

General Osteopathic Council

Consultation on registration fees

6 August 2026

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Foreword

Osteopathy has always been a profession built on trust.

Every day, patients place their trust in osteopaths to provide safe, effective and professional care. In return, the profession has committed itself to meeting the highest standards of competence, conduct and accountability.

Registration sits at the heart of that commitment.

Statutory regulation has helped patients have confidence in osteopathy while supporting the profession to develop and maintain its reputation as a trusted healthcare profession.

As your regulator, with duties set out in law to both 'regulate' and 'develop' the profession for the purposes of public protection, we are proud of the role we play in supporting both patients and the profession. Our work ranges from maintaining the Register and assuring the quality of education, through to supporting professional standards, investing in guidance and resources, and taking action when concerns are raised. This has been evidenced by consistently meeting the Professional Standards Authority performance standards.

We are equally proud that osteopathy continues to benefit from having a profession specific regulator tailoring its approach to the unique context of osteopathic practice to better support high quality osteopathic care. Every registration fee is invested directly into regulating for better practice.

Like many organisations, we are operating in a changing environment. The cost of regulation is increasing and the demands placed on healthcare regulators continue to evolve.

For many years Council has worked hard to keep registration fees unchanged while finding efficiencies and reducing costs wherever possible. More recently, this has included the significant decision to sell our headquarter building and transform the way we work.

These changes and reductions in our outgoings are helping to secure our long-term future, but Council is now setting out the need to increase registration fees to support the profession and the patients we serve.

This consultation is not about increasing fees to maintain the status quo. It is about ensuring osteopathy continues to benefit from strong, independent, regulation long into the future.

We want to hear your views.

Matthew Redford

Chief Executive and Registrar

The consultation at a glance

What is the General Osteopathic Council?

The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) is established by the Osteopaths Act 1993. Council comprises five osteopaths, five lay members and a small staff team. There are separate independent pools of osteopaths and lay people who make decisions about fitness to practise, education and some registration activities.

The GOsC is legally required to 'develop' and 'regulate' the profession of osteopathy. Everything the GOsC does must be geared towards 'protection of the public' and this includes supporting high standards of practice and maintaining public confidence in the profession.

Why are we consulting on fees?

At its heart, this consultation is about ensuring that osteopathy continues to benefit from strong, independent and financially sustainable regulation that protects patients, supports professional standards and helps the profession respond to future opportunities and challenges.

Council is seeking views on:

- The level of the registration fee increase.
- Whether or not the fee increase should be applied equally across the board.
- Whether or not there should be a larger fee increase for practising osteopaths to limit the increase on those entering the profession and/or who are non-practising.

Our registration fees have never been increased and, in fact, were **reduced** between 2012 and 2014. Fees were reduced from £750 to £570 and have remained unchanged ever since despite inflation, rising operating costs and increasing demands on healthcare regulators.

Year	Registration fee	If increased with inflation
Entry to the Register – year 1	£320 (entry fee)	£515
Renewal – year 2	£430 (phased fee)	£692
Renewal – year 3 and thereafter	£570 (standard fee)	£918

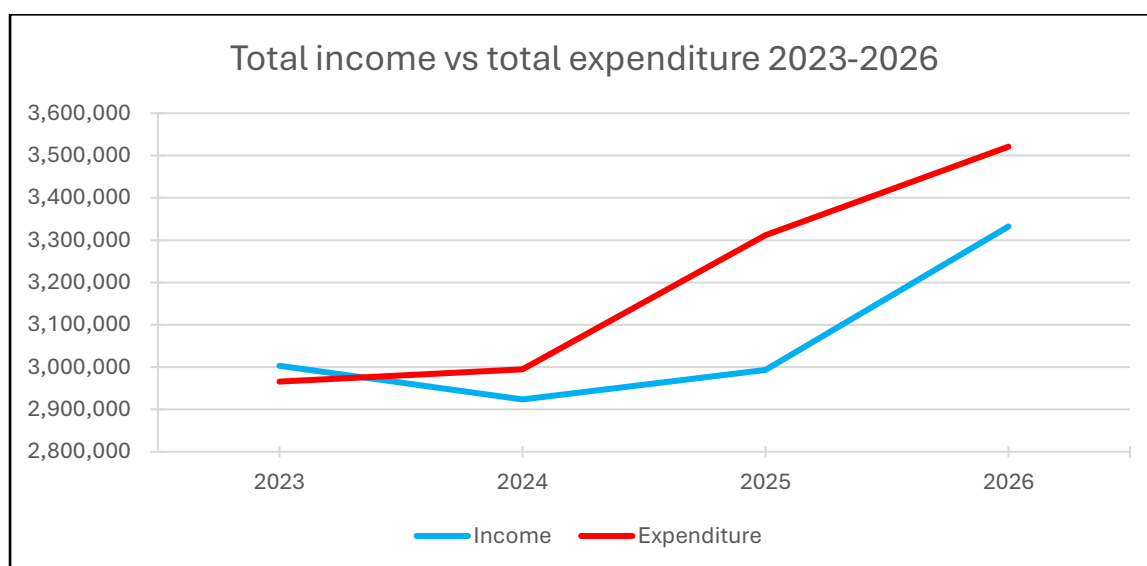
This consultation is **not** recommending fees are increased to the amount they would have been had inflationary rises happened year on year.

This consultation is exploring increasing registration fees **only** by the amount we believe we require to ensure our financial stability into the future which is reflected in the table below:

Fee increased by	Impact per week for registrants paying the standard fee (£570)
£50	£0.96
£75	£1.44
£100	£1.92

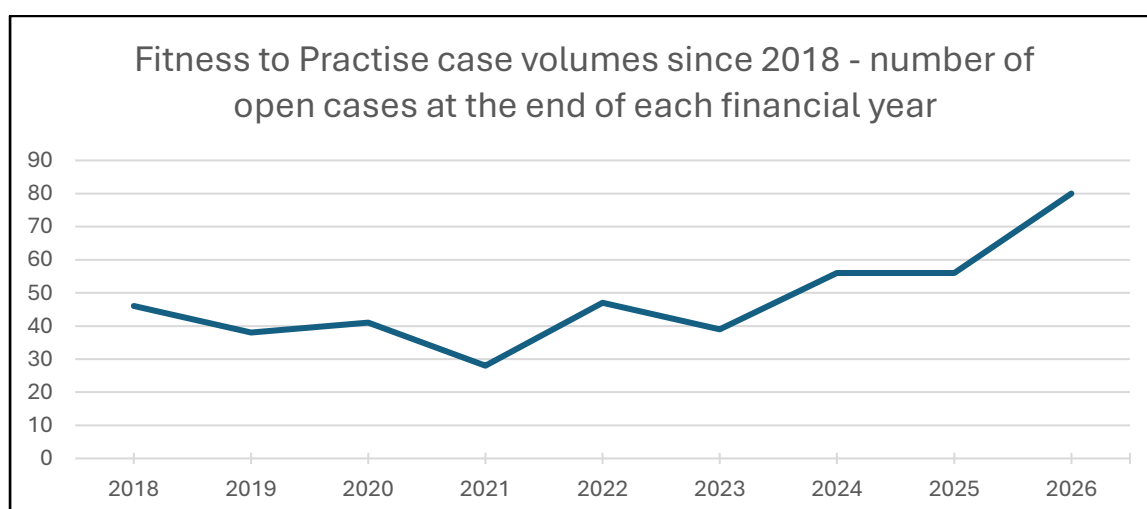
Detailed financial information is [provided in a supporting annex](#) on page 16.

Our expenditure now exceeds income and the gap is forecast to grow if no action is taken. From 2023 to 2026 expenditure exceeded income by £540,000 (see graph below).



Our fitness to practise workload has also increased significantly.

Compared to 2018, the number of open fitness to practise cases has increased by 74%, increasing the costs associated with delivering this area of our statutory responsibilities.



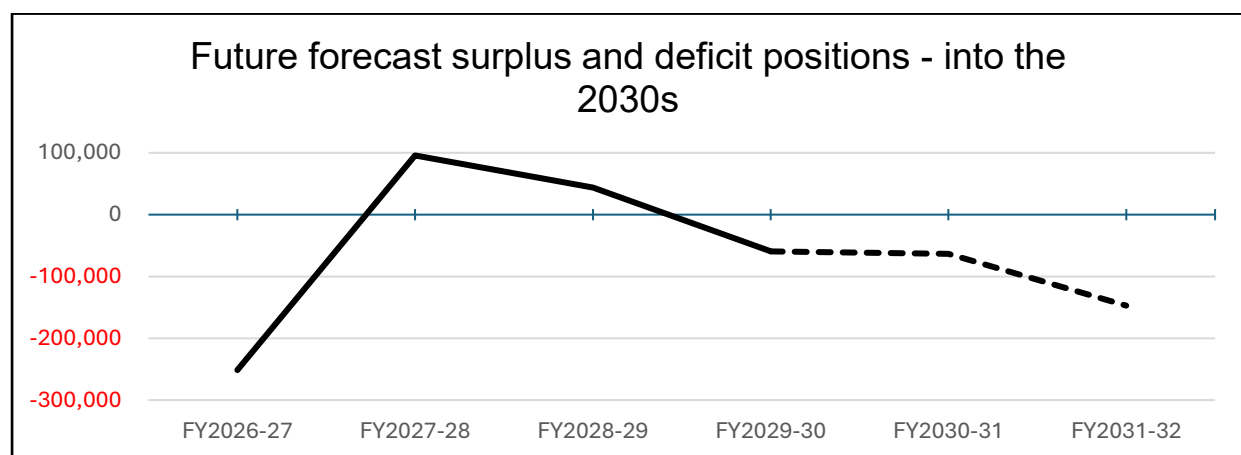
What have we done already?

Before considering registration fee increases, Council reviewed the organisation's finances, assets and long-term sustainability.

Actions we have taken as a result included:

- selling the headquarter building to streamline operational costs
- reducing expenditure across several areas of activity
- introducing organisational efficiencies
- making the necessary investment in new technology (a new CRM (records management) system and website) to ensure that our infrastructure is fit for the future

These measures help our financial position but, on their own, do not provide a long-term solution as our expenditure will continue to be greater than our income.



Protecting patients, supporting osteopaths

Registration is more than an annual requirement.

