

# General Osteopathic Council

## Monitoring report

2024/25

The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) regulates Osteopaths in the UK.

There are:

**5,597**

Osteopaths on the register as at  
31 March 2025

This report covers the  
period 1 April 2024 to  
31 March 2025

## Key findings and areas for improvement

### Standard 3 on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The GOsC met our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Standard again this year. It continues to be active in relation to EDI and it continues to perform strongly against the majority of the indicators for this Standard. We saw an example of good practice, in the establishment, evaluation and improvement of its Patient Involvement Forum. There was a delay in the GOsC's review of its fitness to practise guidance and the GOsC had not made the significant progress expected in the collection of EDI registrant data in this review period. The GOsC has plans in place to address the lack of progress.

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## Registrant and Stakeholder Perceptions Survey

For the first time, this year the GOsC carried out a Registrant and Perceptions Survey which looked at the views of osteopaths, students, educators and partner organisations, including how they perceive GOsC as their regulator and how the GOsC performs its role. The GOsC has begun work to make changes in response to the research findings.

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## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Last year the GOsC carried out a CPD Evaluation Survey and in this review period it incorporated its findings and stakeholder feedback in changes it made to its CPD guidance and Peer Discussion Review guidance and templates. The GOsC consulted on the revised documents in this review period.

## Standards met: 18 out of 18



General  
Standards

**5 out of 5**



Guidance and  
Standards

**2 out of 2**



Education  
and Training

**2 out of 2**



Registration

**4 out of 4**



Fitness to Practise

**5 out of 5**

Previous years

2023/24

**18 out of 18**

2022/23

**18 out of 18**

## Our performance review process

We have a statutory duty to report annually to Parliament on the performance of the 10 regulators we oversee. We do this by reviewing each regulator's performance against our Standards of Good Regulation and reporting what we find. The judgements we make against each Standard incorporate a range of evidence to form an overall picture of performance. Meeting a Standard means that we are satisfied, from the evidence we have seen, that a regulator is performing well in that area. It does not mean there is no room for improvement. Where we identify areas for improvement, we pay particular attention to them as we continue to monitor the performance of the regulator. Similarly, finding that a regulator has met all of the Standards does not mean perfection. Rather, it signifies good performance in the 18 areas we assess.

Our performance reviews are carried out on a three-year cycle; every three years, we carry out a more intensive 'periodic review' and in the other two years we monitor performance and produce shorter monitoring reports. Find out more about our review process [here](#). We welcome hearing from people and organisations who have experience of the regulators' work. We take this information into account alongside other evidence as we review the performance of each regulator.



## General Standards

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### The GOsC met all five General Standards this year.

These five Standards cover a range of areas including: providing accurate, accessible information; clarity of purpose; equality, diversity and inclusion; reporting on performance and addressing organisational concerns; and consultation and engagement with stakeholders to manage risk to the public.

This section of our report mainly focuses on Standard 3 because this is our second year of using our new approach to assessing the regulators against this Standard. More information is available [on our website](#), including our guidance document and our evidence framework.

### Our assessment of the GOsC's performance against Standard 3

In 2024, we introduced a new approach to assessing regulators against Standard 3, which focuses on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. As part of that approach, we have broken down the Standard into four separate outcomes. For a regulator to meet the Standard, we would need to be assured that the regulator has met all four outcomes. Our assessment of the GOsC's performance against the four outcomes is set out below.

#### Outcome 1: The regulator has appropriate governance, structures and processes in place to embed EDI across its regulatory activities

The GOsC's previous EDI framework ended in July 2024, and it published its **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Framework 2024-30 (EDIB)** in August 2024. The GOsC plans to report annually to Council on the implementation of the EDIB Framework and to publish a report for wider stakeholders by the end of July 2026.

The GOsC continues to have a clear governance structure to embed EDI across the organisation and continues to carry out and publish Equality Impact Assessments for all policies and processes.

