

Member Fees Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines how members' fees are set, how fees and expenses are paid, and how and when fees are reviewed, to ensure that members are paid appropriate fees for the work they undertake for the GOC. It also provides guidance on who is entitled to additional fees beyond the fees paid for attending meetings.
- 1.2. As a registered charity there is a need to ensure that the monies of the charity are only used to further the GOC charitable objects and, in keeping with other public bodies, we are expected to demonstrate best value for money in all that we do.
- 1.3. In addition, fees paid to Council members (trustees) are subject to review by the Charities Commission.
- 1.4. Our approach is consistent with our values – acting with integrity, pursuing excellence, respecting other people and ideas, showing empathy, behaving fairly and being agile and responsive to change.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that member fees remain current, are fairly applied and are in line with comparable data from similar organisations from within the regulatory and healthcare public body sector.
- 2.2. This policy also provides information on how fees are reviewed every three years against comparable data and how fees for all members are set at a day rate in line with the median benchmarked fee level.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all our members. This includes members who hold more than one appointment with the GOC (such as being a member of more than one committee). This policy does not apply to GOC employees (such as case examiners) or workers (such as education visitors).
- 3.2 The payment of additional member fees for member development, induction, and training, participating in working groups and/or selection panels, undertaking member performance assessment and other activities only applies to members who are not paid an annual fee. This means that Council members are not paid for any additional activity such as preparation for meetings, induction, training and development, undertaking member performance assessment and performance appraisal activities along with membership on Council committees, working groups and/or selection panels.

4. How member fees are set and reviewed

- 4.1 Member fees will be reviewed at least every three years in accordance with the review method described below. Recommendations for changes to members fees and/or changes to this policy are considered by Remuneration Committee for approval by Council.
- 4.2 The review will include consideration of the mean time commitment of all members over a three-year timeframe. Where the time commitment for the role may have changed, the views of members will be gathered to inform the analysis of the data collection.
- 4.3 For roles remunerated by an annual fee the mean time commitment will be calculated to include charring duties, preparation for and attendance at meetings, induction, training and development, undertaking member performance assessment and performance review activities as well as membership on Council committees, working groups and/or selection panels.
- 4.4 If there is a reason to change the time commitment of members outside of the review period, for example, because of a change in responsibilities, the Remuneration Committee and Council will take this into account in reviewing whether to change the fee payable.
- 4.5 Member fees and day rates will be benchmarked against comparable data, which will include data from other healthcare regulators and at least eight non-healthcare public sector bodies, for which comparable fee data is available, as agreed by the Remuneration Committee (see Annex A).
- 4.6 A median day rate for Council Chair and members is multiplied by the mean annual time commitment to identify an annual fee (and paid on a monthly basis).
- 4.7 An allowance for the Senior Council member is identified by adding a supplement of £2,500 to the annual fee agreed for Council members (and paid on a monthly basis). The supplement includes payment for undertaking a range of activities as detailed in the role description, including undertaking the performance appraisal of the Chair and charring committee and other meetings as required.
- 4.8 An allowance for the chair of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee (ARC) is identified by adding a supplement of £2,500 to the annual fee agreed for Council members (and paid on a monthly basis). The supplement includes payment for undertaking a range of activities as detailed in the role description, including additional coordination and reporting requirements with internal audit, external audit and Council.
- 4.9 The Chair of the Investigation Committee will be paid for each day they work. This includes when they undertake the performance appraisal of Investigation Committee members. Hearing Panel members acting as a Chair of a Fitness to Practise Panel or Registration Appeals Committee will be paid the chair day

rate for each day they work. This includes when they undertake the performance reviews of Hearing Panel members.

- 4.10 Where Investigation Committee members or the Chair of Investigation Committee are undertaking work as a Case Examiner, this will be aligned to the current rate for Case Examiners as set out in the Case Examiner Fees Policy.
- 4.11 A rate for all other members is paid for each day they work, with the exception of their own performance appraisal, which is unpaid.

