



# Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2017/18



Regulator reviewed: **General Osteopathic Council**

**Key facts & figures:**

- regulates **osteopathy** in the **United Kingdom**
- **5,239** professionals on its register (as at 31/12/17)
- **£320** annual fee for registration for the first year, **£430** for the second year and **£570** for each subsequent year

## Standards of good regulation

### Core functions

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### Met

(number of Standards)

Guidance & Standards

4/4

Education & Training

4/4

Registration

6/6

Fitness to Practise

10/10

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## Focus on: **Activities and actions demonstrating how the GOsC is meeting the Standards**

The GOsC has continued to meet all of our Standards of Good Regulation. However we did have some concerns about how it has been dealing with complaints about misleading advertising by its registrants. We have set out our views in the full report in the Fitness to Practise section.

### **GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS: STANDARDS REFLECT UP-TO-DATE PRACTICE/STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS ARE SOUGHT WHEN DEVELOPING GUIDANCE**

The GOsC has reviewed and updated its Osteopathic Standards (last updated in 2012). Following a consultation, the standards were agreed in May 2018. The GOsC engaged with stakeholders – aimed at getting input from registrants, patients/public, the osteopathic education sector/students, indemnity providers/private health insurers, and organisations involved in health and care regulation. The results were put to a Stakeholder Reference Group and patient representatives. Areas of disagreement among respondents to the consultation were discussed with the group to reach agreement. The standards come into force on 1 September 2019.

### **REGISTRATION: REGISTRANTS MAINTAIN THE STANDARDS REQUIRED TO STAY FIT TO PRACTISE**

The GOsC has continued to develop a new continuing professional development (CPD) scheme, including producing guidance and resources, templates for recording activity, thought pieces, and case studies. Raising awareness of the new scheme has involved creating a short animation for registrants, themed webinars, e-bulletins, and features in *The Osteopath* magazine. The GOsC consulted on the proposed changes to its CPD rules and published its response. The amended rules received Privy Council approval in April 2018 and were laid before Parliament in June 2018. In our response to the consultation, we noted that, it will be important for the GOsC to ensure that it can identify and adapt to any new risks that emerge over time.

### **FITNESS TO PRACTISE: DEALING WITH ADVERTISING COMPLAINTS**

We carried out a targeted review of the GOsC's performance against fitness to practise standards 1, 3 and 6. This included a sample of cases about alleged misleading advertising by its registrants. We have included a section detailing our findings in the full report. Our concerns related to: not providing full assessments of the complainant's information; lack of transparency and consistency; delays in progressing the cases; lack of detail given to registrants – making it more difficult for them to address concerns; the suitability of these cases to be closed under the GOsC's Initial Closure Procedure; the quality and reasoning set out in the screener's decision to close the case; and little evidence of risk assessment. We do however, recognise that these cases are usually low in risk.

### **FITNESS TO PRACTISE: ANYBODY CAN RAISE A CONCERN**

The GOsC has updated the way it manages fitness to practise concerns by introducing threshold criteria and an Initial Closure Procedure. We carried out a targeted review to see their impact. We did not identify any concerns about the way the threshold criteria are applied. However, we did identify concerns about the Initial Closure Procedure, including: sticking to the deadlines; the suitability of some cases for closure under it; and the information provided to the screeners. The concerns we have raised are not significant enough for the GOsC not to meet this Standard and the GOsC has also indicated that it will consider changing its Initial Closure Procedure process and guidance to address our concerns.

### **FITNESS TO PRACTISE: CASES ARE DEALT WITH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE**

The GOsC's performance has been mixed this year. It has been implementing measures to improve timeliness, including introducing a listings protocol, an escalation policy and an electronic case management system, but we have seen an increase in adjournments and part-heard hearings which give us cause for concern. We observed periods of inactivity in many of the cases we audited, some of which we considered to impact on the level of customer service provided by the GOsC. However, it is clear that the GOsC is implementing measures and working with stakeholders to improve the efficiency of its fitness to practise process. We will monitor the impact of these measures on timeliness over the next year.

**Find out more in the full report.**