#### Outcome 2: In terms of EDI, the regulator ensures that registrants and students are equipped to provide appropriate care to all patients and service users, and have appropriate EDI knowledge and skills

We noted in last year's review that the GOsC's focus on diversity and inclusion in its Graduate Outcomes for Osteopathic Pre-Registration Education (Graduate Outcomes) and Standards for Education and Training demonstrated good practice. There have been no changes to these documents this year.

This year the GOsC published EDIB guidance on its website, including resources to support CPD. The EDIB guidance references those aspects of the Osteopathic Practice

Standards (OPS) most aligned with EDI requirements and provides tips on how osteopaths can ensure that their practice meets EDIB best practice.

The GOsC also published revised guidance on professional behaviour and student fitness to practise in education which includes expectations around challenging discrimination. Additionally, the guidance incorporates requirements that education providers ensure and demonstrate an inclusive learning culture.

In this review period the GOsC consulted on changes to its CPD scheme which will make activities in boundaries with patients and EDI mandatory elements of the scheme.

### Outcome 3: In terms of EDI, the regulator makes fair decisions across all regulatory functions

This year we have seen evidence of the GOsC continue to use the findings from recent surveys/consultations to identify and put in place actions with the aim of reducing the possibility of disadvantage across its regulatory functions. The GOsC has also been working with others in the osteopathic sector to improve its capture of EDI data from those raising fitness to practise concerns.

Last year, we considered that the GOsC could improve the level of data it holds about its registrants across a broader range of protected characteristics. We have not yet seen any significant improvement in this area.

#### Ongoing Opportunity for improvement

The GOsC continues to hold nearly complete EDI data for its registrants in respect of three characteristics (gender, age and nationality) but it has not made the significant progress expected in its collection of EDI registrant data this year. As reported last year, the GOsC plans to implement a CRM system which will allow for broader data collection, but this has been delayed. The GOsC told us that it is currently concluding the system's final integration and testing and will set a launch date once it is satisfied that the system is working effectively. Going forward, a fuller understanding of registrants' EDI data will be fundamental to the GOsC being able to assure itself and others of its fair decision-making.

The GOsC's revision of its fitness to practise guidance for early-stage decision-makers to improve references to discriminatory behaviour is on track but was delayed beyond this review period. The GOsC revised its Investigating Committee Decision-Making Guidance to include allegations of discrimination against patients, colleagues and other people and published the updated **Guidance** in April 2025. It has made similar changes to the **Hearings and Sanctions Guidance** which it published in May 2025.

### Outcome 4: The regulator engages with and influences others to advance EDI issues and reduce unfair differential outcomes

In this review period we have seen evidence of the GOsC continuing to seek out and act on feedback from a wide range of stakeholders including patient focus groups, registrants, students, professional bodies and education providers.

### **Good Practice**

The GOsC carried out an evaluation of its Patient Involvement Forum during this review period by asking GOsC staff and forum members about their experience to identify what was working well and improvements. The GOsC used the evaluation to map the demographics of the forum's membership and is looking at ways to improve. We commend its work in not only establishing/maintaining a Patient Involvement Forum but also in evaluating it and taking action to develop and improve it.

The GOsC has used a range of research to inform its work, including the findings from the Registrant and Stakeholder Perceptions Survey and the research examples used as CPD resources linked to the EDIB Framework. It has expanded the means by which it might be contacted and continues to assess the corporate complaints it receives for EDI implications. The evidence we have reviewed under this outcome provides assurance that the GOsC engages with and influences others to advance EDI issues and reduce unfair differential outcomes.

The GOsC continues to be active in this area and performed strongly against most of the indicators under Standard 3. We have identified good practice in relation to one indicator, but we did not see any significant progress in this review period against two indicators which we identified as opportunities for improvement last year.

The GOsC has plans in place to improve the collection of EDI registrant data and has now reviewed its fitness to practise guidance. Our decision was finely balanced, and because the evidence shows that the GOsC is performing well in most areas, we were reasonably assured that the lack of complete data, across a broader range of protected characteristics, does not currently prevent the GOsC making fair decisions across its regulatory functions. The GOsC met all four outcomes.