5. Fees for induction, learning and development

- 5.1 For members who are not paid an annual fee, additional fees for induction, learning and development will be paid for:
- a. attendance at induction learning and development which have been arranged by the GOC;
 - b. attendance as an observer at GOC meetings/hearings as part of a planned induction or as part of agreed learning and development; and
 - c. attendance for development which is directly related to the role and arranged by the GOC.
- 5.2 The day rate for induction, learning and development fees will be the same regardless of the member's substantive role. All activity incurring an induction and development fee should be agreed with the relevant head of department in advance.
- 5.3 We will not pay additional development or induction fees for the following:
- a. attendance at a Council meeting or a committee meeting at which you are not an appointed member (unless it is part of a planned induction (see point 5.1.2 above));
 - b. any development which is not directly related to the role and not arranged by the GOC;
 - c. attendance at optical conferences or trade exhibitions, consultation events or stakeholder meetings;
 - d. where the member is already being paid for attendance at a meeting on the same day the development or induction was delivered; and
 - e. attendance to speak at a GOC meeting, conference or event for the purposes of development or induction, on behalf of the GOC – the payment of speaking fees are dealt with separately in the GOC Gifts and Hospitality policy.

6. Fees for meetings held by teleconference/videoconference

- 6.1 Member fees for meetings held via teleconference/videoconference or in a hybrid format are paid at the same rate as meetings attended in-person. Members travelling for in-person meetings or to attend hybrid meetings are not paid an additional fee for time spent travelling. GOC will pay any additional travel or subsistence expenses incurred which relate to in-person attendance, in accordance with the GOC Expenses Policy.

7. Reading fees

- 7.1 Hearing Panel and Investigation Committee members required to read papers in excess of 500 pages may be paid an additional reading fee. Payment of additional reading fees will require authorisation by the Director of Regulatory Operations or the relevant head of department and only applies to Hearing Panel or Investigation Committee members.
- 7.2 Reading and preparation fees for other committee members are included in the fees paid for attending meetings.

8. Cancellation fees

- 8.1 Hearing Panel members may have a hearing cancelled at short notice. As Hearing Panel members are required to commit to attendance at a hearing which can be a number of days or weeks long, if a hearing is cancelled the following terms will apply:
- a. Half a day fee will be paid for each hearing day cancelled within five calendar days of the scheduled hearing commencement date [capped at seven calendar days];
 - b. A full day fee will be paid for events that conclude earlier than anticipated [capped at full fee for day 1-2; half a fee for days 3-5; no fee thereafter];
 - c. Half a day fee will be paid for split event days that are within 28 calendar days of an early finish. [no fee thereafter]. Split events are defined as events scheduled over non-consecutive days.

9. Fees for other activities

- 9.1 Members may be asked to undertake other activities for the GOC to discharge the responsibilities of the role they have been appointed to. For example, members may be asked to act as selection panel members for the appointment of other members, undertake a desk-based review, fill another member role on a temporary basis or participate in a Council workshop or working group.

- 9.2. For members who are not paid an annual fee, fees for such activity will be communicated with the member in advance and if the agreed activity will take less than a day (for example, two hours), the fee paid will be pro-rata the agreed and published daily fee (based on a 7-hour working-day).

10. Payment of fees

- 10.1 Fees will be authorised and paid to members via payroll within six weeks of attendance at a meeting or completion of an activity. Payments are normally made on the last working day of the month. For meetings held after the 20th day of the month payment will be made the following month.
- 10.2. For member attendance and/or activity which does not relate to a meeting, workshop or hearing (for example, fees paid for sifting and shortlisting of applications or a desk-based review) the fees for such activity will be communicated with the member in advance and if the agreed activity is less than a day, paid pro-rata in accordance with the agreed and published daily fee.
- 10.3. Once authorised and the agreed activity is completed, the fee will be paid to members via payroll on the next available occasion, normally within six weeks

11. Payment of expenses

- 11.1 Members are encouraged to use the GOC reception travel and accommodation booking service wherever possible, so that payment for travel and accommodation can be made directly to the provider and benefits of centralised bookings can be realised. Information on how to use this service will be provided on appointment.
- 11.2. Whilst attendance at such events as listed in 5.3 will not be additionally remunerated, the GOC will pay any authorised additional expenses incurred which relate to attendance as a member, such as travel or subsistence, in accordance with the [GOC Expenses Policy](#)
- 11.3. Expenses booked and paid for by members directly, such as travel, accommodation or subsistence, will be separately reimbursed in accordance with the [GOC Expenses Policy](#), within six weeks of receipt of a valid claim. Claims are normally paid monthly on the last working day of the month. Claims submitted after the 20th day of the month will be reimbursed the following month.
- 11.4. All expense claims should be submitted using the GOC expenses claim form (available from the GOC Finance Team) and submitted to the [GOC Finance Team](#) within two calendar months of attendance or completion of the work, and at the year-end (31 March) no later than 15 April. In order for a claim to be valid it must be made in accordance with the expenses policy and accompanied by receipts. Any claims made not in accordance with the expenses policy will

require approval by the Director of Corporate Services. Claims received more than two months after the event will not be paid.

