in their local area.

Q61. Is there a particular reason you have never attended a GOsC regional conference?

There were 553 substantive responses, of which:

- 198 (34.5%) said that they either did not have the time to attend or that the event dates were inconvenient. This was by far the most common reason.
- 101 (17.6%) said that the locations of the conferences were too far away or too expensive to get to.
- 84 (14.6%) gave reasons that indicated a lack of interest, general apathy, or the opinion that the events were too expensive for what they offered. (Note: the GOsC does not charge for attendance.)
- 59 (1.3%) stated 'no reason'.
- 51 (8.9%) were recently qualified and had not yet had the opportunity to attend.
- 32 (5.6%) cited reasons to do with the GOsC and a general lack of trust in the GOsC. As indicted in responses to other questions, some respondents are of the opinion that the GOsC is not interested in hearing or taking account of registrants' opinion.
- 27 (4.7%) said that they either did not know what a GOsC regional conference was or when these took place.
- 3.7% (21) were other responses (e.g., 'as above', 'void', 'various').

Q62: Please provide us with any other comments or suggestions as to how the GOsC could improve the services we provide for registrants.

There were 766 responses, comments and suggestions on the following themes:

- 214 (27.9%) of these responses reflected the opinion that GOsC registration fees are too high. Registrants working part-time should pay a lower registration fee; fees should be charged on a sliding scale according to income. Cost savings could be made by printing GOsC publications on lower-quality paper; all communications should be electronic (although an equal proportion indicated that they would object to this); the GOsC should relocate its London offices to a cheaper rural location; most of the GOsC staff should be laid off. Some responses called for a breakdown of all GOsC finances and a greater degree of transparency in GOsC spending.
- 185 (24.2%) of these responses were critical of the GOsC's performance as a regulator. Responses here reflected some misunderstanding of the GOsC's role. Many responses called for the GOsC to do more work in promoting osteopathy and raising the profession's profile; a substantial number complained that the GOsC worked to protect the public. There was a general feeling that there was too much regulation and that osteopaths should regulate themselves, or at least decide what the regulations should be and the GOsC enforce this. Roughly 4% of responses to this question were of the view that the GOsC should be replaced by the HPC, which it was thought would regulate osteopathy less stringently. A small number accused the GOsC of authoritarianism, over-regulation and 'tyranny'.
- 90 (11.7%) felt that the GOsC was out of touch with both osteopathy and osteopaths. Common themes suggested the GOsC is limiting the scope of osteopathy, preventing development, and ignoring the 'original principles and philosophy' of osteopathy. Many respondents emphasised the view that osteopathy involved treatment of 'the patient as a whole' and that this was being ignored. The most frequent recommendation was to employ more osteopaths and to be less 'political'.
- 54 (7%) were happy with the way that the GOsC operates at present.
- 29 (3.8%) offered comments relating to GOsC communications. In general, these called for less 'jargon' or 'legal-speak' or for information to be written in 'plain English' (cf. Q.29 on language and tone of GOsC communications). A few also took this opportunity to say that they felt strongly that all communications should not become electronic.
- 27 (3.5%) wanted the GOsC to provide more regional events, particularly CPD training and more regional conferences and consultations.
- 18 (2.3%) called for more resources. In particular, many requested access to more journals. A few called for the printed Register of Osteopaths to be reintroduced (this was mentioned in other sections of the survey, some believing this would give them 'better value' for their registration fee).
- 16 (2.1%) asked for more guidelines relating to scope of practice and fitness to practice, for example 'recommended templates' for use in practice (mentioned elsewhere in survey feedback).
- 16 (2.1%) suggested that the GOsC could do more to promote wider recognition of the high standards of osteopathic training and practice.
- 16 (2.1%) commented on osteopathic education, requesting more CPD resources or suggesting that the standard of education in osteopathic colleges was not sufficiently high.
- 12 (1.6%) made comments about the survey, typically that it was too long.
- The very small number of remaining comments related to the revalidation process, new graduates, overabundance of paperwork caused by the GOsC, private health insurer recognition, email and telephone contact with the GOsC, research funding, and the Advertising Standards Agency. Each of these subjects under 1% of the total comments and suggestions in this section.
- 40 responses (5.2%) could not be categorised (e.g., 'nothing comes to mind', 'see my previous comments', 'I think you have had enough information').