

GCC Business Plan 2024



What we do

The General Chiropractic Council is the UK regulator for the chiropractic profession

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 strategy has four areas of focus each with its own aim and objectives:

	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.

Our priorities for 2024, the culmination of the GCC Strategy 2022-24

The current three-year Strategy was adopted in 2021 and set out our overarching goals for 2022 – 2024. Its development was in response to the evolving landscape of health and social care, and the challenges we face.

In the 2022 business plan, we set out our initial priorities for the first year to build some firm foundations and work towards the strategic aims. This included seeking a greater awareness of patient understanding and needs. The following year, we worked hard to collate the learnings and intelligence we gained from 2022, to develop resources and improvements, and build this into our core work.

We introduced new standards for chiropractic education in 2023. Our vision for 2024 is that we maintain a focus on our core regulatory function of standard setting for the profession as a whole. We must also carry out our work more efficiently making improvements where we can. We must also look ahead into what the future holds for the GCC and the chiropractic profession. We will develop our strategy for 2025 and onwards and do so consultatively and collaboratively with our stakeholders.

What will success look like?

If we are successful in achieving our aims in the year, we will see –

- A Code of Practice that has been reviewed, subjected to wide consultation, and updated, providing modern and clear standards and expectations for chiropractors and patients.
- Collaboration, investigation, and business intelligence streamlined with a case management system for the Fitness to Practise team, delivering efficiencies.
- Students embarking on approved chiropractic programmes that align with the new Education Standards.
- A wider range of guidance and toolkits relating to professionalism that support registrants in their learning and reflections on their practice.
- A financially sustainable organisation so that we can continue to regulate effectively and protect the public.
- The development of a new corporate strategy for 2025 onwards, that reflects the regulatory duties the GCC must undertake as well as doing better where necessary.

Valuing People, Valuing Diversity

At the GCC, we believe equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are important to what we do as both as a regulator, and an employer. We want to learn and do better where we can. In 2022, we developed a 15-point action plan spanning the three

years of the Strategy by way of our commitment to EDI across all aspects of the work we do.

We also believe in our staff who, although a small team, bring immense pride into the work they do and commitment to the organisational goals. We would not be able to achieve our aims without a diverse workforce, with a range of valuable skills and knowledge.

We want to improve the staff workload by investing in enhancing our current systems, as well as adopting new ones. This will support our mechanisms to bolster our ability to do our job well.

Our success in achieving our aims also relies on the support of our many partners who contribute their knowledge and expertise to help us meet our statutory obligations and priorities.



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

What have we achieved so far?

In 2022, we sought to foster meaningful patient involvement and seek their input on their concerns. This involved the formation of a Patient Advisory Panel comprising recent chiropractic patients, which has played a role in collecting diverse viewpoints on a wide range of topics. Together with the panel, a new Patient Portal was developed, offering valuable resources and information to patients and the broader public. We explored and documented the patient's perspective of professionalism among chiropractors and published a report. In addition, a patient communication toolkit for registrants was published, emphasising the importance of effective communication in patient care.

The following year, we published research on patients' expectations and experience in receiving chiropractic care. With the GCC Patient Panel, we considered the influence of registration, reputation and professionalism on patients' choice of chiropractors. This informed the development of new resources and guidance for registrants and introduced the "I'm Registered" campaign. A joint workshop was held with the General Osteopathic Council with both chiropractic and osteopathic patients, exploring the Duty of Candour and this research has informed the development of a Candour toolkit for registrants.

How does this shape our priorities in 2024?

Patients and their care are at the centre of all our work. Their involvement has been valuable, and we will continue to integrate patients' views and their voice into our priority areas of work next year. In 2024, we plan to produce more guidance aimed at chiropractors but informed by patients and further emphasise the value of registration to patients – through registrants to their patients. We will be embarking on a review of the Code of Conduct and a development of a corporate strategy next year. It is essential that we engage with patients and capture their views in both areas, and we will do so using a range of methods.

Guidance and toolkits

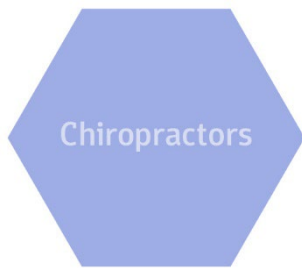
We will continue to engage with our patient advisory group to inform the development of the new Code of Practice and associated guidance and toolkits.

Promote regulation and registration

We will implement an "I'm Registered" campaign for the public and an analysis will be conducted to assess the outcome and impact the mark has made.

What are the outcomes and benefits?

