

GCC Business Plan 2022



Purpose

The GCC Business Plan 2022 sets out how the organisation will deliver on the first year of its new strategy for 2022-2024.

What we do

The General Chiropractic Council (GCC) is an independent statutory body established under the Chiropractors Act 1994. Its purpose is to develop and regulate the chiropractic profession and protect the health and safety of the public, by setting the highest standards in a Code of Practice, investigating if standards are not met and, where found to be unfit to practise, removing a chiropractor from its Register.

The title of 'chiropractor' is protected by law. It is a criminal offence for anyone to describe themselves as a chiropractor without being registered with the GCC.

Before registration, the GCC checks to ensure all chiropractors, including those from outside the UK, are properly qualified and fit to practise. The Council sets Education Standards and approves and monitors programmes offered by education providers responsible for the training of chiropractors in the UK.

Through all these activities, the GCC helps to support and raise public confidence in the profession, and its place within the wider health and social care system.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

To be a respected regulator of a trusted profession.

Mission

To enhance professionalism in chiropractic and promote high-quality care that the public can access safely and confidently, by regulating effectively. Our priorities will be informed by the concerns of patients.

Values

Togetherness: Working as a team within the GCC and with others, appreciating diversity, listening and supporting each other effectively and fairly.

Achievement: Working hard towards a common goal, encouraging and supporting each other, fostering improvement and innovation, and celebrating success.

Accountability: Taking responsibility, using resources wisely and setting clear, attainable targets.

Integrity: Communicating openly and honestly, building mutual respect and trust, having an open mind to reflect and learn lessons.

GCC Strategy 2022-2024

The development of the GCC Strategy 2022-2024 follows significant changes to the external health and social care landscape, including the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic and the quickening pace of regulatory reform. The strategy reflects the challenges that we face and our focus for the next three years, ensuring we make the right impact in the right way. It is ambitious and achievable.

	Strategic aims	Strategic objectives
Patients & Public	To place patients and their care at the centre of all GCC work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1A. To gain a greater understanding of patients' needs and expectations so these can be reflected in the work of the GCC. 1B. To promote chiropractic standards that take full account of patients' needs and expectations. 1C. To create, enhance and disseminate information to help patients make informed judgements about their chiropractic care.
Chiropractors	To promote continuing chiropractic best practice, professionalism and value within the health and social care system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2A. To identify, collect and analyse data and insights from regulatory and statutory activity. 2B. To share learning through the gathering and dissemination of GCC internal data and public, patient and registrant research. 2C. To work with education providers and stakeholders to continue the development and promotion of professionalism in registrants, from the start to the end of their careers.
The GCC	To regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3A. To act when and where we identify poor practice, from complaints, the misuse of title or when registration requirements, including annual CPD fulfilment, are not met. 3B. To set and promote educational, professional and registration requirements to ensure they remain appropriate and fit for purpose. 3C. To be a sustainable and effective organisation committed to social equality, diversity and fairness.
The Profession	To enhance the nature and form of regulation for the profession for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4A. To 'shape the future' of regulation of the profession by influencing the conclusions of the government's consultation and review of health and social care regulation. 4B. To foster knowledge sharing and expertise, drive efficiencies and seek opportunities to delegate and/or attain economies of scale. 4C. To take forward the development of rules to be applied upon agreed legislative change.

GCC Business Plan 2022

This GCC Business Plan 2022 sets out the work we will undertake to:

- fulfil our core activities and the standard by which we want to achieve delivery.
- enhance and improve how we work, realising the intent which underpins the new GCC Strategy 2022-2024.

What will success look like in 2022?

If we are successful in achieving our aims, we will see:

- The participation of a diverse group of patients in the regulation of chiropractic, trusting that they are considered an important constituent, and valuable voice, within the regulation of the profession.
- Registrants being better supported in meeting the requirements of patients and the expectations of the Code of Practice, further to the development, review and publication of clear guidance and best practice, and efficient regulatory processes.
- The requirement for graduate registrants to meet the expectations of patients and employers, supported by the inclusive development of new standards for education providers.
- The protection of patients through careful, thoughtful and effective regulatory processes.
- The GCC to be rated highly by the Professional Standards Authority, meeting all the standards of good regulation and our openness to innovative the approaches to regulation.
- The GCC to be seen as a valued contributor to the development of the health and social care regulatory system, open to future decisions and options that may be presented.
- The further development of our employee team, committed and engaged to the delivery of the outcomes and impacts we want to make.