It demonstrates to patients, government, employers and other healthcare professionals that osteopaths belong to a profession committed to the highest standards, accountability and safe and effective care. It helps ensure that patients can have confidence in the people who treat them and provides assurance that there is an independent regulator safeguarding the public.

GOsC exists to protect patients and support high professional standards. In doing so, it also contributes to the continued development of osteopathy as a regulated healthcare profession. Every registration fee helps maintain the standards, systems and infrastructure that underpin the profession. It supports osteopathic education, professional standards, fitness to practise, patient engagement, research, professional guidance, educator development and leadership. The GOsC is a recognised focal point for international regulatory collaboration.

Unlike the situation for many healthcare professions, every pound paid in registration fees is invested directly into regulating and developing high quality osteopathic care. It is not used to regulate other professions. This enables the GOsC to focus entirely on the needs of osteopathic patients and practitioners and the context in which osteopathy is practised.

For many years, Council has worked hard to minimise the financial impact on osteopaths and fees have remained unchanged since 2014, when they were reduced, despite inflation and increasing regulatory costs. During that same period, the volume and complexity of fitness to practise work has increased significantly (as it has across the whole healthcare sector so this is not an osteopathy-only challenge) and the expectations placed upon healthcare regulators have evolved. Expenditure now exceeds income and forecasts show that this position is not sustainable in the long term.

The sale of the headquarter building is a significant part of securing the organisation's future, but it is not intended to fund day-to-day operations. The proceeds will strengthen the organisation's reserves, providing resilience against future uncertainty, supporting transformation and ensuring continuity of statutory functions. Like any charity, the GOsC must maintain reserves that allow it to respond effectively to risk and to future challenges.

Our Council (comprising five osteopaths and five lay people) believes that the ongoing costs of regulation should be met through operational income rather than through spending reserves. Put simply, reserves can only be spent once. A financially sustainable regulator requires income that is greater than the cost of delivering its statutory responsibilities. At its heart, this consultation is about ensuring that osteopathy continues to benefit from strong, independent regulation which is tailored to assuring standards in the unique context in which osteopathy is practised;

that patients remain protected; and that future generations of osteopaths inherit a profession supported by a regulator that is financially sustainable, future-focused and able to meet the challenges ahead.

Why registration matters

For patients, registration provides confidence. It means they can check that an osteopath is appropriately qualified, meets professional standards and is accountable to an independent regulator. It provides assurance that concerns can be investigated and acted upon where necessary.

Why registration matters to patients

Statutory regulation means patients can be confident that:

- All osteopaths are trained and qualified in standards of ethics and competence and will do their best for patients.
- All osteopaths keep up to date and work within the limits of their competence.
- There is an up to date Register where they can check their osteopath is registered.
- They have somewhere to raise concerns.

For osteopaths, registration is a public statement of professionalism. It demonstrates a commitment to high standards of competence, ethics, professional development and accountability. It is one of the defining characteristics of osteopathy as a recognised healthcare profession.

Why registration matters to osteopaths

Being a statutorily regulated profession matters to osteopaths because it shows that they hold themselves to account to be:

- Properly qualified and trained to deliver ethical and safe care with patients.
- Up to date through continuing professional development.
- Fully insured and safe to practise.
- Accountable to patients and the profession through a concerns process.

Registration is therefore not simply a legal requirement. It is an investment in the collective reputation, credibility and future of the profession.

Regulation of osteopathy

Every registration fee paid to GOsC, is invested directly into regulating osteopathy and supporting high standards of practice, education and patient care. It allows us to develop expertise and insight that is specific to osteopathy, while maintaining a clear focus on the issues and opportunities that matter to patients, osteopaths, students and educators.

Regulation is about much more than maintaining a Register or responding when concerns are raised. It helps create confidence in osteopathy as a healthcare profession, supports professional standards and contributes to the long-term development of the profession.

Some of the ways GOsC adds value include:

- Protecting patients and maintaining confidence.
- Supporting high professional standards.
- Strengthening the profession.
- Anticipating future risks and opportunities.

The statutory arrangements for osteopathic regulation are not the subject of this consultation. This consultation seeks views on how the current system of osteopathic regulation can continue to be supported in a financially sustainable way.

Protecting patients and maintaining confidence

Patients need confidence that the osteopath they choose is appropriately qualified, keeps their skills up to date and is accountable for their professional conduct.

To support this, GOsC:

- maintains the Register of osteopaths;
- investigates concerns raised about osteopaths and takes action where necessary to protect the public;
- protects the osteopathic title, including taking action where individuals seek to present themselves as osteopaths when they are not entitled to do so;
- develops standards, guidance and resources suitable for osteopathy that support safe and effective care;
- works with patients to ensure their experiences inform the development of regulation, including enhancing the patient voice within osteopathic regulation – this is an approach which is being monitored with interest by larger, more established regulators who wish to learn from our experience and innovation.

Supporting high professional standards

GOsC is able to focus on the specific needs of osteopathic education, training and practice. This includes:

- assuring the quality of osteopathic education and so protecting entry into the profession; and supporting education providers to maintain high standards, work which is undertaken in-house
- developing and maintaining the Osteopathic Practice Standards
- producing guidance and resources that reflect the realities of osteopathic practice
- supporting communication, consent and shared decision-making through free resources and materials
- engaging with groups of osteopaths across the UK to embed our standards using a range of interactive methods
- using our data and insight to identify areas that lead to patients raising concerns, including commissioning and funding research in the area of professional boundaries where concern levels are high analysing and publishing data and insights about concerns, complaints and professional trends to identify issues and support the sector to make improvements across the profession
- involving osteopaths in all of our decision-making structures ensuring decision making that is right for high quality osteopathic practice

Strengthening profession development

Regulation also plays an important role in supporting the continued development of osteopathy as a recognised healthcare profession. This includes:

- recognising the diversity of osteopathic practice that matters to patients and ensuring that regulation reflects the breadth of care provided by osteopaths, protects patients and supports patients to get the care they need and want.
- working alongside other health professional regulators to ensure that standards are aligned across health professional regulation while also ensuring that they reflect and are appropriate to the unique context of osteopathic care and practice.
- international work with other osteopathic regulators and professional bodies to raise and assure standards across borders supporting quality of care for UK patients and osteopaths
- supporting osteopathic research through our part funding of the National Council for Osteopathic Research and the International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine which informs the development of standards, raises knowledge and insight, and contributes to enhanced patient care;
- supporting educators to maintain high-quality osteopathic education, helping ensure future osteopaths enter practice with the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by our standards
- supporting the development of future professional and regulatory leaders, through leadership events and initiatives such as the Council Associate Programme. These leaders can contribute to maintaining high standards, robust governance and public confidence in osteopathy.
- promoting inclusive practice for patients and helping the profession understand and address barriers to participation and progression;

Anticipating future risks and opportunities

Healthcare continues to evolve and regulation must evolve alongside it.

GOsC focuses on issues that may affect the future of osteopathic care, including:

- developments in technology and digital practice, for example use of artificial intelligence and other digital technology;
- workforce and education challenges;
- emerging risks and opportunities for patients and practitioners;
- international developments that may affect UK osteopathic practice and professional recognition;
- supporting diversity and inclusion within osteopathy by funding and facilitating work to understand barriers to entry, progression and retention for under-represented groups, and supporting inclusive practice across the profession.

We also work with partners across healthcare regulation and the osteopathic community to ensure that osteopathy continues to be well positioned for the future.

Why we are consulting

Registration fees have never increased and, in fact, were reduced between 2012-14. They have remained unchanged since while the cost of regulation has increased significantly and the demands placed upon healthcare regulators have evolved. The most notable pressure has been a substantial increase in fitness to practise caseloads and associated costs.

Compared to 2018 levels, our fitness to practise caseload has increased by 74%

As a result, our expenditure has exceeded our income in recent years and future modelling indicates that this position will continue if no action is taken.

During the period 2023-26, **expenditure has outstripped income by £540k**. This is not a sustainable position and Council, demonstrating good financial management, therefore has a responsibility to act.

What we have already done

Before consulting on fees, Council reviewed the organisation's finances and long-term sustainability.

This work demonstrates Council's commitment to ensuring that registration fees are used responsibly and that efficiencies are pursued wherever possible. Decisions include:

- Bringing our quality assurance function in house. This is saving **over +£250k over a five-year period**.
- Fitness to practise cost savings through not sending out any investigations to be undertaken externally: saving **c.£140k per year**.
- We have reduced the cost of IJOM research journals following a review of the titles we supply to osteopaths; this followed an examination of the most used titles supported by a small engagement exercise with the profession. This allowed us to make **a year on year saving of around £14k** while still providing the profession with the most popular and useful titles.
- Absorbing our patient voice work into current roles by not replacing staff who have left. This is estimated to save **c.£18k a year**.
- We have reduced the amount we spend on external research projects, with the 2026-27 budget being **£8k lower than the previous year**.
- Strengthened our in-house research and data analysis function meaning that we undertake many pieces of survey and research work in house rather than externally. This is estimated to save **c.£10k to c.£20k per year**.
- Putting in place a new CRM (records management system) to make our registration process **more efficient and fit for the future**.
- We have renegotiated our software licences and IT security contracts, which is bringing in a saving of **over £6k in the past year**.

Building a sustainable future

The sale of the headquarter building is a significant milestone. It reduces future costs, supports a more flexible operating model and allows the organisation to strengthen its financial resilience. The proceeds from the sale will be held within reserves.

These reserves help protect continuity of services, provide resilience against uncertainty and allow investment in future transformation and improvement. They are an important safeguard for both patients and the profession. However, reserves are not a long-term substitute for sustainable income and should be held to ensure the future proofing of the profession.

Like any business, such as practices run by osteopaths, Council believes that the day-to-day cost of regulation should be funded through day-to-day income, ensuring that reserves remain available for managing future uncertainty and strategic investment.