- Updated information to patients and the public and increased awareness of the *I'm Registered* mark.
- Enhanced protection of patients' well-being and safety by providing clear guidance to chiropractors on professional boundaries.
- Increased public awareness of the importance of choosing registered and regulated healthcare professionals.



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

What have we achieved so far?

Through the learning and findings from our regulatory work, we identified areas where we could develop resources to promote best practice, professionalism, and value within the profession.

Spanning across the first two years, we published a range of toolkits and content on the website and social media, featuring:

- registrant films in collaboration with Health and Care Professions Council
- registrant-focussed content and toolkits on aspects of professionalism including effective communication, leadership, competence, reflective practice, and patient-centred care
- new content on reflection for registrants incorporated into CPD guidance
- a new Return to Practice in the UK guide and process
- a toolkit on Consent to support the updated Consent Guidance
- updated guidance on Duty of Candour and toolkit.

We undertook a comprehensive review of the GCC Education Standards and Quality Assurance such that both are fit for purpose and include an increased focus on multi-disciplinary learning and working; further integrating chiropractic into the wider healthcare professions, while providing the best care and outcome for their patients.

In response to the Financial Strategy for 2023-2025, we conducted research to better understand the shape and profile of the current and future workforce with our existing data, employing predictive modelling of the chiropractic profession.

How does this shape our priorities in 2024?

The learnings and insights obtained through regulatory and statutory activities have informed the development of a significant range of toolkits and guidance for the profession. We will develop further resources to strengthen professionalism within chiropractic care.

We also want to reinforce an environment of trust and transparency. In support of the relaunch of a chiropractic patient incident reporting and learning system by the Royal College of Chiropractors, we plan to develop a communications plan to promote the system and the benefits of shared learning from errors for the profession.

Implementation of Education Standards

We will continue to support education providers with the implementation of the new Education Standards.

GCC-approved qualifications and programmes

We will quality-assure current GCC-approved qualifications and support the development of new programmes and satellite programmes.

Guidance and toolkits

Following the revision of the Maintaining Sexual Boundaries Guidance, we will develop a toolkit for registrants. Further toolkits will be developed on managing patient data and diagnostic imaging.

Safe culture of care and reporting

The Royal College of Chiropractors plans to relaunch its Chiropractic Patient Incident Reporting and Learning System (CPiRLS) in early 2024. Aligned with this, a communications campaign will be developed to promote the benefits of a safer culture of care and reporting, and the importance of learning from errors to prevent future harms.

What are the outcomes and benefits?

- Chiropractic qualifications meeting the standards set by the GCC will maintain a high level of education and training in chiropractic care. This will lead to the provision of safe and effective care of patients.
- Expansion of the range of resources available to registrants to enhance their knowledge and skills and practice.
- Encouragement of a culture of safer care and reporting in the profession, reducing the stigma associated with reporting errors.



We regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively

What have we achieved so far?

In the first year of the strategy, we reviewed several Fitness to Practise (FtP) processes, including the Publication and Disclosure Policy, Investigating Committee Decision-Making Guidance, and the Hearings protocol. Additionally, Clinical Advisers were introduced to speed up the investigation process.

It is important that the GCC embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles into all aspects of our work and so, we developed a 15-point action plan. Throughout the years we have –

- developed a standing EDI working group
- implemented an EDI policy and toolkit for registrants
- conducted a thematic review of Investigating Committee cases to ensure that the current process is fair, non-biased and non-discriminatory
- begun a thematic review of Professional Conduct Committee cases
- surveyed the profession on key concerns regarding EDI and the public to develop an understanding of external stakeholders' opinions of the relevance of EDI within chiropractic
- selected EDI as the focus of CPD for all registrants for the 2023/2024 period.

We have prepared for the work that would be undertaken in 2024 including a scoping review of the Code of Practice and setting the groundwork for the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards.

We set out to strengthen our financial sustainability by reviewing our office arrangements and IT services and have identified efficiency solutions in doing so.

Our performance is reviewed annually by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). In 2023, we successfully met all 18 Standards of Good Regulation, notably the significant improvement in the time to progress investigations.

How does this shape our priorities in 2024?

Looking ahead to 2024, our central focus will be to review the GCC Code of Practice. Our fundamental regulatory role is to establish clear and current standards. Our scoping review of the Code has shown that a wider review is necessary.

We will continue to improve the operations of Fitness to Practise where necessary, enabling us to achieve our statutory requirements and protect the public and patients.