Valuing People, Valuing Diversity

To succeed, we must recognise and value all the people involved in the delivery of our business plan and strategy.

Each objective and activity outlined in this plan relies on our people continuing to do their work effectively; committed to realising the aims of our strategy and being recognised for making a difference to the safety of the public and the development of the profession; all consistent with our GCC values.

The GCC has a small, dedicated team committed to the aims of the organisation and working hard to fulfil its regulatory functions. We will support and nurture this talent, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, while maintaining a good work/life balance. Our annual employee survey is one measure for assessing the extent we have achieved this. We carry out twice-yearly appraisals, building in individual development plans. New employees are supported with an induction programme, helping them to develop their understanding of the GCC, its functions and their ability to succeed.

Beyond its employees, the GCC is supported by its many partners who serve on Council, committees and panels. Their knowledge, expertise and dedication ensure we work effectively. We must maintain and build on these relationships, maximising the value from interactions, and ensuring lay and registrant partners are recognised for their commitment to the GCC and the chiropractic profession. Finally, we must ensure that we recruit people who represent the society we work in.

All organisations must meet legal duties on equality and diversity. At the same time, social equality, diversity, inclusion and fairness should not be a tick-box exercise. It should be embedded, embraced and lived by the organisation, its functions and the people who work within it. Woven through our aims is a commitment to inclusivity and diversity in the way that we work, and in encouraging the profession and other stakeholders to work with the GCC on that endeavour.

In 2022, the GCC will establish an EDI Working Group which will begin to examine, action and implement an agreed 15-point EDI Action Plan over the next three years.



We place patients and their care at the centre of all GCC work.

Overview

The interests of patients and the public are at the heart of all we do. Our focus for 2022 will be on seeking the involvement of patients to understand their concerns, along with maximising opportunities for patients and the public to share their views with the GCC, and to be involved in informing how we do our work.

What is new for 2022

Identify issues of concern and expectations from patients regarding their chiropractic experience

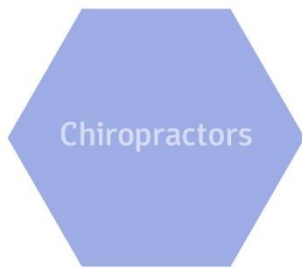
By June 2022, we will have completed our 'Exploration of patients' chiropractic experience and satisfaction while undergoing care' research, building on the previous systematic review that we published in 2021. We will publish a comprehensive report highlighting key concerns from patients, drawing on all our research involving the public and patients. We will engage with patients to identify their top key themes, communicating these to registrants and embarking on the development of new resources for patients in 2023.

Develop and implement a patient-focussed engagement and involvement plan

By the end of 2022, we will have created a plan to engage and communicate with the public and patients, ensuring they have a clear understanding and expectation of chiropractic treatment. We will produce new patient-focused information, guidance, blogs and vlogs and communicate these widely. We will create a patient advisory group and provide opportunities for patients to be involved with and inform GCC activities, policies and processes.

Outcomes and benefits

- A deeper understanding of the chiropractic experience from a patients' perspective, rather than the professional or GCC perspective.
- To focus our resources towards addressing key patient concerns and themes so they have a better chiropractic experience and reducing complaints in these areas.
- Ensure patients and the public have an increased knowledge of the GCC and increasingly utilise the public/patient sections of the GCC website.
- Give registrants a better understanding on the role of the GCC in protecting the public.
- Facilitate a greater understanding of chiropractic and its value within the health and social care system.



We promote continuing chiropractic best practice, professionalism and value within the health and social care system.

Overview

The GCC has a duty to support the long-term development of the chiropractic profession and support registrants in meeting the standards that we expect of them. We aim to ensure that registrants have, and maintain, the right knowledge, skills and expertise to deliver safe and high-quality care.

What is new for 2022

Develop resources to provide support on professionalism

We will publish and disseminate research carried out jointly with the Health and Care Professions Council on professionalism, creating content to support registrants in their understanding of professionalism.

We will develop new content and guidance on the theme of being a reflective practitioner, a key component of professionalism, and create guidance to support the reflective component of our CPD scheme.

We want to communicate more directly with registrants, covering themes from fitness to practise, being a reflective practitioner, regulatory reform and patient involvement with the GCC.