What additional investment will deliver

The proposed fee increase will enable us to continue delivering our statutory role with confidence ensuring we have:

- sufficient resource in our fitness to practise processes so these continue to operate fairly and as efficiently as possible (within the confines of legislation that is outdated and prescriptive)¹
- robust quality assurance of education with graduates well prepared for their future career in the profession
- updated Osteopathic Practice Standards and supporting resources that work for the diversity of osteopathic practice and patients
- a greater level of resource to ensure we can further demonstrate the fairness of our regulatory processes, embedding equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging
- an ability to continue to use our data and insight to inform resources to help osteopaths to continue to give high quality care, avoid concerns and meet patient expectations and needs
- continued to provide osteopaths with practical resources and regulatory insight that supports them to meet professional standards and deliver high quality care to patients
- continued investment in our educators to support the osteopathic education sector which is under significant pressure. This will be through sharing good practice in education and supporting access to expert resource, for example on artificial intelligence
- provided support to newly qualified osteopaths as they transition into practice, helping promote safe practice, professional confidence and retention within the regulated profession
- invested in our patient work to ensure the patient voice informs osteopathic regulation
- the right level of infrastructure and digital investment to ensure the GOsC is fit for the future and positioned to meet future challenges.

The proposed increase in registration fees, combined with the expenditure reductions we have both implemented and plan to implement in this financial year, is expected to eliminate the deficits that have been forecast and ensure the financial stability of the GOsC into the 2030s.

¹ The GOsC operates fitness to practise processes which are recognised by the Professional Standards Authority as appropriate. The timeliness with which we process fitness to practise concerns is among the fastest across the healthcare regulators.

Consultation overview

Council is consulting on:

- The level of the registration fee increase.
- Whether or not the fee increases should be applied equally across the board.
- Whether or not there should be a larger fee increase for practising osteopaths to limit the increase on those entering the profession and/or who are non-practising.

The detailed financial information is [provided in a supporting annex](#).

We are undertaking this consultation under the Osteopaths Act 1993 and will seek amendment to the GOsC (Application for Registration and Fees) Rules 2000.

Timeline

Action	Date
Consultation document approved by Council	July 2026
Consultation published	August 2026
Consultation closes	October 2026
Analysis of responses completed and considered by Council	November 2026
Analysis and updated Equality Impact Assessment published Decision published.	November 2026
Draft rules prepared and agreed with Department of Health and Social Care	Early 2027
Rules come into force	2027 (expected May)
Fee changes come into effect	The new fee level comes into effect at each osteopath's next registration renewal date after the new rules come into force.

The consultation period will last for 12 weeks from 6 August 2026 to 29 October 2026.

Results of the consultation will be analysed and presented to Council before the end of 2026 and responses will help us to understand the impact of our plans, including on groups who are protected under the Equality Act 2010 and the relevant legislation in Northern Ireland.

Council will make a decision on registration fees taking into account the findings from this consultation and this decision will then be submitted to the Privy Council as changes to registration fees require legislative amendment, specifically to the GOsC (Application for Registration and Fees) Rules Order 2000, amended 2014.

The proposed implementation date for the fee increase is May 2027, subject to legislative approval depending on resources available within the Department of Health and Social Care and Privy Council.

Osteopaths will pay the new fee at their next registration renewal after the date the new rules come into force.

Council members, in their role as Trustees, will continue, to monitor registration fees paid by registrants on an annual basis. This does not mean registration fees will increase every year. Any future increase would again require another consultation and the necessary legislative approval. This consultation is exploring increasing registration fees by the amounts we believe we require to ensure our financial stability into the future.

Closing Statement

This consultation is about investing in high standards, not simply setting the level of a fee.

It is about ensuring that patients continue to have confidence in the profession.

It is about preserving and developing the benefits of a regulator dedicated solely to osteopathy.

Without action, projected deficits would continue to grow. This would reduce the organisation's ability to invest in quality assurance, professional standards, fitness to practise, patient engagement and future improvements, increasing the risk that statutory functions would become harder to sustain in the long term.

And it is about ensuring that future generations of osteopaths inherit a profession supported by regulation that is agile, strong, independent, sustainable and focused on patient safety.

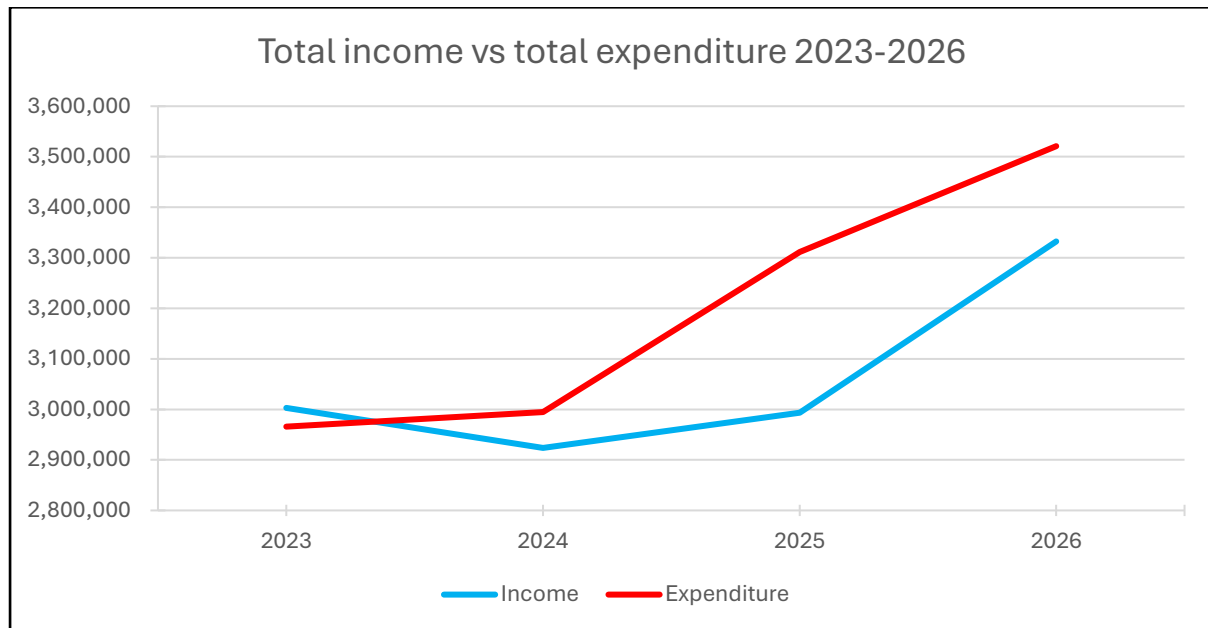
Financial annex to registration fee consultation

Why is Council increasing fees?

There are a number of reasons for this increase in registration fees. As background it is important to remember that registration fees have remained unchanged since 2014, despite ongoing inflationary pressures and rising demands for the regulation sector.

The key factor is that **our expenditure now exceeds our income**. During the period 2023-26, expenditure has outstripped income by £540k. This is not a sustainable position and Council as stewards of the organisation, demonstrating good financial management, have a duty to act.

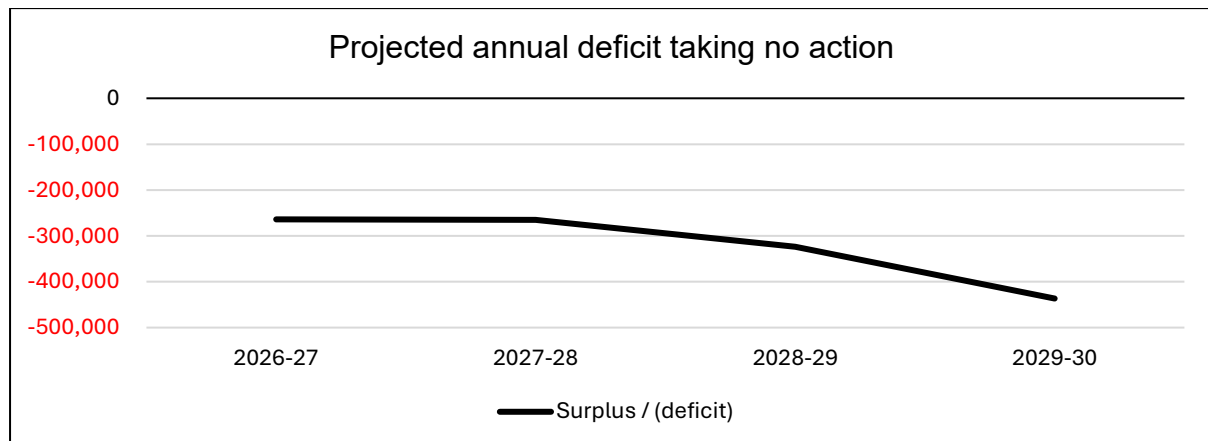
Table 1: Total income v total expenditure in the period 2023-26



It is important that we act now to ensure we continue to meet our statutory responsibilities and protect the public for the long term.

If we continued to allow ongoing deficits we would be putting public protection and the delivery of statutory functions at significant risk.

Table 2: Projected annual deficits through to 2030 if no action is taken



Increase in concerns

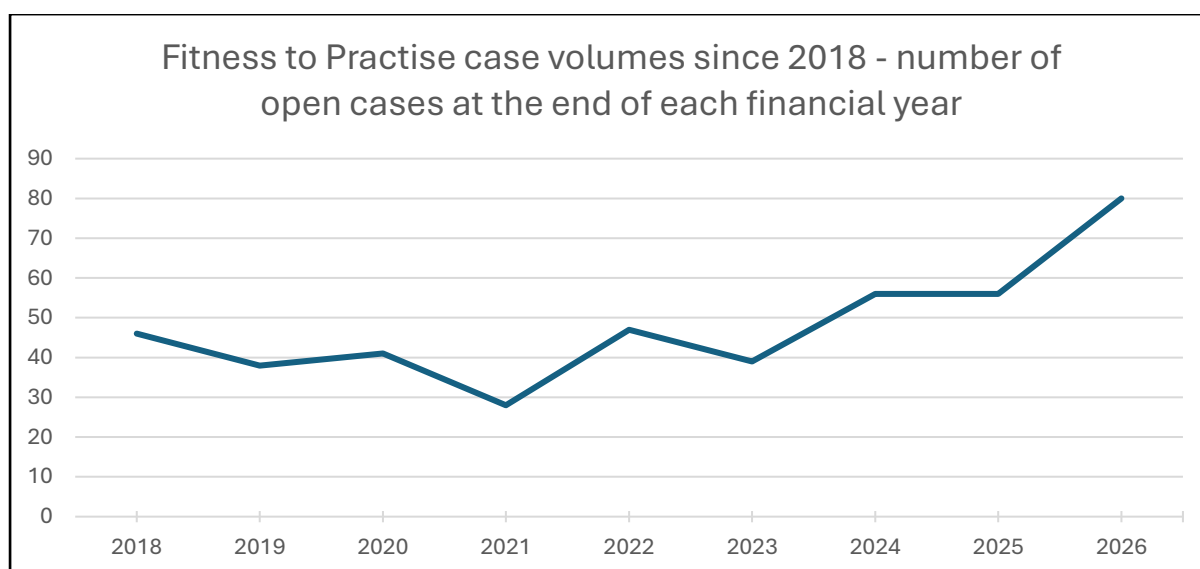
The key reason for the high increase in our expenditure is that there has been a substantial increase in the number of concerns made against osteopaths. There has been an associated increase in the expenditure needed to resource this area of our work.

