Practical arrangements for remote hearings

1. Introduction

This guidance sets out expectations on the conduct of how remote hearings are organised, what happens during the hearing and other relevant information. These procedures are intended for guidance only and do not constitute a direction to any Committee to take a particular course of action when hearing cases.

1.1. Technology

The preferred platform for remote hearings at the GCC is Microsoft Teams ('Teams'). Telephone conferencing facilities may be available and can be used where a participant does not have access to a device with a camera, or in circumstances where Teams is temporarily unavailable for any reason. If an alternative platform is used, this protocol will still apply.

In advance of the hearing, the GCC will set up virtual meeting rooms (including breakout rooms) for the hearing, with individual links sent to the relevant participants.

1.2. Timings

Remote hearings will usually be scheduled from 9:30am to 5:00pm, providing the Committee and parties with the flexibility to manage the hearing day according to individual circumstances and adjustments.

Occasionally, these times may be adjusted due to the needs of any party at the direction of the Chair, for example when completing witness evidence or handing down a final determination to avoid the need to adjourn. This will be determined by the Committee Chair, taking into account the well-being of all participants.

It is important the Committee take account and be responsive to the tiring impact of remote hearings affecting concentration and alertness. The Committee Chair must ensure that consideration is given to holding sufficient breaks.

When joining the hearing, including after breaks, all participants must be muted and only speak after the Committee Chair, or the Committee Coordinator, opens proceedings. Prior to any break in proceedings, the Committee Chair will indicate the time that the hearing will resume. All participants must ensure that they return to the virtual hearing room promptly. All hearing participants must ensure that they log out of the main hearing link at the end of each hearing day, and when otherwise directed by the Committee Chair.

1.3. Communication

The Committee Chair will ensure that parties are introduced and identify everyone present in the 'virtual' room.

All hearings are formal regardless of how they are held, and parties should ensure that communication, presentation and appearance are appropriate. Parties to the hearing are expected to have their cameras on, with the microphone muted while not speaking to limit background noise.

Participants should consider where they are situated for the hearings. They should ensure that they are in a quiet room by themselves (unless the registrant and their representative are in the same location) where they will not be disturbed. The Committee Chair should confirm that witnesses are alone in a room or whether they are being supported. If they are supported by a friend or family member, the individual should sit so that they appear on screen behind the witness.

Participants should check the lighting of the room to ensure that they can be seen clearly.

Parties should be reminded to not talk over each other and only speak when invited to do so by the Committee Chair.

Where a representative wishes to take instructions from instructing solicitors, the Committee Chair should allow appropriate breaks to facilitate this.

Test calls will be arranged, where necessary, with legal representatives, registrants and any other participants to ensure they are familiar with Teams' functionality and to test their connection.

1.4. Witnesses

Test calls will be arranged with witnesses in advance of the hearing to ensure the hearing runs as smoothly as possible.

The witness will be asked to take a religious oath or make an affirmation prior to giving evidence. In line with page 177, paragraph 55, of the Equal Treatment Bench Book (July 2024, as revised 2026), the oath can still be taken during a remote hearing if the witness does not have the relevant holy book physically present with them at home.

Witnesses will be provided with an electronic link to the waiting area for the main hearing room so they can join the hearing at the designated time. The Committee Coordinator will allow access to the main hearing room when the Committee is ready.

A factual witness will not be permitted to observe the hearing until after they have given their evidence. This is to ensure their evidence is not influenced or tainted. The witness will have a copy of their witness statement and any exhibits, but must not have access to other material before they have given evidence.

If a representative needs to refer the witness to a document within a bundle during cross-examination, the document will be shown to the witness via the screen sharing facility – see paragraph 1.6 below - or sent to the witness by secure email during the hearing.

If a party believes that a witness needs to see a particular document in advance, they must agree this with the other party or seek permission from the Committee at a preliminary hearing.

If a witness requires any reasonable adjustments due to disability or other needs in order to give their best evidence, they should contact the Committee Coordinator in advance.

Witnesses who remain under oath should not discuss their evidence with any other individuals during a break in proceedings, without permission from the Chair.

1.5. Documents and bundles

Documents and bundles will be shared with the relevant parties electronically via secure methods prior to the hearing. Parties should have these available during the hearing.

