



General
Osteopathic
Council

GOsC updated statement about face to face osteopathic practice (4 January 2021)

This statement is subject to change so please keep checking for updates.
[See the version history for this document.](#)

There is not a prohibition on osteopathic practice in the current legislation across the UK.

We continue to advise osteopaths to use their professional judgement in determining whether it is appropriate to see patients for face-to-face treatment. Other options for treatment include phone or video consultations.

If osteopaths consider, in discussion with the patient, that it is appropriate to offer a face-to-face consultation as a treatment option, they should:

- Triage patients remotely prior to attendance to ensure that they and members of their household do not have relevant symptoms and that they are not subject to requirements to self-isolate. Consider, with the patient, whether a video or phone consultation may be an appropriate treatment option. See also our '[Statement on remote consultations](#)' and '[A guide to telephone and remote consultations](#)' published by the Institute of Osteopathy.
- In making decisions with patients, osteopaths should consider the needs of their patients to receive treatment against the risks posed by undertaking that treatment both to the patient, themselves, and the public, in the current context of transmission of COVID-19.
- Ensure that stringent infection control procedures are in place where they are practising and that there are policies in place to reduce the transmission of any diseases. Osteopaths must review [relevant guidance](#) from the relevant public health bodies and governments for the area in which they are working, and ensure that what they do continues to reflect any updated guidance. See also our [interim infection control guidance](#), and the range of resources and guidance published by the [Institute of Osteopathy](#) (the professional membership body for osteopaths).

In the current emergency context of COVID-19, all osteopaths who are practising must ensure that they protect their patients and the public, themselves and others, and should ensure that they have read and implemented as appropriate, updated guidance to the country in which they are practising including:

- Relevant clinical guidance for the local area in which the osteopath is practising including: [COVID-19: guidance for health professionals](#) (England) (24 December 2020); [Guidance for Primary Care](#) (Scotland) (17 September 2020), [Guidance for Health and Social Care Staff, healthcare workers and providers](#) (Northern Ireland) and [Guidance for Health and Social Care professionals: coronavirus](#) (Wales).
- Other related guidance: [Coronavirus Guidance \(England\)](#), [Coronavirus Guidance \(Scotland\)](#), [Coronavirus Guidance \(Northern Ireland\)](#), [Coronavirus Guidance \(Wales\)](#)
- [Infection control guidance](#) issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Public Health Wales (PHW), Public Health Agency (PHA) Northern Ireland, Health Protection Scotland (HPS)/National Services Scotland, Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England as official guidance

General Osteopathic Council Interim Guidance
5 November 2020

Date	Changes made	Sign off
24 March 2020	Original version	Matthew Redford and Chair of Council
24 March 2020	Additional statement about osteopathic practice in the current context. Guidance updated to incorporate Guidance on Shielding	Matthew Redford
27 March 2020	Additional statement about osteopathic practice in the current context. Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020	Matthew Redford
7 May 2020	Updated guidance about Staying at Home and Away from others (1 May 2020) and Guidance on Shielding (5 May 2020) included.	Matthew Redford
12 May 2020	Updated to take account of updated Government Guidance on Staying at Home across the four UK countries which is now diverging.	Matthew Redford

24 June 2020	Updated to take account of relaxation on some social distancing measures and to update links to guidance.	Matthew Redford
16 July 2020	Updated links to guidance and made reference to local lockdowns.	Matthew Redford
5 August 2020	Updated links and referenced pausing of shielding scheme	Matthew Redford
5 November 2020	<p>Addition of self-isolation in triage requirements.</p> <p>Updated links to legislation and guidance following increased restrictions across the UK.</p> <p>Increased focus on patient partnership in decision making.</p> <p>Increased focus on UK guidance.</p> <p>Deletion of information about virus transmission.</p> <p>Updating of links to clinical guidance, general coronavirus guidance and infection control guidance issued by England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales</p>	Matthew Redford
4 January 2021	Amended publication date of COVID-19: guidance for health professionals (England)	Matthew Redford