Core tasks

1. To deliver this aim, a core task of the GCC includes publishing the Code and guidance covering the standards of chiropractic practice and professional conduct that all chiropractors must meet.
2. The GCC assures the quality of undergraduate chiropractic education through approving new programmes of education (we expect to be considering one new programme in 2022). We will carry out our annual monitoring of the current education programmes from five education providers in 2022.
3. We will register new applicants throughout the year, undertake the annual retention programme and maintain the Register of Chiropractors with a greater understanding on the diversity of the register. We will continue to improve our registration processes, enhancing the quality of customer service. We will further develop the digital interface with the GCC while providing a personal service for dealing with less routine matters or problems.

4. We will be focusing our checks on the areas of directed CPD to ensure that public protection is the overarching outcome of the GCC CPD scheme and provide assurance of the continuing fitness to practise of regulated healthcare professionals.
5. We will meet the increasing demand for carrying out Test of Competence assessments for international graduates and augment the pool of assessors through a recruitment drive.

Outcomes and benefits

- Increased registrant awareness and understanding of professionalism and its importance to the profession and patient experience/expectations.
- Education providers assessed as providing high-quality education, reflecting on their admissions and assessments, and demonstrating an understanding of their impact on people with protected characteristics and meeting the needs of a diverse community.
- Ability for registrants to reflect on their professional activity, using this to improve their communications and the experience to patients.
- Registrants that are better supported to reflect on their learning and development as part of their annual CPD returns.
- Enhancement of the data available to the GCC regarding protected characteristics of registrants, helping us better understand the impact that our activities may have on those people.



We regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively.

Overview

We will play our full part in ensuring the system of regulation is innovative, flexible and transparent and that lessons learned during COVID-19 are absorbed and applied.

As a regulator, we have a significant role to play in promoting equality and diversity and we recognise that we can do more. In 2022, we will work to ensure that we are an inclusive regulator, committed to understanding the diversity of registrants and patients, working together with all our stakeholders and understanding the effect of differential outcomes to our work

What is new for 2022

Review and revise GCC Education Standards and QA processes

We will progress with the review of the Education Standards such that they can be consulted and approved by Council in 2022. A review of the Quality Assurance Framework and handbook will be undertaken.

Review GCC ethical guidance

Necessary guidance that helps registrants remain compliant with the Code that informs their actions will be prioritised for review, commencing with the Guidance on Consent.

Review and report on GCC Fitness to Practise (FTP) processes, policy and standards against current, agreed regulatory best practice

We will review of the GCC Fitness to Practise publication policy.

We will produce revised guidance documents for chiropractors under investigation and participants in FTP investigations, embedding the use of Victim Support and Advocacy frameworks.

We will review and consult on a protocol for remote hearings to ensure that the arrangements for these do not discriminate and promote public protection.

We will review how we can speed up the consideration of investigations of fitness to practise, exploring the use of clinical assessors.

Explore and report on opportunities to improve GCC operating costs

We will develop a sustainable year-on-year balanced budget which results in the achievement of a budget surplus of approximately 1.5% annually, while achieving agreed corporate aims and objectives.

We will work with other health and social care regulators to exploit cost sharing/reduction opportunities, for example in exploring internal audit, service procurement and information sharing.

Finally, we will conclude our review of the records retention policy, archiving of documents in physical storage in line with the retention policy, and reduce storage costs post-implementation.

Be a digitally effective organisation

We will research digital and virtual best practice and how it can be applied to the GCC, reviewing the digital and remote working practices and systems currently in use. We will make best use of iMIS for both internal and external users.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

We will build on our EDI work through the creation of an EDI Working Group. We will implement our 15-point action plan and be more systematic and consistent about data specification, collection, diversity monitoring, data analysis and equality impact assessments and ensure diversity in all our communications.