This increase is in line with the experience of most other healthcare regulators so this is not a reflection on the osteopathic profession but a reflection of a changing regulatory environment.

However, even if the fitness to practise caseload was to plateau or reduce this would not translate into immediate cost savings meaning deficits would continue as expenditure is outstripping income.

Compared to 2018 levels, our fitness to practise caseload has increased by 74%

Table 3: Number of open cases since 2018 to 2026



At present, over 40% of our caseload relates to incidents of crossing professional boundaries. Cases related to crossing professional boundaries are more complex, take longer to resolve, and incur higher costs. And with an increased caseload the costs will be incurred into future financial periods as it takes time for these cases to move through our fitness to practise processes.

It is worth noting that this reflects broader trends in healthcare regulation, including changes in public expectations and reporting, rather than a deterioration in professional standards within osteopathy

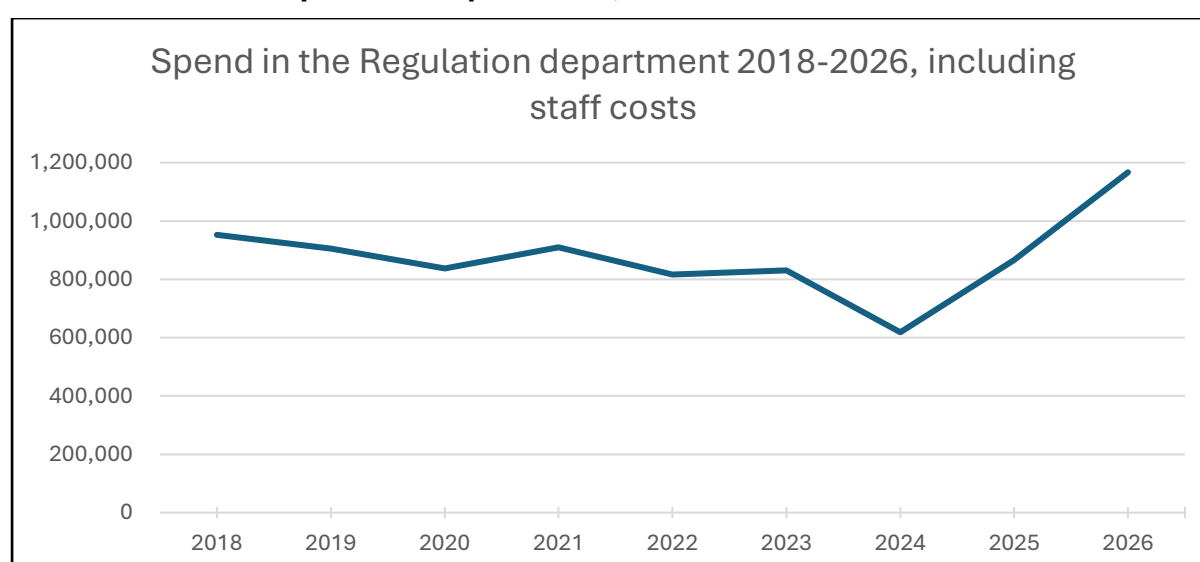
An added challenge is that in managing our fitness to practise cases, we have **legislation which is outdated, prescriptive and inefficient**, making this task more difficult. For example, when the Investigating Committee applies an interim suspension order provision, it can only do so for 2 months, meaning that a separate Investigating Committee meeting is required within this short window of time to consider referral to

the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC). If referred, the PCC have to meet to consider if a suspension order should continue until the case is concluded. This requires three separate meetings/hearings in a short window, all incurring costs, to ensure patient protection. Other regulators have legislation that is not as prescriptive meaning they can be more cost efficient.

Changing the legislation is a matter for Government and outside of the GOsC control. Despite this, the Professional Standards Authority has recognised our fitness to practise work as appropriate, with our timeliness for processing concerns among the fastest across the healthcare regulators.

We have endeavoured, for example, to keep fitness to practise costs down as far as possible through paying fees at a fixed rate to Committee members, legal assessors, external legal advice and other professionals.

Table 4: Fitness to practise expenditure, incl. staff costs 2018 and 2026



The best mitigation of harms for patients and osteopaths is to avoid concerns being raised in the first instance.

This is why we have done work to raise awareness of the issues that arise in our fitness to practise process, but despite this, we are continuing to see concern levels increasing, especially in the area of crossing professional boundaries.

Our work includes:

- Publishing and disseminating our [annual NCOR complaints and concerns report](#).
- Funding a PhD student (who is also an osteopath) to look specifically at what drives these cases in osteopathy and to make recommendations to support osteopaths and patients to reduce the number of concerns.
- Making boundaries and inclusive practice, as well as communication and consent, mandatory CPD from 2026 to support driving down these concerns.

- Providing free CPD and resources in these areas to support osteopaths to run their own sessions.
- Writing blogs and articles on the GOsC website, and in the professional membership body the Institute of Osteopathy magazine, with hints and tips about how best to avoid concerns.
- Supporting the Institute of Osteopathy with materials to run sessions on boundaries as part of their 2026 roadshows.
- Commencing a review of our core standards of ethics and competence: the Osteopathic Practice Standards.

Fees have never increased

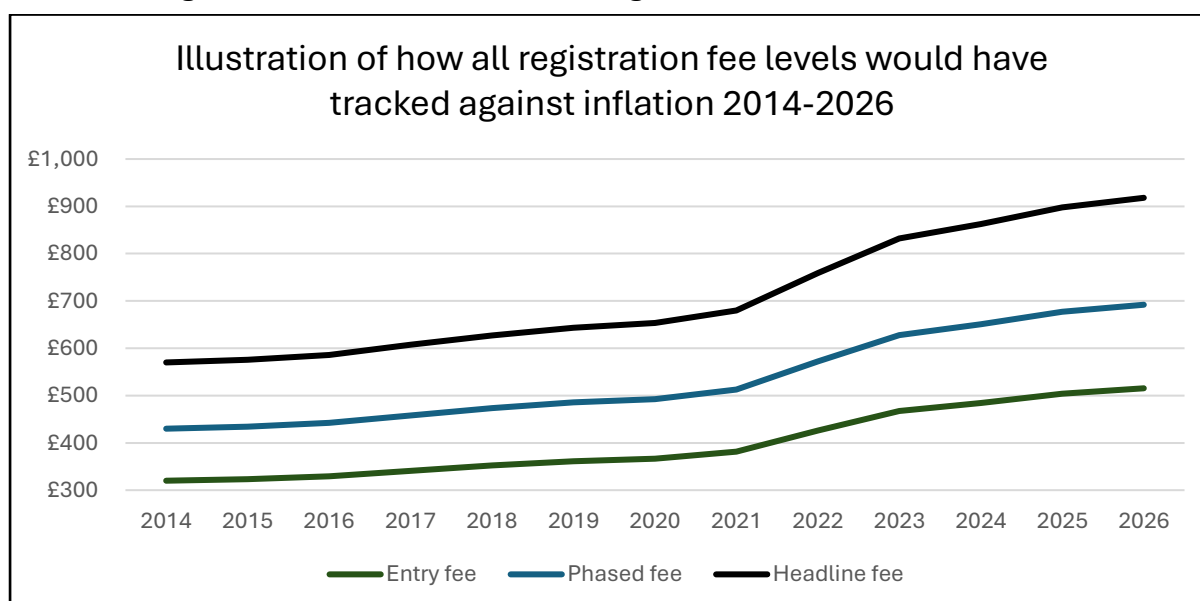
Osteopaths registration fees have never increased and in fact were **reduced** from £750 to £570 in 2014, where they have remained since, despite sustained inflationary pressures and increasing regulatory demands.

Had the registration fee increased in line with inflation, in 2026 it would now be £918

Table 5: Registration fee levels tracked against inflation

Year	Registration fee	If increased with inflation
Entry to the Register – year 1	£320 (entry fee)	£515
Renewal – year 2	£430 (phased fee)	£692
Renewal – year 3 and thereafter	£570 (headline fee)	£918

Table 6: Registration fee levels tracked against inflation – 2014 to 2026



The result of not increasing registration fees in line with inflation means that in financial year 2025-26 alone, income would have been c£1.84m higher.

We must increase registration fees to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the GOsC and ensure we continue to protect the public through delivery of our statutory responsibilities.

Our value proposition

We consider our value proposition to have three components:

1. Ensuring public protection
2. Supporting professional standards and development
3. Delivering robust governance

- **Component one: Ensuring public protection**

This area focuses on our work to ensure patient and public protection and maintaining public confidence in the profession. Our activities to ensure public protection include:

- the quality assurance of education and training
- developing, setting, and maintaining Osteopathic Practice Standards
- maintaining the integrity of the statutory Register of osteopaths
- managing concerns through our fitness to practise processes

Public protection is central to the work we undertake, and this is reflected by the activities under this component which cover the full range of our business.

In the financial year 2025-26, we spent £1.91m on our activities to ensure public protection (2025: £1.68m). This was equal to 53% of our total budget (2025: 51%) and means that for every £570 registration fee we receive, we spend £302 of that on ensuring public protection (2025: £290).

- **Component two: Supporting professional standards and development**

This area focuses on our work to ensure we develop and provide appropriate support for the profession to be able to maintain high quality patient care. Our activities to develop the profession include:

- Supporting osteopaths to maintain and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the Osteopathic Practice Standards.
- Contributing funding to the National Council for Osteopathic Research which supports research and insight that informs standards and improvements to patient care.

