



## **GCC Customer Complaints Policy**

### **Introduction**

The General Chiropractic Council (GCC) helps to protect patients and improve chiropractic education and practice in the UK by setting standards for students and chiropractors. We support them in achieving (and exceeding) those standards, and take action when they are not met. We are committed to providing excellent service in the wide range of interactions we have with our customers, regardless of whether they are engaging with us as a chiropractor, member of the public, employer or in any other capacity. Sometimes we get things wrong, or are unable to help our customers in the way they would like. Our customer complaints process gives our customers a voice to provide feedback on our services. Comments and complaints are important to us, they help us understand what works well and give us an opportunity to improve

### **What is a customer complaint?**

A customer complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the services of the GCC where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. Complaints can be made verbally or in writing, and there is no difference between a 'formal' and an 'informal' complaint. You do not need to explicitly state that you are making a complaint for it to be considered as such. Unless otherwise stated, all references to a complaint in this document refer to customer complaints.

### **This policy covers**

Complaints relating to any team, including:

- any service we have provided that you feel wasn't satisfactory
- a procedure or policy
- the way we have communicated with you
- the actions of our staff <sup>1</sup>
- any previous complaint responses provided under this policy

### **This policy does not cover**

It is important to note that some areas of GCC work are not covered by this policy, such as:

- Complaints about chiropractors - our fitness to practise processes are separate to our customer complaints process. You can find information on how to complain about a chiropractor on the [Concerns about chiropractors](#) section of the GCC website.

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<sup>1</sup> Our complaints policy applies to all staff members, agency workers, contractors, associates and anyone else engaged to work with the GCC, whether by direct contract with the organisation or otherwise.

- Requests for information under the Data Protection Act or Freedom of information Act. See FOI information in the [Demonstrating Accountability](#) section of the GCC website.
- Challenges to decisions where a right of appeal/legal recourse is available.
- Whistleblowing concerns; these are dealt with under a separate process (link).

## **Our complaints handling principles**

We have developed the following principles using lessons learned from our own experience and good practice from other organisations that are recognised for their complaint handling.

### **Visibility**

Information about how to complain is available on the GCC website. Our staff are informed about the complaints process and able to advise our customers on how to make a complaint. As an organisation we are committed to excellent service and we try to make sure that our complaints process is open and transparent.

### **Ways of making a complaint**

We are flexible and want to make sure that everyone has access to our complaints process. Options for contacting us are outlined on the [comments and complaints](#) section of the GCC website.

We will make reasonable adjustments for you if you have accessibility needs or a disability, for example, taking complaints over the phone. Please let our staff know if you have any particular needs and we will do our best to make our complaints process accessible.

### **Timelines and responsiveness**

We aim to:

- acknowledge receipt of complaints as soon as possible, wherever possible within five working days.
- investigate and respond to complaints within fifteen working days.
- let you know of any likely delays as soon as we become aware of them. For example, if in the course of reviewing your complaint it becomes clear that it is more complex and requires longer time to consider.

Where a complaint raises a serious risk or relates to a time-sensitive issue, we will try to prioritise it or escalate to a senior member of staff.

### **Objectivity**

We treat every complaint on its merits, regardless of who has made the complaint.

We act honestly and treat all complainants fairly and with respect

### **Confidentiality**

We recognise that your personal data is important to you, and we are committed to holding it safely, and using it appropriately.

We maintain complaint records electronically. Where personally identifiable information is recorded it is used for the purpose of investigating and resolving a complaint, or dealing with

the wider process in which the complaint was raised. It is stored and processed by the GCC in accordance with data protection legislation.

We report on complaints to the Audit and Risk Committee to understand and improve the performance of our complaints process and of our services. Personally identifiable information is excluded from all reports to preserve the confidentiality of those involved.

### **Outcomes and responses**

In line with complaints handling best practice, we will try to address all the points raised in your complaint. If we can't we will tell you why.

If we have done something wrong, we will take steps to put it right. When the outcome you are hoping for isn't achievable, we will explain why and take on board any learning points, for example making our communications clearer. Sometimes feedback from our customers leads to longer term improvements in our processes, policies or guidance. Where this is the case, we will record the improvement opportunity and pass it to an appropriate colleague to consider taking it forward.

### **Accountability**

Each directorate of the GCC is responsible for handling complaints relating to their area of work and managing the performance of the complaints handling process. Complaints information, trends and improvement work are reported to the Senior Management Team.

### **Continual improvement**

Complaints can facilitate change, and help teams to design and deliver more effective ways of working and provide excellent service. We encourage all staff to use complaints as a learning opportunity. We work with teams to signpost improvement opportunities and make sure that learning is recorded, acted on and reported at senior level.

### **Customer complaints process**

Our step by step process is included in the [complaints and feedback section](#) on the GCC website, where you can find more information on how to make a complaint.