If documents need to be handed up on the day, they should be sent electronically to the Committee Coordinator, who will circulate them securely to the Committee, Legal Assessor and any other relevant party.

Hard copies of the bundles will not usually be provided. However, if hard copies are required for accessibility reasons, please inform the Committee Coordinator.

1.6. Screen share functionality

Teams allows participants to share their screens. If a representative wants to draw the attention of a witness to a certain document for all parties to see, it may be appropriate for them to share their screen. However, this can however lead to incorrect or private information being shared by accident. Therefore, participants must only share their screen with the agreement of the Committee Chair and have taken care to mitigate any potential data security risks.

1.7. Public access

Rule 9 of The General Chiropractic Council (Professional Conduct Committee) Rules Order of Council 2000 requires that hearings in front of the PCC take place in public by default. However, the Committee may, where appropriate, choose to conduct some or all of it in private.

Rule 9 of The General Chiropractic Council (Health Committee) Rules Order of Council 2000 requires that hearings in front of the Health Committee take place in a private session by default, but the Committee may, where appropriate, choose to hear some or all of it in public session.

All hearings are listed on the GCC website. If a member of the public wishes to attend, they can make a request to adjudication@gcc-uk.org.

Observers must complete a form (provided by the Committee Coordinator) to confirm that they agree to several rules of admittance. **No recording of a hearing of any kind is permitted** – this includes recording audio and video, taking photos of the screen on a second device or taking screenshots.

Once the form has been returned, the Committee Coordinator will share a link for the main hearing room with the member of the public. The link must not be shared with anyone else. Hearing parties will be notified of the names of observers prior to the hearing.

The Committee Chair will also reiterate the rules of admittance at the opening of the hearing. Observers will be ejected from the remote hearing if they breach these rules.

The Committee Coordinator will control access to the main hearing room. Anyone attempting to access the main hearing room who has not provided a signed agreement form will be ejected from the virtual lobby.

If the Committee decides to go into private session, any observers will be required to exit the remote hearing. The Committee Coordinator will notify observers when they are permitted to re-join once the hearing in public session.

Observers should have their cameras and audio turned off unless requested otherwise by the Committee Chair. Ultimately, it will be for the Chair to direct what is appropriate on a case-by-case basis. For example, the Chair may ask an observer to turn on their camera and audio to identify themselves to the panel/ parties and then direct them to turn it off again.

Interim suspension hearings are held in public by default, but the GCC routinely requests that these hearings are heard in private. Where a decision is made that the hearing will proceed in private, public access to that hearing will be restricted.

1.8. Technical issues

The Committee and the Committee Coordinator monitor the hearing for any technical issues, which sometimes cannot be avoided. Parties must raise any technical issues with the Committee Chair or Committee Coordinator as soon as possible. This includes poor connectivity issues that impede anyone's ability to hear or see proceedings. Proceedings should be halted until technical issues have been resolved or an alternative way to proceed is identified.

This is to ensure that all parties have fair access to proceedings and that vital information or evidence is not misheard or missed altogether.

If an observer is unable to hear or see proceedings, they should raise this with the Committee Coordinator as soon as possible to ensure public access to the hearing is maintained. The Committee Coordinator will provide parties and observers with email and telephone contact details in case of technical issues.

1.9. Role of the Committee Coordinator

The Committee Coordinator is responsible for the smooth running of the hearing. They will update parties and observers about start and finish times and when to return from breaks or private sessions, so it is imperative that they have accurate contact details. They also create virtual meeting rooms and control access to them.

The Committee Coordinator also facilitates the scheduling of the hearing, monitors case management direction deadlines, coordinates disclosure and paperwork, supports all parties with queries and technical support, and provides support to witnesses.

The Committee Coordinator also provides additional support to unrepresented registrants and vulnerable witnesses if required.

1.10. Record of the hearing

A formal record of the hearing will be taken by a logger, along with an audio recording. Alternatively, the GCC may decide to record via the Teams application or other technology. A verbatim written note of proceedings is then produced – this is called a transcript.

No other party is permitted to record any part of the hearing

1.11. Adjustments

If any participant in the hearing requires any reasonable adjustments, due to disability or other needs, to ensure they can participate effectively in the hearing, they should contact the Committee Coordinator who will be able to assist.

2. Further information

For further information or support, please contact the Committee Coordinator at adjudication@gcc-uk.org.

General Chiropractic Council

November 2026