The passage of the Chiropractors Act was a great achievement against all the odds, but of itself it did not ensure the creation of the General Chiropractic Council, nor the opening of a Register. In order for the Act to be "commenced" five hurdles, set by the Department of Health, had to be cleared.

The GCC had to be financially secure so that the public purse would never be called upon to subsidise it. A viable business plan would have to be created and enough funds would have to be raised by the profession in order to satisfy the Department.

The profession was required to agree upon three sets of standards:

- Standards of Safe and Competent Practice
- Standards of Professional Practice and Conduct
- Common minimum Standards of Education and Training.

Finally, the diverse Chiropractic profession had to continue to speak with one voice. It was made absolutely clear that any significant disunity would kill the commencement of the Act.

The Chiropractic Registration Steering Group (CRSG) immediately commissioned a business plan and set financial targets to be fulfilled that would enable the profession to move on. The profession responded with a levy of £500 to be raised across every Association from every member. This was augmented by a number of charitable fundraising events by individual chiropractors and clinics and in just over two years the GCC's immediate financial future was secured.

The CRSC appointed Professor Tony Atkinson to chair a representative committee that would formulate parameters for Safe and Competent Practice. These were agreed and published within nine months of the passage of the Act.

All associations already had fairly compatible Standards of Professional Practice and Conduct. The committee appointed by the CRSG probably had the easiest task of all and a document was soon drawn up that satisfied all branches of the profession.

The greatest hurdle was maintaining agreement on common minimum Standards of Education and Training even though this had already been secured in 1993 under the King's Fund Working Party on Chiropractic chaired by Master of the Rolls, Tom Bingham, later Baron Bingham of Cornhill. All parties represented in the Working Party had accepted that within five years of legislation coming into force minimum educational standards equivalent to those of the European Council of Chiropractic Education in force on 1 January 1992 would apply to all colleges. However, with such diverse modes of education within the profession, it was sometimes difficult to allay fears and to maintain harmony.

In spite of so many diverse backgrounds, the CRSG was able to maintain sufficient unity within the five strands of the profession represented by the BCA, MCA, BAAC, SCA and ICA to keep commencement on track even though fear, disagreement and misunderstanding remained present during much of this transitional stage. A Unity Conference held by the CRSG in 1996...
addressed by Health Minister Baroness Cumberlege was well attended. It gave ordinary chiropractors the opportunity to learn about each other’s backgrounds, to hear what they perceived chiropractic to be and to see for themselves how patients were actually being treated in practice.

That year the five wings were invited by the Department to propose persons who would be selected on experience and ability to make up the ten member professional element of the GCC that would be balanced by nine lay and education members appointed by the Department under a lay Chair. There was concern that the larger, long established BCA would dominate the new council at the expense of other groups, but informal contact with the Department during this troubled time was sufficient to allay some of those fears. Finally, on 28 January 1997, the Department announced the membership of the Designate Council at a Press Conference under the lay chairmanship of Norma Morris, with 10 Chiropractor members, 4 Education members and 5 Lay members. Baroness Cumberlege announced that the council would soon meet to begin preliminary work to draw up a business plan and to outline the structures needed for the administration of the statutory register. Once complete, the first of the commencement orders would then be made to bring the essential elements of the Chiropractors Act 1994 into force, and the now designate members of the GCC would be formally appointed.

In its first year the new council consulted widely. Standards of Proficiency for Safe and Competent Practice and a Code of Professional Practice and Conduct were rapidly agreed, providing the foundations for an indicative educational syllabus and accreditation documents. It began drafting rules for the governing of the GCC’s machinery and it formulated a detailed business plan. However it had to wait patiently upon the Department of Health’s legal team to pick over and send back and forth the rules that would finally govern the way the GCC was run and administered, but on 14 August 1998 the first Commencement Order conferring full legal status on the GCC was bestowed by the Secretary of State.

The rush of new legislation following the election of the Labour government in 1997 ensured that the Department’s legal team had no time for old private members legislation. There was a prolonged and frustrating period of marking time whilst the Department continued to process the set of rules that would ultimately govern the GCC, sending them back and forth, time and time again, until the Department was finally satisfied with how they wanted the GCC to run. This placed financial strains on the GCC, limited the appointment of a Registrar and created anxiety, but on the 15th June 1999 the final Commencement Order was bestowed by the Secretary of State and the GCC opened its Register. Thus, on the fifth anniversary of the Chiropractors Bill receiving Royal Assent, the first cohort of registered Chiropractors was announced.