

GCC Business Plan 2023

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 General Chiropractic Council.

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 target

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.

Business Plan 2023

Introduction

The GCC Strategy covers 2022 – 2024. Its development reflected changes in the external health and social care landscape, and the challenges we face.

Our business plan for 2022 set out our first-year priorities to meet the aims and objectives of the strategy. We worked hard to:

- achieve a greater understanding of patients' needs and expectations, developing guidance and resources to better support patients and registrants, making good progress towards placing patients more at the centre of our work
- develop a range of resources aimed at registrants supporting professionalism within chiropractic
- develop, consult on and agree new Education Standards, that for the first time embed the theme of patients, their care and a focus on equalities throughout
- improve a range of Fitness to Practise processes to speed up the time taken investigating, and consulting on and introducing new guidance for carrying out investigations and how hearings are carried out
- contribute to the programme of regulatory reform and the development of new frameworks, in line with government priorities for regulation.

We must now build on the achievements and progress made in the first year. For these activities to have lasting impact, we must implement in 2023 those developments made in 2022 to embed the improvements to how we carry out our core work. We must also be ambitious in our project work identifying further areas for improvement - to further fulfil our strategic objectives.

At the same time, we must not lose focus from fulfilling our core tasks. It is important we do those well to meet the expectations of our stakeholders.

The first-year business plan priorities were ambitious. They laid the foundations for our work in 2023. This year, we recalibrate the balance between project work changing and enhancing what we do, and the core tasks we must deliver in a challenging work environment.

What will success look like?

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

- Increasing awareness and understanding of chiropractic as a regulated profession by patients and the public
- Registrants better supported with updated and new guidance and resources to set our expectations and inform their practice
- Improvements to regulatory processes further protecting patients, towards swifter resolution for the benefit of complainants and registrants alike.
- The GCC rated highly by the Professional Standards Authority, meeting all the standards of good regulation and our openness to innovative approaches to regulation
- The GCC 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 GCC operating with digitally effective information technology infrastructure that promotes security, enabling agility and efficiency

Valuing People, Valuing Diversity

Successful outcomes are achieved by our people working positively and collaboratively with all our stakeholders.

The GCC has a small but dedicated and talented team committed to the aims of the organisation. The team embody the values of togetherness, achievement, accountability and integrity enabling us to meet the objectives we set out to do well. Our team are proud to work for the GCC, would recommend the GCC as a great place to work, feel enabled to do their job well and feel cared about. We can always do more to support our people – in a small organisation the pressures are felt personally and sometimes resilience is stretched.

We support and nurture this talent, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, while working hard to maintain a work life balance. In 2022 our senior management team and wider staff group embarked on tailored development programmes to deepen respective understanding and preferences to underpin teamwork. Without the team we do not achieve.

We are also supported by its many partners who serve on Council, Committees, and panels. Across the membership, there is a broad vast of knowledge and expertise to ensure we succeed in our statutory obligations and in meeting all our priorities. We must maintain and build on these relationships, through consistent and valuable interactions.

All organisations must meet legal duties on equality and diversity. At the same time, it must come from an authentic recognition of difference, both the strengths that

difference brings and the potential for different outcomes that have negative consequences for some people.

Like many, we are open, we will continue to learn from each other as we drive for equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work by greater understanding through collecting better information, incentivising action by our standard-setting and guidance, and championing the benefits of an equitable approach.

In early 2022, we established an equalities, diversity and inclusion (EDI) working group. Benefiting for their diverse knowledge and experience, they collaborated to develop a [15-point EDI Action Plan](#) spanning the three years of the Strategy. Already, we can point to achievement of a third of the committed actions. This includes the development and publication of a new GCC EDI policy, an EDI toolkit and EDI training and development for all GCC employees. As part of our review of GCC functions and processes to identify and address any possible equality issues we commenced a thematic review of Investigating Committee closed cases. A report will be published in early 2023.

2023 will see the development of a corporate inclusion policy, a review of our brand guidelines and an operational review for protected characteristics.

We will not only create a successful, thriving workplace and a fair work culture, but as a leader our influence will flow through the network of our stakeholders including the chiropractic profession.



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. Last year, we sought meaningful patient involvement and input on issues of concern to them; along with maximising opportunities for patients and the public to share their views with the GCC. This year, our focus for 2023 will draw on the findings and, in turn, enable us to develop and update our policies and processes.

What we know from our work in 2022 and what's coming in 2023

Last year, we created and implemented more resources and support to patients when seeking and using chiropractic treatment. We want to build on that.

Our patient community, that we set up in 2022, told us that they are reassured by regulatory oversight and knowing more about this increases their confidence in the profession.

The patients were positive about chiropractors displaying the **GCC I'm Registered** mark, believing this would be more successful if linked to greater patient education around healthcare regulation.

Here are examples of comments received when we embarked on the activities to gain a greater understanding of patient needs and expectations.