12. Transparency

- 12.1 Member fees will be circulated to members and published on the GOC website.
- 12.2 In accordance with our information disclosure policy, the fees and expenses paid to Council members are published on our website on a quarterly basis and disclosed in our annual report.

13. Questions regarding this policy

- 13.1 Any questions regarding this policy and its application should be directed to the Head of Governance in the first instance.

Annex A: Benchmarking data sets

Allowance rates for Comparator organisations

The below tables provide data on comparator organisations, including median and mean figure. The numbers in bold are the method by which the organisation remunerates i.e. where the organisation pays an annual allowance the annual allowance figure has been bolded, where the organisation pays on the basis of days worked the daily rate has been bolded.

Health and social care regulators

Health and social care regulator	Total income pa / staff numbers /registrant numbers	Charity	Number of board members	Chair			Council member			Additional responsibility		Associate			Partner member		Fitness to Practise Panel		
				Annual time commitment	Annual allowance	Equivalent day rate	Council member annual time commitment	Council member annual allowance	Council member day rate	Role/ time commitment	Annual allowance	Annual time commitment	Annual allowance	Day rate	Annual time commitment	Day rate	Member day rate	Chair day rate	Cancellation fee should a hearing postpone at short notice
Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC)	£100.4m; 1,060 staff; 808,000 registrants; Fee: £120	Yes	12	156 days pa (3 days per week)	£78,000 (since May 2018)	£500	36 days pa (3 days per month)	£15,166 (last increased in July 2022)	£421	Audit Committee Chair £2,000 Remuneration Committee Chair £2,000 Investment Committee Chair £250 Accommodation Committee Chair £250 (As of 1 April 2023)	36 days pa (3 days per month)	£10,605	£295	Varies according to Committee.	£295	£310	£340	See below	
<p>Cancellation policy for panel members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookings cancelled 14 calendar days and over: No payment • Booking cancelled within 13 calendar days or less: 50% payment for up to a maximum of 9 working days within the specified cancellation period. • Cancellation or part-heard hearings after the scheduled start date: 100% payment for up to 9 working days. • Standby periods: 100% payment for each day on standby. 																			
General Dental Council (GDC)	£42.5m 421 staff 124,478 registrants Fees: Dentist - £621 Dental Care Professional - £96	No	12	104-156 days (2-3 days a week)	£55,000 (last reviewed in Sep 2023)	£352-£508	Minimum 35 days. 6 Council meetings	£15,000 (last reviewed in Sep 2023)	£428	Committee Chair Total: £15,000 Additional: £3,000	Independent Governance Associates – 10 days (approx.) Statutory Panellists Assurance Committee – 10 days (approx.) Associates	£4000	£400	No equivalent role	£353	£353			
General Medical Council (GMC)	£135.2m 1,587 staff; 335,694	Yes		156 days (3 days a week)	£110,000	£705	36-48 days (3-4 days per month) 7	£18,000	£375-500	No additional fee	No equivalent role			Co-opted Committee members	£325		See line below		

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				Annual time commitment	Annual allowance	Equivalent day rate	Council member annual time commitment	Council member annual allowance	Council member day rate	Role/ time commitment	Annual allowance	Annual time commitment	Annual allowance	Day rate	Annual time commitment	Day rate	Member day rate	Chair day rate	Cancellation fee should a hearing postpone at short notice	
	registrants; Fee: £433 (discounted fee for newly qualified doctors = £166)						Council meetings and Council meetings.								£325					
<p><i>For MPTS Tribunal Members as probably the best comparator for Panel Members at the NMC.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We only pay a 50% cancellation fee if cancelled within 14 days. So that's half our daily fee.</i> <i>If the hearing concludes early then they only get a cancellation fee for remaining days (again 50%).</i> <p><i>Also if there is a non-sitting day unexpectedly midway through then they get a full fee as they could be required to come back and do work on that hearing at any time</i></p>																				
Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC)	£36.2m; 282 staff; 320,438 registrants; Fee: £116.36			156 days pa (3 days per week)	£65,000 (March 2019)	£416	9 Council meetings pa (and Committee meetings)	£12,000 (from 2019/20)	Up to 2018/19 – daily fee rate of £341 per day was paid	Committee Chair	Total: £14,000 Additional: £2,000	9 Council meetings (and Committee meetings)		£341 (not for seminars or training)	Four Committee meetings pa	£341	£206	£348	See below	
				When notification is given that attendance at an FTP panel on a previously booked day is not required			Fee payable													
				Notification on the day of attendance, or on the working day before attendance:			full fee for that day of attendance when no alternative paid work is undertaken on the cancelled days													
				Notification more than 1 working day but less than 5 working days before the attendance:			half day fee for that day of attendance when no alternative paid work is undertaken on the cancelled days													
				Notification 5 or more working days before the attendance:			no fee													
General Chiropractic Council (GCC)	£2.8m; 16 staff; 3,341 registrants; Fee: £800			No info on Chair's time commitment	£27,000 (since Jan 2023)		4 Council meetings - some 2 days (+ Committee meetings)	£7,800 (since Jan 2023) <i>Plus:</i> £2,000 each for Chairs of Audit & Risk Committee and Remuneration and HR Committee; and £2,500 for Chair of Education Committee						No equivalent role		£300	£300	£350		

