



College of Osteopaths

Freedom of Information Regulations

1. Introduction

The College of Osteopaths, as a Public Authority, is committed to the principles underlying the Freedom of Information Act 2002 (“FOIA”). This legislation provides a general ‘right of access’ to much of the information held by the College, in order to ensure openness, transparency and accountability. The College of Osteopaths fully recognises this ‘right to access’ and will not restrict access to information unless a statutory exemption applies.

The College therefore commits to:

1. Make publicly available all Policies, Procedures and Minutes of meetings.
2. Ensure all requests for information are dealt with in an efficient, timely and helpful manner, in accordance with the section 60 Code of Practice on the Discharge of Functions which accompanies FOIA.
3. Apply due consideration as to whether information should be disclosed in those instances where a statutory exemption or exception applies.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy has been established to ensure that the College of Osteopaths complies with FOIA. Information ‘held’ by the College includes information created or received, regardless of format, as well as information held by third parties on the College’s behalf.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The College of Osteopaths has a responsibility to implement the provisions of FOIA. The College must therefore maintain a general ‘right of access’ to the information it holds, and maintain its records in accordance with the regulatory environment as set down in the section 61 Code of Practice: Records Management that accompanies FOIA.
- 3.2 The Board of Governors have overall institutional responsibility and acts as a central point of contact for enquirers, it also has responsibility for:
 - a) The management of, and response to, those non-routine Information Requests made to the College where the Act's exemptions or exceptions, as appropriate, are applicable
 - b) The development of guidance and training for staff on FOI issues
 - c) The provision of the administrative structure for all Requests for Review received by the College under the OIA



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- d) The coordination of contact between the College and the Information Commissioner.

3.3 The Principal is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring compliance with this Policy.

3.4 Data stewards are responsible for:

- a) Liaising with the Data Protection Officer to retrieve information and respond to non-routine requests for information
- b) Collating and checking the accuracy of responses from the College
- c) Providing advice and guidance to staff

The data stewards are: Bursar for staff; Clinic Operations Manager for patients and Registrar for student.

3.5 All members of College staff are responsible for:

- a) Familiarising themselves with this Policy and associated guidelines
- b) Providing general advice and assistance to those requesting information
- c) Seek advice from, and liaising with, their local Data Steward as soon as possible after a request is received
- d) Managing documents and records in accordance with College procedures written within the Employee Handbook and Policy on Storing Documents.
- e) Responding to routine “business as usual” requests for information.

4. Breaches of this Code of practice

4.1 Compliance with this Policy is compulsory for all staff employed by the College of Osteopaths and any member of staff who fails to comply with this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action. The Employee Handbook is available on the Staff Intranet or via the Bursar.