### **Registrant and Stakeholder Perceptions Survey**

For the first time, the GOsC commissioned research to look at the views of osteopaths, students, educators and partner organisations including how they perceive GOsC as their regulator and how the GOsC performs its role. The research also included interviews and focus groups with osteopaths, students and colleagues from partner organisations. Findings show that 64% held negative perceptions of the GOsC, based largely on the experiences of other osteopaths/social media and some common misunderstandings of the GOsC's role. Respondents who had positive views of the GOsC (11%) were more likely to have had direct experiences with the regulator and to have a better understanding of the GOsC's role.

The GOsC has begun work to make changes in response to the research findings, including reviewing and making improvements to how it might be contacted and how it communicates with others. We will continue to monitor the GOsC's work in this area.

**“...discussions have been initiated by GOsC to seek [our] views, which has been appreciated and demonstrated GOsC's commitment to work collaboratively within the profession, build trust and promote inclusivity.”**

**Stakeholder feedback**

## Guidance and Standards

**The GOsC met both Standards for Guidance and Standards this year.**

The GOsC consulted on two pieces of guidance in this review period:

- *Guidance on Professional Behaviours and Student Fitness to Practise in Osteopathic Education*. The GOsC made changes to the guidance as a result of the public consultation process, including the addition of a specific case scenario and further clarification of the fitness to practise process. The revised **Guidance** was published in February 2025. The GOsC plans to incorporate the new Guidance into its established round of introductory talks for all first-year groups at Osteopathic Education Institutions.
- *Guidance for Applicants and Students with a Disability or Health Condition, Students with a Disability or Health Condition – Guidance for Osteopathic Institutions*. The GOsC updated its existing guidance with input from students, patients, educators and graduates including those with health conditions, disability and with lived and learned experience and an equality expert. It made changes to improve the accessibility of the new guidance, and the consultation strategy focused on ensuring further expert input in due course. We will monitor the outcome of this consultation.

## Education and Training

**The GOsC met both Standards for Education and Training this year.**

The GOsC continues to quality assure (QA) osteopathic education institutions to ensure that they are implementing the Standards for Education and that only students who meet the Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS) are awarded a Recognised Qualification (RQ) that allows them to apply for registration.

This year the GOsC announced that it is to move its quality assurance processes in-house from July 2025 with a transition period until October 2025. The GOsC is working with the education sector to inform the transition and to develop the QA Visitor role and a job description for a QA Visit Manager. It plans to retain its independent Education Visitors to

maintain continuity. We will continue to monitor the GOsC's progress and stakeholder feedback in this area.

## Registration

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**The GOsC met all four Standards for Registration this year.**

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Evaluation

In response to the findings of its **CPD Evaluation Survey**, published in September 2024, the GOsC revised its CPD guidance to make activities in EDI and boundaries with patients' mandatory elements of the scheme. The GOsC also revised the Peer Discussion Review guidance and templates and its CPD guidance to make them simpler and more accessible for both osteopaths and peers. The GOsC consulted on the revised documents in this review period. We will monitor the outcome of this consultation and the GOsC's work in this area.

## Fitness to Practise

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**The GOsC met all five Standards for Fitness to Practise.**

### Time taken to progress cases

There have been some increases in the time taken to progress cases through the GOsC's fitness to practise processes during this review period. The GOsC explained that this reflects delays associated with third parties, which affect a significant proportion of its small caseload. The GOsC's annual median timeliness remains amongst the shortest of all the regulators and as we have not identified any additional concerns about the GOsC's fitness to practise process in this review period, we are assured that it is working as intended.

### Support for people involved in fitness to practise cases

The GOsC is planning a number of measures to support those involved in fitness to practise cases. It is considering providing electronic witness feedback forms and independent support for witnesses and registrants taking part in remote hearings. It has also embarked on an independent review of the tone of voice used in its fitness to practise communications. We will continue to monitor the GOsC's work in this area.



### Quick links/find out more

- Read the [GOsC's 2023/24 performance review](#)
- Find out more about [our performance review process](#)
- Read our [Standards of Good Regulation](#)
- Read our [evidence framework for Standard 3](#)



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