The digital world evolves rapidly with new features and benefits, improving user experience, and we'll be doing the same within our operational framework. We will make improvements to our registrant portal. We expect to see more automation and a seamless experience across the registration, retention and CPD areas of this portal. Additionally, we'll be incorporating a new case management system to the Fitness to Practise team.

Below are the highlights of the key activities that we will be undertaking:

Review of the GCC Code of Practice

We will review and consult on the Code of Practice, following the scoping review conducted in 2023. This is integral to ensuring high quality professional practice and sets out for patients the quality of care they are entitled to receive from chiropractors.

For chiropractors, these are the benchmarks of conduct and practice they will be measured against if a complaint is made to the GCC.

Fitness to Practise Case Management System

We plan to introduce a system that streamlines the FtP case management process.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

We will continue to implement the 15-point action plan including the creation of EDI champions within the profession and researching the diversity of chiropractic patients. A new action plan will be developed in line with the new corporate strategy.

Deliver Fitness to Practise statutory requirements

We will continue to work towards meeting FtP performance standards and realise the benefits of new arrangements of obtaining clinical advice and in the listing of cases.

Improvements to the Registrant Portal

We will be working on enhancing functionalities on the registrant portal (iMIS), improving user experience for internal and external stakeholders.

Welsh Language Standards

We will comply with the Welsh Language Standards for healthcare regulators. This is an opportunity for us to promote the language to those accessing our services and staff. The development of the Welsh application form for registrants on our CRM system will be a key piece of activity that will be implemented in 2024.

Continuing to fulfil our governance duties through recruitment

The GCC consists of a Council, a number of statutory and non-statutory committees, and several external Partners that support the organisation in our role as a regulator. We will embark on several recruitment drives to both fill and expand membership roles, including Chair of Council, leadership roles of the Investigating Committee and

Professional Conduct Committee, lay members of Council and Education Committee, and more.

What are the outcomes and benefits?

- The Code of Practice remains relevant and reflects the high standards expected, benefiting both chiropractors and patients.
- An FtP case management system and registrant portal that enhance efficiency, accuracy and reduce administrative burdens.
- Compliance with our legal obligations regarding Fitness to Practise, building trust amongst the public.
- Chiropractic education is aligned with the new standards, benefiting both students and the quality of patient care in future.
- Demonstration of a commitment to promote a more inclusive and diverse profession.
- An effective governance structure for regulation, diverse representation, and a broad range of skills.
- The GCC is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards (No.8) Regulations 2022.



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

The focus of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in regulatory policy reform was in the development of an Order, providing the basis, or template, to be applied to all regulators when appropriate. The Order is initially to facilitate new powers in the regulation of professions within the General Medical Council (GMC); we have been and are keen to be a valuable contributor to those developments.

What have we achieved so far?

Although we had hoped for more progress on regulatory reform – particularly for the GCC and the chiropractic profession, we have fostered a transparent and cooperative regulatory environment through meeting with our fellow health and care profession regulators to keep abreast of any developments. We have also attended joint-regulator sessions to discuss and contribute where possible.

Throughout the two years, we have responded to consultations and publications for the following –

- Consultation undertaken by DHSC – Healthcare Regulation: deciding when statutory regulation is appropriate. [GCC's response](#)
- Publication of the Government's response to the outcome of the 2021 consultation on reform of professional regulation. [GCC's statement](#)
- Publication of the government's response to the outcome of the 2023 consultation on Regulating anaesthesia associates and physician associates. [GCC's response](#)

How does this shape our priorities in 2024?

We have seen that collaborative discussions with the Government and regulators have been valuable and we will continue to do so, contributing where we can. Next year, we want to actively drive efficiencies and be proactive on any potential legislative changes in the horizon.

Corporate Strategy 2025 and onwards

We will focus on developing the next corporate strategy that will set the overarching approach that we intend to follow from 2025 and build on the achievements of the Strategy 2022 - 24. In developing the new strategy, we will ensure that the views of key stakeholders are considered and regulation for the profession is enhanced.

Regulatory Reform

We will keep abreast of any further developments with DHSC and other health and social care regulators.

We will ensure that key stakeholders are informed of any new developments.

Review of Rules

In-line with the new powers under the Order, we will consider a review of the GCC Rules Order.

Should the review proceed, we will plan accordingly in 2024/25.

What are the outcomes and benefits?

- Where possible, influence and secure legislative change needed to our current powers to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our regulation.
- Work to shape as far as possible future regulatory frameworks that prioritise safeguarding the well-being of the public through the effective regulation of chiropractic.
- A new corporate strategy for the General Chiropractic Council in 2025.