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- Funding a profession-wide subscription for the International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine (IJOM) and other research journals that support high-quality practice and continuing professional development.
- Listening to and engaging with osteopaths, patients and sector partners to ensure regulation remains informed, proportionate and responsive to the realities of osteopathic practice.

In the financial year 2025-26, we spent £0.76m on our activities to ensure we developed and supported the profession (2025: £0.80m). This was equal to 21% of our total budget (2025: 24%) and means that for every £570 registration fee we receive we spend £120 of that is spent on developing the profession (2025: £137).

These activities contribute to public protection by helping osteopaths maintain standards, supporting improvements in practice, informing regulatory decision-making and strengthening patient confidence in the profession.

- **Component three: Delivering robust governance**

Delivering robust governance should ensure an organisation remains stable, productive and manages risks appropriately. Our activities to deliver robust governance include:

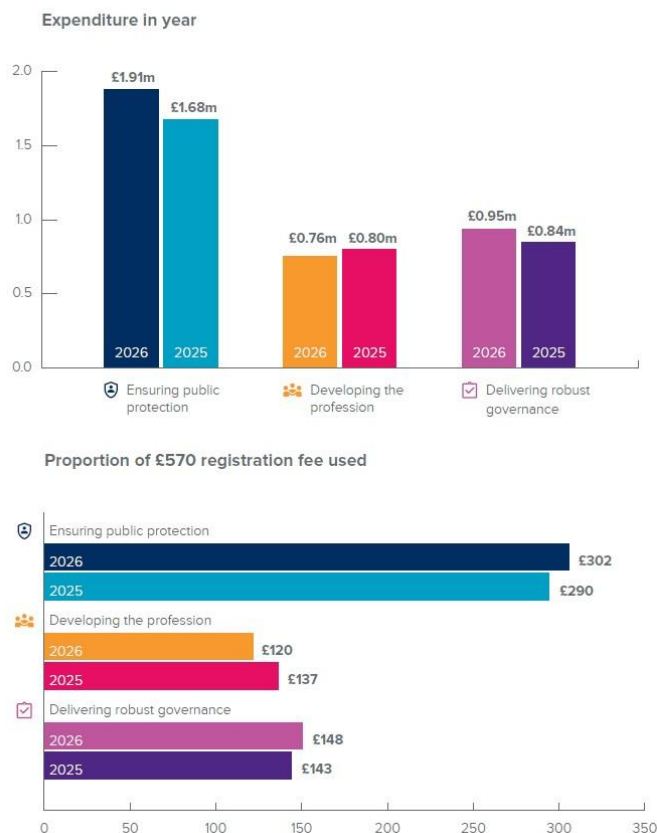
- appointing, training, and maintaining a governance structure that consists of Council, the Policy and Education Committee, the Audit Committee, and the People Committee
- holding Council meetings in public and making the meeting papers available on our website in advance
- investing in our IT infrastructure and new digital ways of working
- subjecting our work to independent audits and review

In the financial year 2025-26, we spent £0.95m on our activities to ensure we delivered robust governance (2025: £0.84m). This was equal to 26% of our total budget (2025: 25%) and means that for every £570 registration fee we receive we spend £148 of that on delivering robust governance (2025: £143).



What does the registration fee fund by value proposition?

The headline registration fee of £570 is broken down to show the amount of spend across the GOsC value proposition in 2025-26.



Sector context

The challenges which GOsC are facing are not unique to osteopathy. Across the healthcare system there are pressures on student numbers; there are significant increases in the number of fitness to practise concerns received; costs are increasing and Councils are raising registration fees.

In recent years, it is only the General Osteopathic Council and the General Chiropractic Council who have not increased registration fees

The table below shows by regulator: the number of registrants, the maximum registration fee paid by their registrants, when their registration fee was last increased and the level of that increase.

Table 8: Summary of registrants, headline fee, date of last fee increase and amount of increase per regulator

Regulator	Number of registrants	Headline fee £	Date of last increase	£ Last increase
General Chiropractic Council	4,041	800	—	—
General Dental Council	125,736	698	2026	77
General Osteopathic Council	5,653	570	—	—
General Medical Council	393,357	481	2025	8
Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland	2,984	477	2025	79
General Optical Council	34,895	405	2026	10
General Pharmaceutical Council	92,705	310	2026	17
Health and Care Professions Council	356,104	123	2025	7
Social Work England	104,857	122	2025	30
Nursing and Midwifery Council	853,707	143	2026	23

NB the other regulators have increased registration fees multiple times since 2014, whereas GOsC has never increased registration fees.

It may be helpful to compare across the regulators, for example we can see the following from the table:

- The General Chiropractic Council has 29% fewer registrants compared to GOsC, and their headline fee is 40% higher.
- The General Dental Council has 2,124% more registrants compared to GOsC, and their headline fee is 22% higher.
- The General Medical Council has 6,858% more registrants compared to GOsC, however, their headline fee is only 16% lower.
- The General Optical Council has 517% more registrants compared to GOsC, however, their headline fee is only 29% lower.

What will happen to the proceeds arising from the sale of the headquarter building?

The proceeds from the sale of the headquarter building will go into the GOsC's reserves to ensure we have a sufficient buffer against future uncertainty, and to allow us to face future challenges and unforeseen circumstances.

As a charity we need to maintain reserves for our core purposes, and this aligns to the expectations of the Charity Commission including:

Operational continuity	Maintaining essential statutory activities during short-term income disruption.
Income volatility	Manage risks arising from fluctuations in registrant fee income, investment returns and/or external funding.
Risk mitigation	Provide financial capacity to respond to: • Legal challenges • Regulatory changes • Major IT or operational changes • Unexpected costs.
Strategic flexibility	Enable investment in transformation, improvement, or public protection initiatives
Orderly wind-down (worst case scenario)	Ensure liabilities (eg. staff costs, contractual obligations) can be met responsibly.

We will maintain an appropriate level of reserves to:

- Manage financial uncertainty.
- Ensure continuity of statutory functions.
- Maintain public confidence and support osteopaths to deliver high-quality care.
- Support strategic flexibility and respond to opportunities.

Our reserves policy aims to:

- Support the long-term sustainability of the organisation.
- Ensure the continuity of statutory regulatory functions.
- Provide financial resilience against unforeseen risks or income fluctuations.
- Enable informed decision-making by Council and the Senior Management Team.

Where reserves are above the target level we will need to consider investment in our strategic priorities and/or designation of funds for future commitments. However, we will take a prudent approach because reserves can only be used once.

Historical context

When GOsC was established, the standard registration fee was £750 (2000-2012) before being reduced over three years between 2012-14, to its current level of £570. This was a 24% reduction with fees remaining unchanged for the next 12 years.

Reductions were also applied to the entry fee and phased fee of c.14%-15%.

Table 9: current fee levels

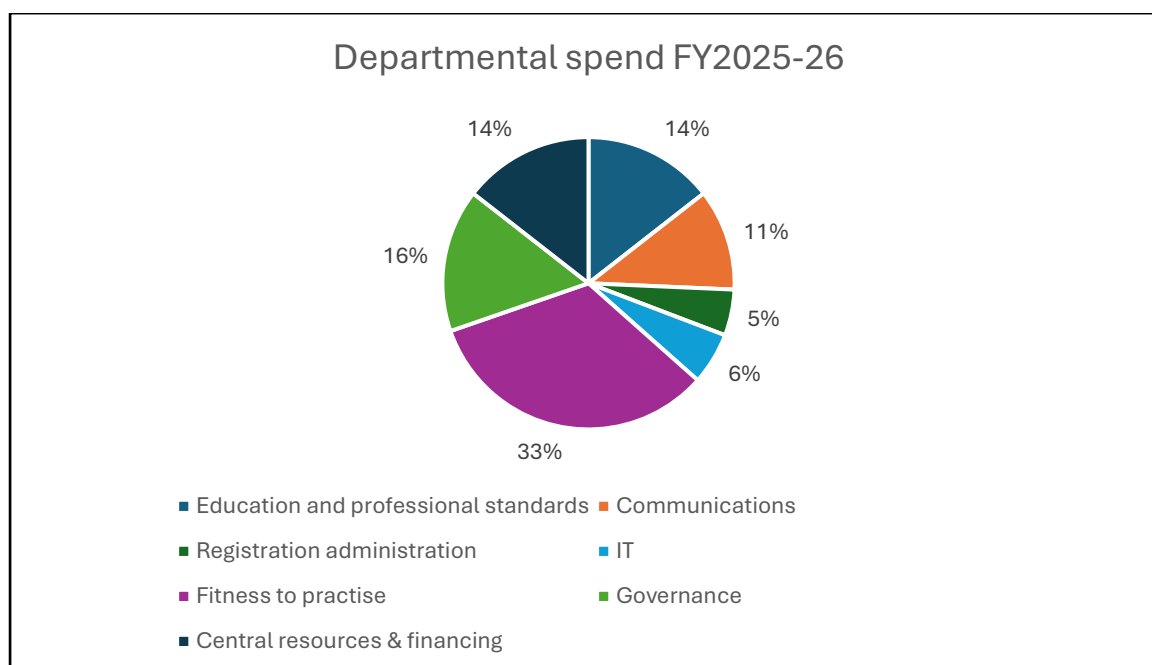
Year	Registration fee
Entry to the Register – year 1	£320 (entry fee)
Renewal – year 2	£430 (phased fee)
Renewal – year 3 and thereafter	£570 (standard fee)

NB There are reduced fees for year 2 and beyond if you are non-practising or live/work overseas for three months or more.

Current context

While GOsC has held registration fee levels constant since 2014, this has been in the face of increasing cost pressures. Our expenditure per area of activity is shown on the pie chart below, with fitness to practise incurring 33% of the budgeted expenditure, followed by governance (16%) and education and professional standards (14%).

