

PLEASE NOTE

This document has been updated.
The current version can be found at:
gcc-uk.org/guidance-first-aid

Special bulletin to Registrants January 2020

First aid in emergencies

Dear Registrant

Following the inquest in York into the death of a patient following treatment the GCC was asked by the Coroner to consider making first aid training a mandatory requirement for registrants¹. This bulletin sets out the action registrants must now take.

Every chiropractor is likely to encounter potential traumatic and medical emergencies at some point in their professional life. Like all registered health care professionals chiropractors have a duty to their patients during emergencies.

Chiropractors therefore must develop competencies in recognising, assessing and managing emergency potential medical and traumatic conditions that may be encountered in chiropractic settings.

It is a requirement of our educational programmes that students are trained to deal with medical emergencies. Thereafter it is important that chiropractors keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

Our expectations

The GCC cannot tell you what provision you should make for first aid. As a health care professional it is your responsibility to understand the emergencies that can arise in your practice and the clinical environment. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are prepared to administer first aid in the event of a clinical emergency.

We expect all chiropractors to now consider their own first aid knowledge and skills and determine whether or not to undertake further specific first aid training.

You should start by considering whether your first aid skills and knowledge are sufficient, appropriate and current. It may be some time since you last undertook any training or it may be that you refresh your first aid competence on a routine basis.

In assessing your own first aid needs, and those of your clinic, you should consider:

- When you last undertook first aid training, noting it is good practice to undergo refresher training every three years

¹ The Coroner also asked the GCC to review the requirement for pre-treatment imaging to inform whether a patient is suitable for treatment. Our response will be communicated separately.

- Whether you need to undertake first aid training that takes into account the practice of chiropractic, for example in the provision of CPR and medical emergency first aid
- Whether you employ others and how you ensure your employees are suitably competent. The Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. These regulations apply to all workplaces including those with under five employees and to the self-employed.

Our requirements for 2020

In September 2020, as part of your CPD return for 2019/20, the information you submit to us must include your reflection on your own first aid knowledge and skills. We want you to tell us in the information you submit to us what training you undertook or, if you did not, the steps you took to assure yourself of your own competence to administer first aid on a patient should the need arise. We will be amending the registrants' portal soon to enable you to do this.

We will review your submission and follow up with registrants where we have concerns as to the action taken or where we require further information.

The professional associations and Royal College of Chiropractors have indicated their support for these requirements in light of the tragic event.

First aid training

Many providers of first aid training are available offering a range of courses delivered in a range of different ways. We do not hold a list of accredited or appropriate providers.

It is for you as a chiropractor to identify a provider that is suitable for you. When selecting a training provider, you must be confident it will deliver training with appropriate content for you as a chiropractor. This must take account of clinical practice and emergencies related to your patients including the vulnerable, elderly and those with a history of interventions relating to their care. If you provide care at sports events specific training to deal with injuries, on field assessment and principles of injury management may be required.

We know the Royal College of Chiropractors has partnered with a training provider to provide first aid training courses for chiropractors across the UK. These courses are pitched at chiropractors by trainers experienced at training healthcare professionals. Courses commence in February 2020 with new dates and locations added to meet demand, and are open to any registered chiropractor: <http://bit.ly/rccfirstaid>

For queries about this bulletin enquiries@gcc-uk.org