



COVID-19 Update

A message from Matthew Redford, Acting Chief Executive and Registrar

Keeping yourselves, your loved ones, and your patients and the public healthy at this difficult and unprecedented time are top priorities.

We understand that this is a time of great uncertainty for everyone, so we want to assure you that we are doing our very best to get as much information and support to you as possible.

We have been publishing updated guidance and drawing together the regularly updating advice from government so do check back frequently. You can find this at osteopathy.org.uk/covid-19, and we'll detail some of this guidance in the message below.

The team at GOsC, although we are working remotely, are working hard to answer your queries and produce new guidance to help clarify these complex and challenging times. It may take us a little longer to respond than usual due to the volume of enquiries, so please bear with us during this time. All your questions are important to us and we will be responding as soon as we can.

We also want to encourage you to take a moment to [think about your own mental health](#) and so we are collating some resources that you might find helpful in these stressful times (see below). You might also want to take this opportunity to join the new Facebook group set up by the professional body, the Institute of Osteopathy, which is open to all osteopaths and not just members, and is providing some community support to help people deal with this crisis: [Let'sTalkOsteopathy](#).

Should my practice close?

We are in discussions following yesterday's announcement from the government and hope to publish updated advice imminently.

Infection control

We have issued interim guidance on infection control in osteopathy, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Read guidance](#)

Allied Health Professionals

On 19 March 2020 the GOsC together with the UK Chief Allied Health Professions Officers and the Health and Care Professions Council jointly published a statement on supporting allied health professionals and allied health professional support workers during the COVID-19 epidemic in the UK. The letter recognises the role that osteopaths can play in this current COVID 19 epidemic. [Read statement](#)

How can I help the NHS?

Osteopaths are being welcomed by the NHS in all four countries of the UK.

Further information is available on the [NHS England website](#). Private practitioners can either contact their local providers or you can register with NHS Professionals via nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk/en/Joining-NHSP or nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk/en/Joining-NHSP/Our-NHS-our-Bank/Allied-Health-Professionals

You can also apply to your local NHS Trust via www.jobs.nhs.uk. Search for COVID-19 and check what roles they have and consider how you can help. The roles may vary, from clinical to administrative, for example, so there may be some need for flexibility according to what's needed.

Concerns about loss of income

Many osteopaths are naturally concerned about the prospect of loss of income during these difficult times.

In terms of specific clinical and business advice, the professional body the Institute of Osteopathy has provided practical advice which is available here: osteopathy.org/news/covid-19-update.

The government has issued advice for small businesses at: gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19. This guidance is being continually updated.

We are also currently awaiting updates from the government with regard to potentially extending support for the self-employed, which would greatly assist the profession.

Registration fees

Osteopathy registration fees are set out in legislation, and can't be varied without a change to that legislation. At the moment, what is in place is the existing option to reduce your registration fee if you are non-practising for three continuous months within your registration year. [Read more](#)

Professional Indemnity Insurance

Please remember that you're required by law to have Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) whether you're seeing patients or not. This legislation protects patients. However, if you change your status to 'non-practising' (ie not seeing/speaking to patients), you need to have 'run-off' cover in place. You will need to discuss this with your insurance provider. PII is there to: protect and assure patients and the public, and ensure that you're indemnified against liabilities.

Run off cover will protect both you and your patients should a claim be made against you retrospectively. You can find out more about the insurance requirements at: osteopathy.org.uk/insurance

Educational providers

We have published a COVID-19 statement to osteopathic educational providers to outline our position. [Read statement](#)

CPD

Given the unprecedented and difficult circumstances we all face concerning the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the process of verification and assurance has been put on hold. We will no longer be contacting a sample of osteopaths at the end of their CPD year for the time being.

Key worker status and osteopaths

The government has asked parents to keep their children at home, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. [The government guidance](#) states that a key worker in health and social care includes frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.'

The Department of Health and Social Care have advised us that osteopaths can 'make a decision for themselves based on the guidance that has been published'. Please note that there is no guarantee of educational provision as that will depend on the decisions taken by the school, nursery or education authority.

Looking after your mental health and wellbeing

During this stressful time, it's important to take care of your mental health and wellbeing. [The Federation of Small Businesses](#) and the [NHS, Every Mind Matters](#), have some bitesize tips, audio guides and further resources that could help you. As mentioned above, you might also want to join the new Facebook group: [Let'sTalkOsteopathy](#), set up by the professional body, the Institute of Osteopathy, which is providing some community support to help people deal with this crisis. It is open to all osteopaths.