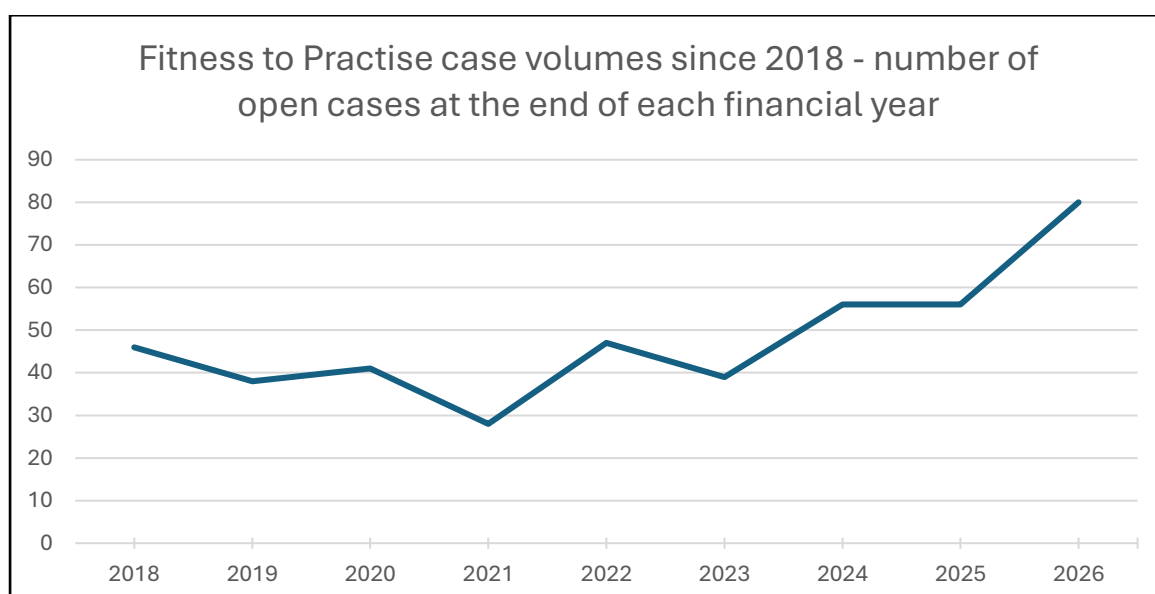
Table 10: Analysis of department expenditure in financial year 2025-26



Operating expenditure, inflation, and caseload pressures within fitness to practise, have increased substantially. For example, compared to 2018 levels, our fitness to practise caseload has increased by 74%.

This is shown in the graph below alongside the expenditure on fitness to practise across the same period, which demonstrates the unpredictability of this area of our work.

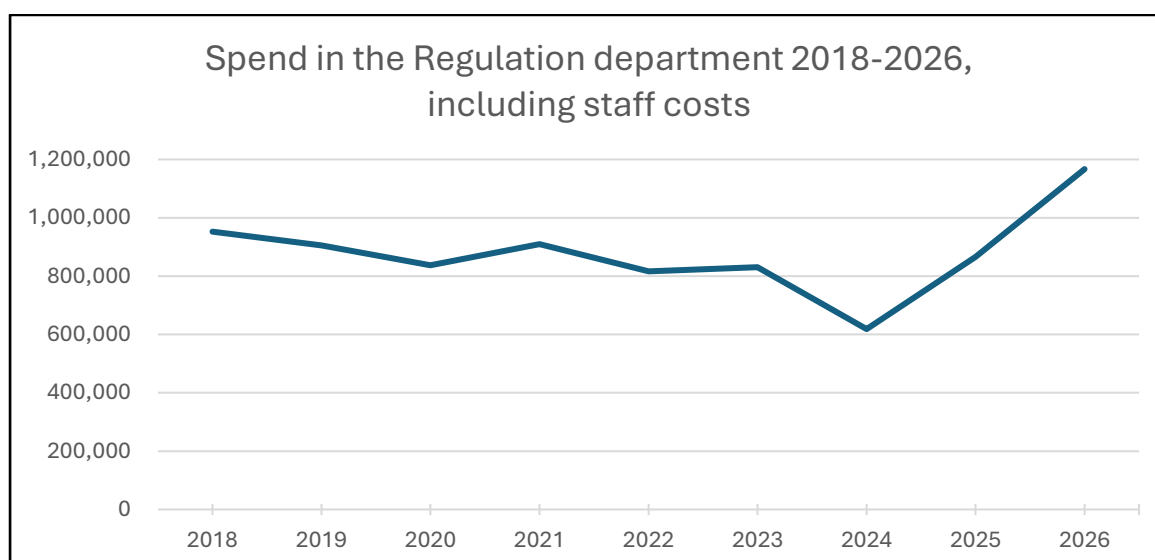
Table 11: Number of open cases since 2018 to 2026



Fitness to Practise spend is not linear; it depends greatly on the volume received, and is linked to the complexity of each individual case. Cases related to crossing professional boundaries are more complex, take longer to resolve, and incur higher costs. At present, we have over 40% of the caseload related to incidents of crossing professional boundaries.

Our legislation is outdated, prescriptive and inefficient. Despite this we have endeavoured to keep costs down as far as possible through paying fees at a fixed rate to Committee members, legal assessors, external legal advice and other professionals. However, the relatively fixed cost of hearings has been impacted by the increase in the volume of cases.

Table 12: Fitness to practise expenditure, incl. staff costs 2018 and 2026



The best mitigation of harms for patients and osteopaths is to avoid concerns being raised in the first instance. However, despite undertaking work to raise awareness of the issues that arise in our fitness to practise process, we are continuing to see concern levels increasing, especially in the area of crossing professional boundaries. The increase in the caseload is consistent across all healthcare regulators and is not unique to osteopathy.

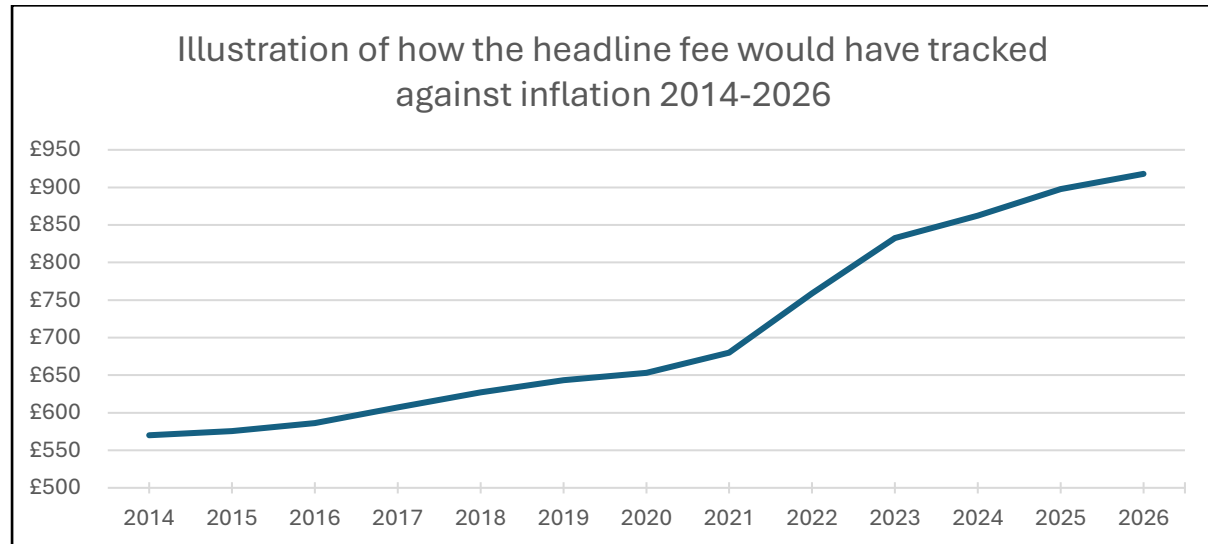
Our work to raise awareness of the issues arising in fitness to practise, include:

- Publishing and disseminating our annual NCOR complaints and concerns report.
- Funding a PhD student and osteopath to look specifically at what drives these cases in osteopathy and to make recommendations to support osteopaths and patients to reduce these concerns.
- Making boundaries and inclusive practice, as well as communication and consent, mandatory CPD from 2026 to support driving down these concerns.
- Providing free CPD and resources in these areas to support osteopaths to run their own sessions.
- Writing blogs and articles on the GOsC website, and in the Institute of Osteopathy magazine, with hints and tips about how to avoid concerns.
- Supporting the Institute of Osteopathy with materials to run sessions on boundaries as part of their 2026 roadshows.
- Commencing a review of our core standards of ethics and competence, the Osteopathic Practice Standards.

Inflationary impact on registration fees

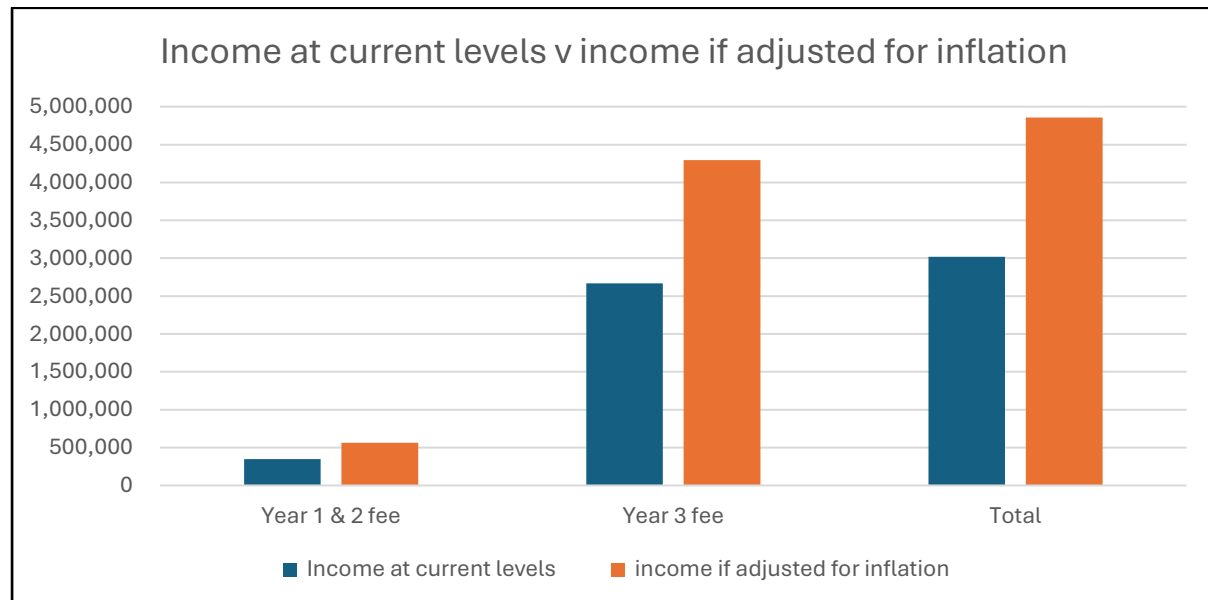
Had the headline fee increased in line with inflation, in 2026 it would now be £918. Using the same inflation rates, the entry fee would be £515, and the year 2 phased fee would be £692. In 2026, just under 92% of registrants pay the headline fee.