"I had no idea they had to be registered with the GCC, which has greatly increased my confidence in their profession and services."

"I believe all chiropractors should display a registration certificate, so patients know this professional body that regulates chiropractors and enhances your confidence in the chiropractor you are seeing."

"I think displaying a registration certificate available so that you can refer to GCC and check their details will be important to some people, especially if they are not going through a recommendation or word of mouth."

Our Business Plan Project 1 promotes the value of regulation and registration to patients and the profession.

We will develop a revised suite of resources, guidance and web copy for registrants to promote their GCC registration. We will implement 'I'm Registered' campaigns with stakeholders to motivate registrants to apply resources throughout their communication channels and with patients/public.

What are the outcomes and benefits?

- A deeper understanding of the chiropractic experience from a patients' perspective, rather than the professional or GCC perspective.
- Resources focused towards addressing key concerns and themes experienced by patients, so they have a better chiropractic experience, with reducing complaints in these areas.
- Patients and the public have greater reassurance as to registrants' standards of professionalism.
- 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

We have a duty to support the development of the chiropractic profession and support registrants to meet the standards that we expect from them. We aim to ensure that registrants have the right knowledge, skills and expertise to deliver safe, high-quality care.

What we know from our work in 2022 and what's coming in 2023

Supporting professionalism

Last year, we focused on developing resources aimed at registrants to support the theme of 'professionalism' within chiropractic. This is a big priority for us – professionalism is at the centre of effective care and reduces the potential for poor care and resulting complaints.

Spontaneous views of professionalism based on word association

Patient perspective



Professional perspective



We published registrant-focussed content on professionalism with materials and guidance on the themes of *communication* and *reflection*. Good communication underpins all aspects of professionalism and is critical to building professional relationships with colleagues, patients and other healthcare professionals. Reflective practice involves a professional thinking about their experiences and making an effort to learn and improve them – as an important habit.

We want to continue promoting chiropractic best practice, professionalism and value within the health and care system.

Building on knowledge from our interactions with patients in 2022, in 2023 we will publish new resources on different aspects of professionalism, including patient centred care, leadership, reflective practice, and competence.

We published new Guidance on consent in 2022, and in 2023 we will complete and publish research findings undertaken with patients on their expectations of arrangements for consent and from it, develop a toolkit for registrants.

Our Business Plan Project 2 aims to develop resources to support professionalism.

We will publish toolkits on aspects of professionalism: patient centred care, leadership and reflective practice. We will complete and publish findings from research with the patient community on consent. We will use that research to publish a toolkit for registrants on the expectations that patients have about consent.

Embed a culture of safer care

Safer care is a priority for us all. The Professional Standards Authority in *Safer Care for all* (2022) illustrated the fragmented landscape in health and social care, and the four nations, each with complex patient and public safety mechanisms spanning numerous different bodies. An over-arching objective of the GCC is to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public. We want to give a greater focus to incentivising safer care provided by registrants.

Our focus will be on the expectation that all health and social care professionals must act openly and honestly with their patients in the event things go wrong. Building on the joint statement issued by all healthcare regulators on Candour in 2014, and the work by other regulators, we will review our Candour Guidance. We will explore patients' experience, perceptions and preferences and develop information for patients mirrored in a new toolkit to support registrants.

We will do more to promote and publicise the RCC chiropractic patient incident reporting and learning system (CPiRLS) to encourage further use by registrants. We want to ensure the profession benefits from collective learning in the interest of patients; equally we want to ensure the profession itself sees and embraces the benefit of reporting and learning. We see the risks of the regulator being too closely involved disincentivising adoption across the profession.

In 2022 we published new Guidance on diagnostic imaging. This followed the publication of a comprehensive review in 2021. We will maintain a focus on imaging in 2023. Responsibility for overseeing effective radiology governance rests with the Care Quality Commission in England, and equivalent bodies in each nation. We will

work with those bodies and with the UK Health Security Agency and the Society of Radiographers focused on where chiropractors have practitioner and operator responsibilities under the IR(ME)R Regulations. to promote best practice, and the publication of an imaging toolkit.

Our Business Plan Project 3 will embed a culture of safer care.

We will revise guidance and toolkit resources on Candour for registrants informed by research with the GCC patient community. We will develop a toolkit and learning resources for registrants and the profession building on the diagnostic imaging guidance. We will scope out potential for additional resources around avoiding and managing conflicts of interest. We will work with the RCC to further promote the incident reporting system (CPiRLS) used by registrants to aid learning.

What are the outcomes and benefits?

- Registrants are better supported to inform their practice with a range of updated guidance and resources to inform their practice.
- There will be fewer Fitness to Practise complaints relating to consent.
- Registrants are better informed with resources available on Candour.
- There will be clarity for the profession on undergraduate teaching relating to diagnostic imaging.
- Registrants will have learning and resources addressing involvement in diagnostic imaging as an employer, practitioner, operator and/or referrer.
- There will be a culture within the profession of openness and honesty.
- Improved practice in use of diagnostic imaging and meeting requirements of IR(ME)R.
- Increased usage of CPiRLS leading to opportunities for improving care in the chiropractic profession.



We regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively

Overview

The GCC must be operationally sustainable to enable us to fully regulate effectively, efficiently, and inclusively.

What we know from our work in 2022 and what's coming in 2023

In 2022, we consulted widely and revised Education Standards and how we assure the quality of education programmes and providers. We expect the new Education Standards and Quality Assurance Handbook to be published and in place from Spring 2023. The education programme providers will be supported to implement the requirements set out there.

In recent years, our records have been kept and stored digitally although we hold an archive of records off-site. In 2022 our retention policy was updated, and we reviewed those records. Following the feasibility undertaken, this year we will be disposing of records in line with the policy and transferring retained documents to a digital format through the year.

Effective succession of decision-makers in committees enable us to regulate effectively. Several Committee Members will conclude their final term of office between 2023 and 2024, and to ensure there is a smooth transition between current and new partners, we will conduct an extensive recruitment campaign for those. Recruitment will also be taking place to vacancies on Council. Recruitment for the vacant posts will take place over the year.

Our performance is reviewed annually by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). In its review in 2022, the GCC met 17 out of 18 Standards of good regulation. It was identified that improvement was needed in the pace of the Fitness to Practise processes. We will work hard in improving in this area. By June 2023 we will recruit Clinical Assessors following a review in 2022 of where best the FtP team can access clinical expertise. This additional resource will enable the Fitness to Practise team to progress cases quicker and reduce costs in the use of expert witnesses.

Technology is an integral component to enabling the work we do across the organisation. We will integrate innovation and effectiveness within our Information Technology framework. It is imperative our services are streamlined with it. We will review our current I.T infrastructure and business needs and initiate a tender exercise for an I.T. managed service provider (MSP) in the first half of the year.

Our Business Plan Project 4 is to integrate innovation and effectiveness within the I.T. framework.

We will identify an I.T. expert to help plan and produce the specification for the tender for an I.T service provider. We will conduct a tender exercise with I.T service providers. The Audit and Risk Committee will appoint or re-appoint the I.T service provider.

We will maintain a sustainable annual budget surplus of approximately 1.5% while achieving agreed corporate aims and objectives. We will work with other health and social care regulators to exploit cost sharing and collaboration opportunities. We will explore a range of opportunities here with a view to securing value for money.

In 2023 we will be expected to comply with The Welsh Language Standards (No. 8) Regulations 2022. These are statutory duties and by early 2023 we expect to be issued with our Notice of Compliance setting out those requirements applicable to us and milestones for completion.

Our Business Plan Project 5 is to comply with Welsh Language Standards

We will receive a Notice of Compliance from the Welsh Language Commissioner with a list of Standards to comply with. We will implement the Standards outlined such that the GCC is compliant.

What are the outcomes and benefits?

- Patients, the profession, and education providers will be engaged, and report that they are, in the development of new education standards such that as they are developed, they have confidence that they will best prepare future graduates for practice.
- Improvements in the processing time for key components of the fitness to practise system.
- A review of the GCC cost base and the delivery of a costs sustainable GCC.
- Improved processes and systems to improve the experience of our stakeholders and drive business efficiencies.
- Effective governance such that the GCC meets its statutory obligations.
- A review of the GCC costs base will lead to an effective reduction in the GCC's operating costs per registrant.
- 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

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 that interact with us.

What we will do in 2023

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 are expected to act as the template for subsequent Orders to other regulators.

We will keep abreast of any developments and ensure that Council is appraised of it all, enabling it to balance wider issues with our important accountability for delivery role.

In 2022, Council agreed a financial strategy for the 2023-25 financial years. The current financial strategy (2019-23) had set out the GCC to have a sustainable footing: a 'balanced budget' position and it has now been achieved. The new financial strategy is intended to ensure we build on the successes made in the last few years and position the GCC to be in a more financially viable position.

The GCC's revenue flows are predictably cyclical and are predominantly sourced from registrant fees. The year-on-year growth has been slow and for a sustainable future, we want to conduct research such that we better understand the current and future workforce. This will explore retention, decisions to remain in or leave the profession; options for international accreditation and the domestic education supply. Our objective is to make evidence-based decisions as to which actions – taken by the GCC or stakeholders – will deliver medium and long-term change.

The Business Plan Project 6 will understand the current and future workforce (supply and demand)

We will conduct research to understand the future sustainability of the workforce and barriers to growth and present a report to Council as part of the Financial Strategy.

What are the 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.
- There will be a greater understanding of the current and future workforce, informing the profession about its future and enable stakeholders to take action.
- In line with the 2023-2025 financial strategy, achieve long-term sustainable financial growth and security for the GCC.