



**General
Chiropractic
Council**

Consultation: A fresh approach to Continuing Professional Development

1 May 2019 to 12 June 2019

ABOUT THE GENERAL CHIROPRACTIC COUNCIL

The General Chiropractic Council (GCC) regulates chiropractors in the UK to ensure the safety of patients undergoing chiropractic treatment.

The GCC is an independent statutory body established by Parliament to regulate the chiropractic profession. We protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring high standards of practice in the chiropractic profession.

The title of 'chiropractor' is protected by law and it is a criminal offence for anyone to describe themselves as a chiropractor without being registered with the GCC. We check that all chiropractors are properly qualified and are fit to practise before being allowed access to the profession.

As of 1 May 2019, there were 3,294 chiropractors registered with the GCC.

BACKGROUND

The Code which sets out standards of conduct, performance and ethics for chiropractors, states that:

To assure their continuing fitness to practise chiropractors must maintain and develop their professional knowledge, skills and performance in accordance with the requirements set out by the GCC.

This standard includes:

Taking part in relevant and regular learning and professional development activities

that aim to maintain and develop their competence and improve their performance and the quality of the services they provide.

As part of our five-year strategy to promote standards we have committed to *“Develop and implement a proportionate approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) submissions and audit by September 2019”*.

As part of this objective we have reviewed our approach to CPD. The review includes the CPD summary that we ask chiropractors to send us and what constitutes acceptable learning, in particular, *learning with others*.

Chiropractors have been required to show us the steps they have taken towards their professional development since 2004, when the General Chiropractic Council (Continuing Professional Development) Rules came into force.

Those rules include a requirement on chiropractors to complete 30 hours of learning activities annually (15 hours must be undertaken *with others*) between 1 September and the end of August each year. A full learning cycle must also be completed consisting of:

1. an identified learning need or interest
2. a plan
3. learning activities
4. an evaluation of the CPD undertaken and how the learning has been or will be applied to the chiropractor's practice.

For 10 years we audited only the evidence provided to establish attendance at events from a random sample (up to 20%) of registrants. So, while we could check on attendance, the audit provided little assurance as to:

- whether the event had an impact on a registrant's practice
- the quality of the learning undertaken
- how the learning had been applied in practice.

In 2014, we began to check the CPD summaries submitted by *all* registrants. We found that a high percentage were not being completed as intended. From registrant feedback and our analysis, a number of reasons for this were recognised. One reason was confusion over the wording of the form itself.

OUR VISION

In recent years the requirements for ensuring continuing fitness to practice of registered professionals has evolved from one concerned entirely with inputs (hours) to one concerned with impact on practice. With this in mind, and taking into consideration the CPD rules, we have reviewed our CPD approach.

Our starting point is that all professionals should have the opportunity to demonstrate their continued competence that reflects what they actually do – in practice or in teaching.

The task we have is to balance assurance that registrants meet required standards, and at the same time to stimulate improvements in the quality of care

provided by chiropractors, building trust and confidence in the profession.

We believe the result is both proportionate and right-touch, providing assurance that registrants are updating their knowledge to ensure they maintain the necessary skills to practise safely and competently for the benefit of patients.

THE CONSULTATION

The purpose of this consultation is to seek feedback on the proposed revised CPD summary form that registrants will be asked to complete annually. We are particularly interested to hear whether respondents feel the summary offers:

1. *a proportionate approach to ensuring registrants have undertaken relevant learning; and*
2. *a right-touch approach that minimises the risk registrants have not reflected on their learning, the lack of which may adversely impact patient safety.*

The intention of the summary is to enable registrants to show they have undertaken learning that meets our CPD standards as well as demonstrating that they have reflected on that learning and their development.

As a result, we have removed some components of the learning cycle from the summary which will now only be requested by the Registrar as part of the full CPD record in cases of possible non-compliance with the rules.

Until now, we have asked registrants to tell us their learning need or interest. However this does not provide assurance that a chiropractor has remained up to date and *we propose to remove this requirement*. It might facilitate learning, but the majority of registrants do not reflect on their practice at the beginning of the CPD period to choose a learning cycle.

Registrants are influenced by events, such as seeing a specific condition in practice, and undertake appropriate learning as the year progresses. The learning need or interest is therefore often completed retrospectively, just before the summary is submitted.

The current summary also asks registrants to give details of how they intend meeting their learning need or interest and essentially forms part of their own Personal Development Plan. Since this does not have any bearing on the outcome of the learning *we do not intend asking registrants to provide this in future*.

In addition, *we no longer intend asking registrants to give an evaluation of their individual learning activities* and how they have been incorporated into practice.

OUR NEW APPROACH

We propose asking registrants to give details of:

- the learning activities they have undertaken, including the type of activity, such as a seminar, peer review or reading, along with either an event title or subject details

- at least 30 hours of learning activities, of which 15 must be with others.

We will also ask for an explanation, in 100 to 250 words, of how their overall CPD has benefitted the service they provide or their teaching or research or, if they are not practising, how it will benefit that service once back in practice.

We have included an example CPD summary form on the final two pages of this consultation. An electronic version will continue to be available for registrants to complete online via the GCC website.

ACCEPTABLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

We also intend to produce a list of learning activities acceptable for CPD that we hope will make registrants consider a wider range of activities to those traditionally undertaken. It should aid clarity as to what is and is not acceptable, but will not be a definitive list.

To facilitate this we have included a question in the consultation aimed at capturing the range of learning activities chiropractors undertake, of which some may not already be captured in our current [CPD guidance](#).

AFTER THE CONSULTATION

As part of this consultation we will also:



CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The questions are set out below.

1. Do you consider that asking chiropractors to reflect on their CPD at the end of the CPD year will better demonstrate their competence in improving care?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
 - Please tell us why.
2. Please tell us of any impacts (whether positive or negative) you foresee in relation to the proposed CPD changes, including on Equality and Diversity.
3. In the proposed new CPD record summary there is a question as follows: *How has your CPD benefitted the service you provide? (if you are not currently offering that service please state how it will be of benefit in the future)*. Is the question clear?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
 - If you do not think it is clear please tell us why.
4. Do you think that asking registrants to provide a summary of their reflection for the year in 100 to 250 words is proportionate?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
 - Please tell us why.
5. Considering our current [CPD guidance](#), are there additional activities you feel should be accepted as CPD by the GCC?
6. Please provide any further comments you have on our proposed approach to CPD.

HOW TO RESPOND

Responses are invited by 12 June 2019 online [[here](#)]. Alternatively, we are happy to receive responses by email or post. Our contact details are listed below:

cpd@gcc-uk.org

or

**CPD Consultation Response
General Chiropractic Council
186 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BT**

Thank you for responding to the consultation

GCC Continuing Professional Development record summary for the 2020/2021 CPD year (1 September to 31 August)

Learning activities			Hours	
Type of activity	Title and brief subject of the learning activity (what was your activity about?)	Date of activity (from-to)	Learning with others	Learning alone
Peer review	Review of treatment in cases involving scoliosis in children.	01/10/2018 – 02/10/2018	8	3

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

How has your CPD benefitted the service you provide? (if you are not currently offering that service please state how it will be of benefit in the future) (100-250 words)