Table 13: Headline registration fee tracked against inflation 2014 to 2026



The result of not increasing registration fees in line with inflation means that in financial year 2025-26 alone, income would have been c£1.84m higher.

Table 14: Registration income adjusted for inflation



Future context

The Council is clear that operational expenditure should be covered by operational income. However, during the period 2023-26, expenditure has outstripped income by £540k. We need to act now as a continuation of this situation is not sustainable.

Table 15: Total income v total expenditure in the period 2023-26

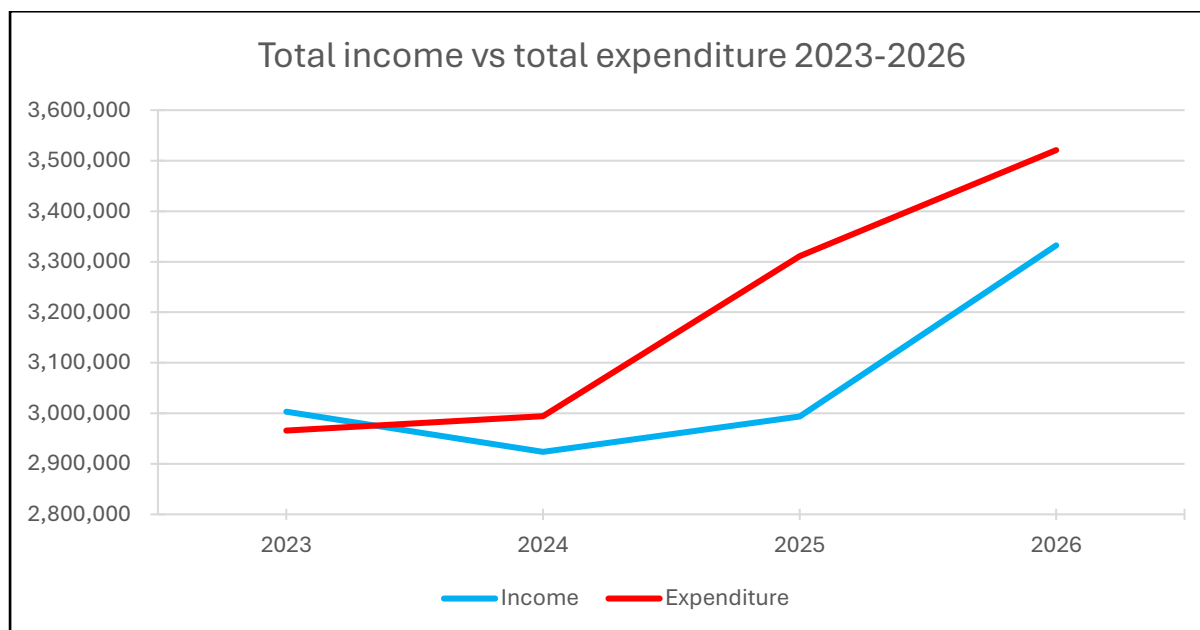
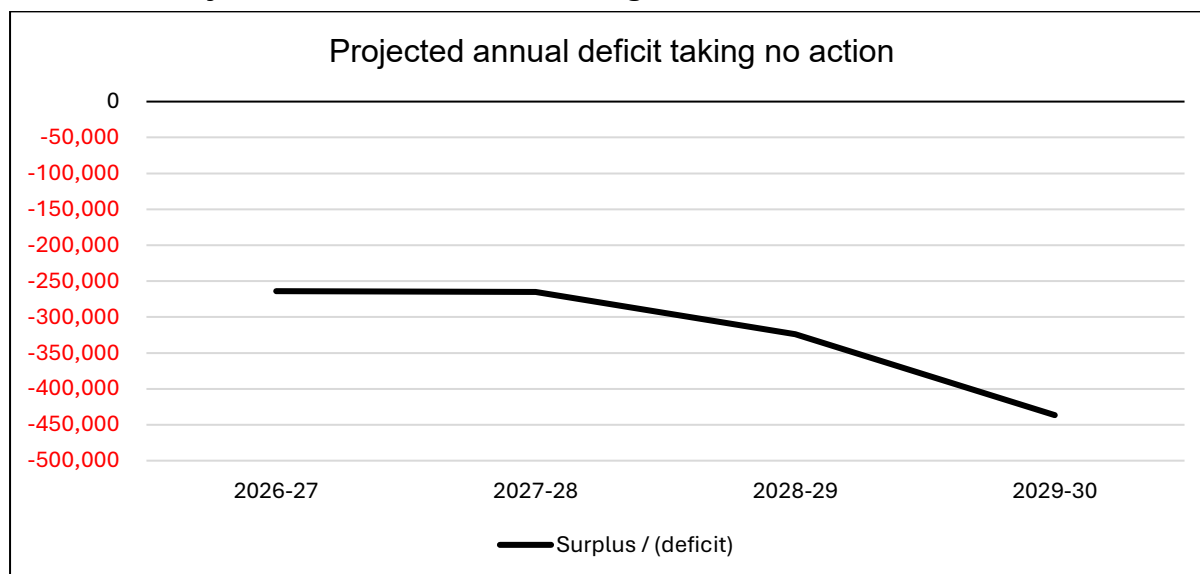


Table 16: Projected annual deficits through to 2030 if no action is taken



We have, for many years, been able to avoid raising fees. As set out in this consultation document we are now in the situation where we need to do this to ensure the financial sustainability of the GOsC.

Every year Council members have considered fee rises and have chosen not to seek fee rises recognising that this means GOsC has been losing income on an annual basis.

Council members, in their role as Trustees, will continue, on an annual basis to monitor registration fees paid by registrants. This does not mean registration fees increase every year. Any future increase would require a separate consultation and the necessary legislative approval.

We have looked carefully at where we can reduce our outgoings and increase our income. The findings of this exercise are contained in the Financial and Asset Framework.

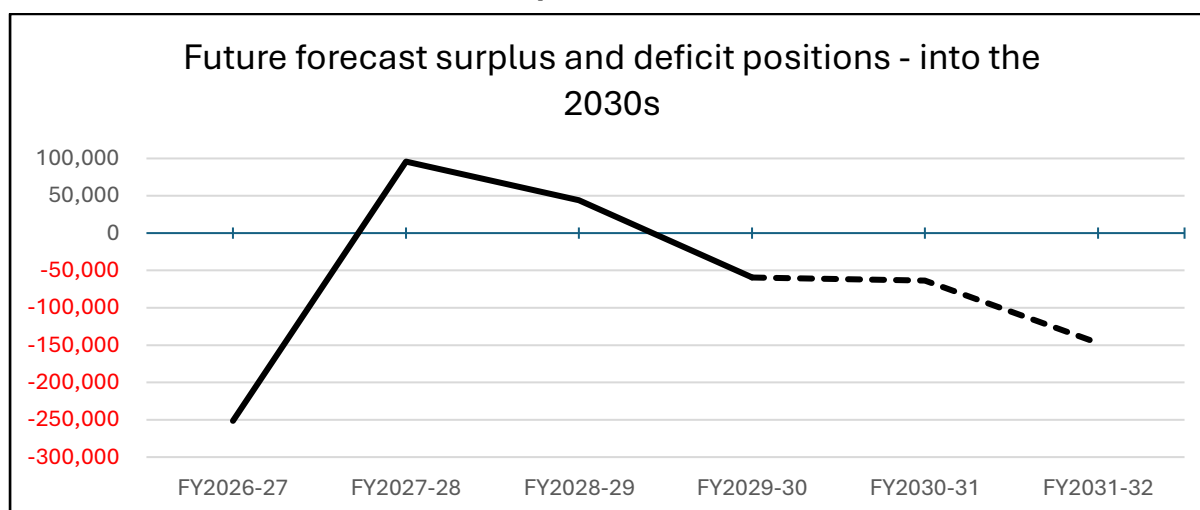
The Financial and Asset Framework identifies actions that GOsC plans to take to reduce expenditure and increase income, which include:

- The sale of the headquarter building which will eliminate maintenance and other associated costs.
- Alternative employment/staffing requirements as a result of a different operating model post the sale of the headquarter building, most notably around facilities/estates and the introduction of the new CRM (records management) system.
- Increased investment income arising from higher returns post the sale of headquarter building.

These are in addition to measures we have already taken to reduce expenditure.

We have forecast that these measures, if enacted in full during financial year 2026-27, would bring expenditure within income in the next two financial years (2027-28 and 2028-29) before GOsC slipped back into deficit.

Table 17: Future forecast financial positions into the 2030s



Therefore, while we will continue to explore measures for reducing expenditure, Council have concluded that GOsC also needs to generate additional income.

How much additional income is generated by a registration fee increase?

Every £10 increase in the registration fee (across the board) would raise approximately £55,960 with a £50 increase generating slightly less than £300k.

The table below summarises what registration fee increases would mean in terms of additional income generated and what the impact would be per registrant, per week for those who pay the headline registration fee.