Health and social care regulator	Total income pa / staff numbers / registrant numbers	Charity	Number of board members	Chair			Council member			Additional responsibility		Associate			Partner member		Fitness to Practise Panel		
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<u>General Optical Council (GOC)</u>	£10m; 87 staff FTE; 33,174 registrants; Fee: £380	Yes		130 days (2.5 days per week)	£50,000	£423	8 Council meetings pa (+ Committee meetings)	£13,962 pa (since April 2019)		Senior Council Member	Total: £16,462 Additional: £2,500	8 Council meetings pa		Unremunerated.		£421	£319	£372	See line below
<p>FTP Panel cancellation</p> <p>The GOC operates a 5 working day cancellation policy for hearings cancelled in advance for committee members. If a hearing is cancelled prior to it starting, we pay the committee member 0.5 fee for the days that fall into the 5 working day period. If it is cancelled with more than 5 working day notice, then there is no payment due.</p> <p>The GOC has an early finish cancellation fee schedule when a hearing finishes early of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Days one and two after the hearing concludes – Full pay 2. Days three, four & five – 0.5 pay 3. Days six or thereafter - nothing 																			
<u>General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)</u>	£2.84m 29 staff; 5,521 registrants; Fee: £570	Yes		78 days pa (1.5 days per week)	£30,000 pa (1.5 days a week)	£346	18 days	£7,800	£417	Chair of the Policy and Education Committee, Audit Committee and People Committee	Total: £10,000 Additional: £2,250	18 days	£3,600	£200 (paid per meeting attended)		£330	£330 per day from 1 April 2024)	£330 + Chairing allowance of £50 per day.	See line below
<p>If fitness to practise panels are cancelled, in respect of each day of the hearing, the following will be reimbursed to those members affected:</p> <p>Prior to hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 working days' notice: half fee • More than 5 working days' notice: no fee <p>During hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working days' notice: full fee • 2-5 working days' notice: half fee • More than 5 working days' notice: no fee <p>Out-of-pocket expenses incurred by a panel member will continue to be reimbursed. For example, if a registrant member has arranged a locum who would in turn have to be paid for the full number of days booked, they should continue to be reimbursed for that expense.</p>																			
<u>General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)</u>	£27.1m 296 staff 90,460 registrants plus 13,311 pharmacies Fee: £257 (pharmacists)			156 (3 days a week)	£60,000 pa (with effect from 1 April 2024)	£384	Up to 30 days pa)	£15,000 pa (last reviewed in June 2024)		Committee Chair	Total: £17,500 Additional: £2,500 pa	No equivalent role							See below
<p>Ftp Panel:</p> <p>An event is cancelled with fewer than 6 working days' notice from the hearing start date: 1x full day fee for first day booked, half day fee for subsequent days (up to 10 days)</p> <p>An event is cancelled with 6-10 working days' notice from the hearing start date: Half day fee for each cancelled day (up to 10 days)</p> <p>An event is cancelled with 10+ days' notice from the hearing start date: No fee</p>																			

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The above also applies to events finishing earlier than scheduled e.g a hearing concludes 2 days early: 1 full daily fee and 1 half day fee for the 2 unused days. If a hearing finishes 10+ days' early, no fee is applicable past the tenth cancelled day.																			
Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI)	£1.4m 15 staff 2,893 pharmacists Fee: £398	Yes		30 days pa	£10,000 pa Remuneration based on attendance	£336	Up to 6 Council meetings pa + up to 12 working groups (+ Committee meetings)	=Remuneration based on attendance at meetings	£236	Committee Chair	Remuneration based on attendance. £286 day rate	No equivalent role			£250	£500			our current position is that we are starting to revise our policy on committee payments, however for now we deal with each of these situations on a case by case basis.