Core Tasks

1. Investigate all complaints received from the public. We expect to deal with 100 enquiries with approximately 80 progressing to investigation stage. In 2022, we expect to improve our timeliness by:
 - Reducing the amount of time from the receipt of a complaint to its closure to **30 weeks** (in 2021 our performance was 35 weeks)
 - Reducing the amount of time from referral from Investigating Committee to the matter being listed before the PCC to **35 weeks** (in 2021 our performance was 39 weeks)
 - Reducing the amount of time from the receipt of a section 32 complaint to its closure or consideration for further action to **16 weeks** (in 2021 our performance was 72 weeks).
2. Following a pilot in 2021, to evaluate and report on the experience of complainants and registrants following the completion of fitness to practise proceedings, taking the opportunity to implement process improvements and to understand any differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
3. Hold a minimum of **12** Investigating Committee meetings to ensure that we can progress all complaints promptly.
4. Meet the PSA performance standards.
5. Enhance our communication activities with continuing improvements to our website and social media presence, and through maintaining a monthly newsletter to stakeholders.
6. Review the external IT support service for opportunities to achieve best value returns.
7. Optimise the use of the CRM system leading to improved efficiencies for employees and other stakeholders.

Outcomes and benefits

- Patients, the profession and education providers will be engaged in the development of new Education Standards, ensuring confidence that they will best prepare future graduates for practice.
- Improvements in the processing time of key components of the fitness to practise system.
- A more careful and thoughtful fitness to practise system as experienced by registrants and complainants.
- A review of the GCC cost base, delivering a cost sustainable organisation.
- Enhanced processes and systems to improve the experience of our stakeholders and drive business efficiencies.



We will enhance the nature and form of regulation for the profession for the future.

Overview

Reform of professional health and social care regulation is under way. Over the next few years, decisions will be taken on which changes are to be made and to whom. Ultimately, the design of the regulatory system is for Government to decide. The GCC offers its knowledge, expertise and experience alongside those of patients, the public and the profession.

We will work with the Government, fellow regulators and others to refine and implement changes to professional regulation so that it continues to provide the highest standard of public protection. Regulatory reform has the potential to reshape our operations and transform our approach and improve the experience of those who interact with us.

What we will do in 2022

Input into the Government's consultation on regulatory reform

As has been the case in the last few years, we will continue to input into the many and various aspects covered within the reform agenda, including policy work to establish the 'Order' for new powers to the General Medical Council which will act as the template for subsequent Orders to other regulators.

The KPMG review of the healthcare professional regulatory landscape has been submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care. A further government consultation on the criteria for deciding which professions should be statutorily regulated will take place in 2022.

For the Executive, this input is largely absorbed alongside day-to-day activities. The outputs will largely be communicating to:

- **Council:** We will ensure the GCC Council is appraised of all developments, enabling it to balance wider issues with its important accountability for delivery role.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** We see a desire from the profession for greater involvement. We will utilise a range of mechanisms, such as newsletter and website content, to ensure the regulation of the profession is central to the interests of the profession.

To foster knowledge sharing and expertise, drive efficiencies and seek opportunities to delegate and/or attain economies of scale.

There may be benefits from structural change, such as merger or incorporating the regulation of a profession within a multi-profession regulator. Equally, there could also be efficiencies through the sharing of back-office services and other administrative gains.

As with many commercial and third-sector organisations, the drive for greater efficiency and effectiveness has led to collaborative and innovative solutions. The GCC sees opportunities for greater collaboration with our regulatory partners, and believes that benefits from doing so will flow, both in relation to efficiencies and in maintaining the regulatory distinctiveness of the chiropractic profession.

We have established closer working ties with a grouping of health and care regulatory bodies, sharing information and seeking opportunities for deeper collaboration, for example sharing of employees and joint commissioning.

Be ready to develop rules through collaboration and consultation with stakeholders

The GCC must be ready to take swift advantage to establish rules that enhance flexibility and improve regulation; considering the outdated nature of the current GCC rules. This will be subject to the GCC being granted the ability to do so, requiring extensive consultation with patients, the profession and other stakeholders.

The focus of the Department of Health and Social Care in 2022 will be establishing the legislative Order to apply to the GMC, with consultation taking place in late 2022 and implementation expected in 2023. As such, it is possible that along with other regulators the GCC may be required to embark on developing rules in the latter half of 2022.

This will be a significant task which has not been budgeted within operational expenditure. Subject to developments, we expect that any substantial work will be set out in a full business case for consideration by Council.

Outcomes and Benefits

- Work to ensure, as far as possible, that the future regulatory arrangements secure the protection of the public through the effective regulation of chiropractic.
- Where possible, influence and secure legislative change needed to our current powers to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our regulation.
- Drive efficiency and cost savings further, fostering and achieving greater collaboration with partner bodies

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