Table 18: Analysis of registration fee increase, additional income generated and the impact per week based on the headline registration fee

Fee increased by	Additional income generated	Impact per week for registrants paying the standard fee (£570)
£50	£279,800	£0.96
£75	£419,700	£1.44
£100	£559,600	£1.92

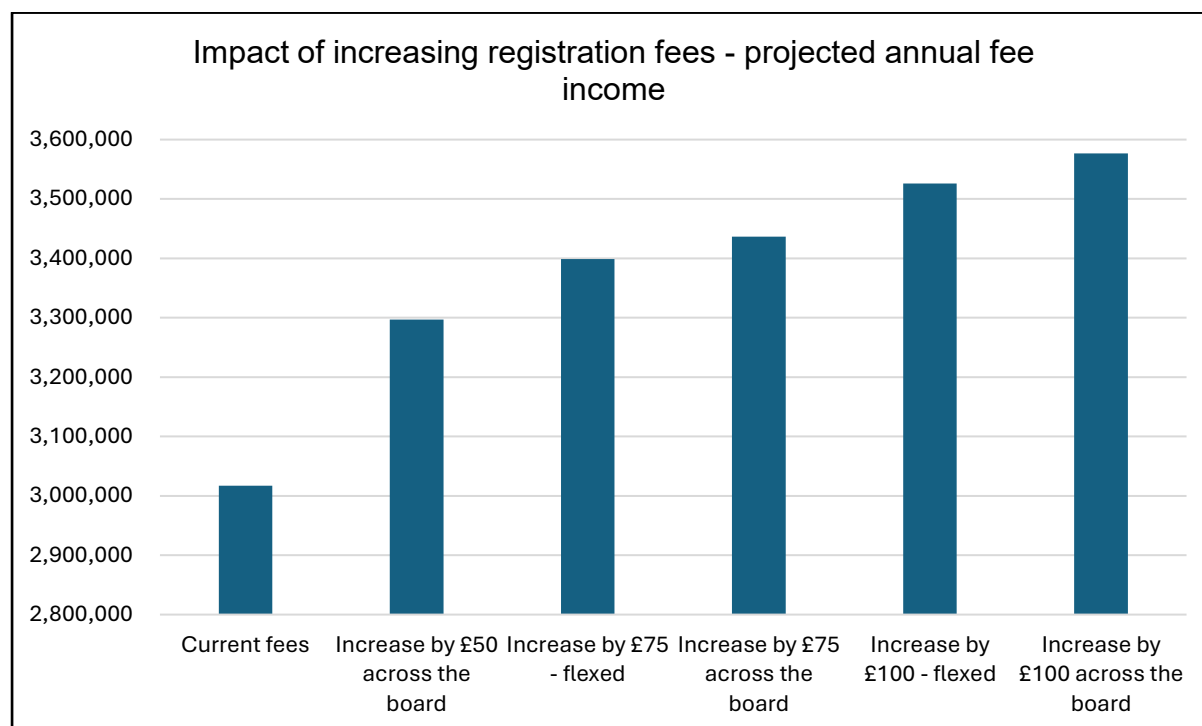
NB: registration fees can be claimed as an allowable business expense.

Table 19: Headline impact of registration fee increase by amount

Descriptor	Impact
£50 increase	Increases income by just under c.£300k annually Eliminates projected future deficits Increase may be seen as manageable to registrants at an additional £0.96 per week Delivery of statutory functions maintained This increase is anticipated to result in a further 2% loss of registrants beyond normal leaver numbers
Increase of £75 or £100	Raises c.£420k-£560k annually Eliminates projected future deficits more quickly Likely to be viewed unfavourably by registrants Delivery of statutory functions financially secure Higher increase will be scrutinised by Department of Health and Social Care This increase is anticipated to result in a further 3-4% loss of registrants beyond normal leaver numbers

NB: the current drafting of our legislation does not give us the autonomy to raise registration fees in line with inflation or introducing new categories of fees for osteopaths who work part time, and so this has not been included in the analysis.

Table 20: Analysis of projected annual fee income from increasing registration fees



The table shows that an across the board increase of £50 will generate income of c.£3.3m, compared to c.£3.6m if it was a £100 increase.

The flexed options – a higher increase to the headline fee with lower increases for entry to the register and for those who are non-practising – generates c.£3.4m if the headline fee is £75 and the increase for lower rates is £35 or c.£3.5m if the headline fee is £100 and the increase for lower rates is £50.

The consultation

In this consultation we are asking for your views on:

- The level of the registration fee increase.
- Whether or not the fee increase should be applied equally across the board.
- Whether or not there should be a larger fee increase for practising osteopaths to limit the increase on those entering the profession and/or who are non-practising.

This will ensure the ongoing delivery of our statutory functions which will enable us to continue supporting osteopaths in giving excellent osteopathic care for patients.

It will also ensure we can help patients to be confident that their osteopath meets high standards of competence, conduct and ethics, and in those cases where concerns are raised, to have sufficient resources available to investigate those concerns fairly, robustly and timely.

How to respond

We want to hear from you, but remember you can skip any questions in the consultation that are not relevant to you.

The deadline for responses to this consultation is Thursday 29 October 2026

You can send us your views by:

- [using this online consultation form](#)
- emailing your responses in the word version to: info@osteopathy.org.uk

If you still have questions or wish to hear more about this consultation before you submit your response, you are welcome to [join our online webinar](#). Please submit your questions in advance via email, the first one will be held on Tuesday 25 August at 6pm.

Information in responses, including personal information, may need to be published or disclosed under the access to information regimes (mainly the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). We will publish a report about the consultation and the responses we have received.

We want to make sure that the data we get from our consultations are robust and have sufficient integrity. The most reliable means of doing this is requiring names and email addresses from each respondent, and limiting responses to one. This allows everyone to have a voice but prevents multiple responses skewing the results. Respondents' information is subject to our [data protection policy and privacy notice](#).

The GOsC is a data controller registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. We use personal data to support our work as the regulatory body for osteopaths. We may share data with third parties to meet our statutory aims and objectives, and when using our powers and meeting our responsibilities under the Osteopaths Act and the associated rules made under the Act. We may use personal data to update the Register, administer and maintain the Register, process complaints, compile statistics and keep stakeholders updated with information about our work.

Consultation questions

Please answer the consultation questions:

1. Please provide your name or the name of your organisation, if replying on behalf of an organisation (optional)

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2. Please let us know in what role you are answering these questions:

GOsC Council (including Patient Partners and Council Associates)/Committee member

Member of the public

Osteopath

Osteopathic educator

Patient

Osteopathic student

Post graduate education provider

Special interest group

Regional or CPD group lead

Other

If you answered 'Other' above, please specify

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3. Having read the information provided, how well do you feel you understand the rationale we have set out for increasing registration fees?

Not at all well	Not very well	Neither well nor poorly	Fairly well	Very well

4. Having read the consultation document and annex, how well do you feel you understand how registration fees support the regulation and development of osteopathy and help protect patients.

Not at all well	Not very well	Neither well nor poorly	Fairly well	Very well

5. Having read the consultation document and annex, how well do you feel you understand the benefits of being regulated by a single-profession regulator?

Not at all well	Not very well	Neither well nor poorly	Fairly well	Very well

6. Which of the following do you think are important benefits of professional regulation for osteopathy? (Select all that apply)

Helping patients identify qualified osteopaths

Maintaining professional standards

Supporting public confidence in osteopathy

Ensuring osteopathic education meets agreed standards

Investigating concerns raised by patients about an osteopath

Other (please specify)

If you answered 'Other' above, please specify

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7. When registration fees are increased, which of the following options do you think is more appropriate?

Increase by £50	Increase by £75	Increase by £100

8. Currently, we have a reduced registration fee for new graduates until year 3 of practice. We also offer reduced rates for non-practising osteopaths. To what extent do you agree or disagree that registration fee increases should be applied equally to everyone across our current structure?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

9. If registration fees are increased by different amounts for different groups of osteopaths, to what extent do you agree or disagree that practising osteopaths should pay a larger increase than new graduates and non-practising osteopaths?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

10. When registration fees are increased, which statement best describes how you would respond in relation to the fees you charge your patients?

I would increase patient fees to recover all or most of the additional cost	
I would increase patient fees to recover some of the additional cost	
I would absorb the additional cost without increasing patient fees	
I am unsure	
Not applicable	

Protected characteristics²

In addition to the equality impacts set out in [the Equality Impact Assessment](#), can you identify any further impacts relating to protected characteristics, either on osteopaths or on patients seeking osteopathic care, that we should consider?

11. Do you think an increase in registration fees could have any impacts on patients with protected characteristics through changes in the price or accessibility of osteopathic treatment?

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

If yes, please provide details.

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12. If you would like to make any suggestions about how any negative equality impacts you have identified could be mitigated, please do so here.

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² Protected characteristics consist of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Impact on Welsh speakers and the use of the Welsh language

In preparing for this consultation we have sought to understand how the approach we take and the potential consultation outcome meet the needs of Welsh speakers and people in Wales, especially to allow for greater opportunities for those in Wales to use the Welsh language.

There are 164 osteopaths in Wales and 8 osteopaths practising listed as 'Welsh-speaking' on the General Osteopathic Council's Register of osteopaths, as of 31 March 2026. There are also currently 139 students studying osteopathy in Wales, and while we cannot be sure how many of these students will go on to join the Register and practise osteopathy after graduating and remain in Wales to do so, we nevertheless take this into consideration when trying to understand the scale of impact our consultation may have on osteopaths and patients in Wales in the future.

The registration fee changes that we have proposed in this consultation would apply equally to osteopaths working in Wales, and all of the devolved nations.

Accompanying questions

Above we explain how we have considered what the possible effects of the approach set out in this consultation to changes in legislation might be for opportunities for osteopaths in Wales to use the Welsh language. Do you agree with our assessment?

Yes	
No	

If no, please explain your views below:

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What changes, if any, could we make to our approach to improve the opportunities available to osteopaths to use the Welsh language?

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Any other comments

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Diversity questionnaire

The collection of personal data can be a sensitive issue and we know that sometimes it can feel intrusive, but we want to make sure that the work we do and our processes are fair and free from discrimination.

Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other characteristic.

As well as providing useful information about diversity within the profession compared to society as a whole, by collecting more comprehensive data about the protected characteristics of osteopaths we can ensure that osteopathic education, standards, continuing professional development (CPD) and our fitness to practise processes are not having any unintended consequences or discriminating against any particular group. We will only use this information to ensure that we comply with our legal obligations to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between those who have particular protected characteristics and those who do not

We are not legally obliged to publish this information on the Register and we are not aware of any other legal requirements that require us to share with third parties. This information will only be used by GOsC staff for the purposes outlined above and to help us tailor our communications so they meet the needs of all osteopaths.

It would be very helpful to us if you would provide this information. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

[Please complete the diversity questionnaire](#)

Thank you for your response to this consultation