

GCC Strategy

2022-2024



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 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 targets.

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



Background

In December 2018 the GCC published its Strategy 2019-2023. In its first two years of delivery, digital transformation to the GCC website and registrants' portal was achieved. Changes were also implemented in fitness to practise and CPD processes, and several new stakeholder communication and engagement activities were launched, helping to further position the GCC as the essential conduit between all stakeholders.

In 2021, following changes to the external health and social care landscape, including the significant impact from the Covid-19 pandemic and more immediate prospects of regulatory reform, Council agreed to the development of a new GCC Strategy to better reflect the current situation.

Development

The new GCC Strategy 2022-2024 has four distinct areas, each with its own aim and objectives:

1. Patients & Public
2. Chiropractors
3. The Profession
4. The GCC

This more-accessible format creates greater equivalency between each area and their respective aims and objectives, better demonstrates that the GCC is addressing its legislative, corporate and social commitments, and improves understanding of the GCC's role with the reader, ie to protect patients and the public, as well as promote the profession through development of standards etc.

Consultation

In June 2021, the GCC sought feedback on its draft Strategy from stakeholders, including registrants, professional associations, the Royal College of Chiropractors and other individuals/organisations.

The consultation closed in September 2021 with over 1,300 people viewing the consultation page on the GCC website, and nearly 400 people attending four online events, with 200+ comments received.

This Strategy has been revised in the light of that feedback, for example, clarifying what is meant by commonly referenced themes, such as the expectations of patients and 'professionalism'.

The Council is grateful to all who took the time to review, attend events and submit views, acknowledging that the new GCC Strategy 2022-2024 is better for it. This valuable feedback will ensure the Strategy:

- meets and supports the needs of all stakeholders;
- is balanced and fair; and
- supports the GCC in meeting its duties.

Valuing People, Valuing Diversity

For the GCC Strategy 2022-2024 to succeed, it is essential that we recognise and value all the people involved in its delivery and impact. The GCC has a small, dedicated employee group, committed to the aims of the GCC and working hard to fulfil its regulatory functions. It is therefore essential that we support and nurture this talent, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, while maintaining a good work/life balance.

As well as its employees, the GCC works most effectively with the support of its many partners who serve on its Council, committees and panels. Their knowledge, expertise and dedication in undertaking a variety of roles, ensure we work well. We must maintain and build on these relationships, maximising the value from every meeting, and ensuring lay and registrant partners are recognised for their commitment to the GCC and the chiropractic profession.

Finally, all organisations must meet legal duties on equality and diversity. At the same time, social equality, diversity, inclusion and fairness is not a simple tick-box exercise. It should be embedded, embraced and lived by the organisation, its functions and the people who work within it. We want to exemplify these values, and we have more to do. 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. It will require joint action.



Our Aims

The GCC Strategy 2022-2024 has four **Aims**:

One:
Patients
& Public

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

Two:
Chiropractors

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

Three:
The GCC

To regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively.

Four:
The
Profession

To enhance the nature and form of regulation for the profession for the future.

Supporting Objectives

The **four Aims** of the GCC Strategy 2022-2024 will be achieved through the delivery of **12 Objectives** across the timeframe of the Strategy.

One: Patients & Public

Our Aim: to place patients and their care at the centre of all GCC work, will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

One A

To gain a greater understanding of patients' needs and expectations, so these can be reflected in the work of the GCC.

One B

To promote chiropractic standards that take full account of patients' needs and expectations.

One C

To create, enhance and disseminate information to help patients make informed judgements about their chiropractic care.

Two: Chiropractors

Our Aim: to promote continuing chiropractic best practice, professionalism and value within the health and social care system, will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

Two A

To identify, collect and analyse data and insights from regulatory and statutory activity.

Two B

To share learning through the gathering and dissemination of GCC internal data and public, patient and registrant research.

Two C

To work with education providers and stakeholders to continue the development and promotion of professionalism in registrants, from the start to end of their careers.

Three: The GCC

Our Aim: to regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively, will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

Three A

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.

Three B

To set and promote educational, professional and registration requirements, to ensure they remain appropriate and fit for purpose.

Three C

To be a sustainable and effective organisation committed to social equality, diversity and fairness.

Four: The Profession

Our Aim: to enhance the nature and form of regulation for the profession for the future, will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

Four A

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.

Four B

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

Four C

To take forward the development of rules to be applied upon agreed legislative change.

Purpose and rationale of our Aims and Objectives

One: Patients & Public

To place patients and their care at the centre of all GCC work. This Aim will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

One A

To gain a greater understanding of patients' needs and expectations, so these can be reflected in the work of the GCC.

One B

To promote chiropractic standards that take full account of patients' needs and expectations.

One C

To create, enhance and disseminate information to help patients make informed judgements about their chiropractic care.

Purpose of Aim

For the GCC to ensure the views and experiences of the body of patients are central to its regulatory decision-making processes and activities. Our focus will be on seeking meaningful patient involvement and input on issues of genuine concern to them, along with maximising opportunities for patients and the public to share their views, thereby improving the quality of care and enhancing the safety of patients.

As with all other health and social care professions and professionals, patients expect to be partners in care, with an open and honest safety reporting culture led by the profession, and for lessons to be learnt when things go wrong. In establishing our expectations, the reputation of chiropractic will be further enhanced.

Rationale for Aim

First, Aim One has a focus on the needs and concerns of patients. Aim Two has its focus on chiropractors. This allows the GCC to address patient needs and concerns, thereby fostering openness and transparency between patients and clinicians.

The safety of patients is central to the work of the GCC, determining all its actions and outcomes. The needs of patients shape the chiropractic profession, from undergraduate academic requirements to development and regulation of the GCC Code. It is vital that the views and experiences of a diverse range of patients and the public are proactively sought and considered in GCC decision-making activity.

Patients and the public offer real-life insight to the profession, and an external perspective that the GCC must access. In doing so, the GCC can better ensure its actions and activities meet the needs and legitimate expectations of the people that we must protect.

Two: Chiropractors

To promote continuing chiropractic best practice, professionalism and value within the health and social care system. This Aim will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

Two A

To identify, collect and analyse data and insights from regulatory and statutory activity.

Two B

To share learning through the gathering and dissemination of GCC internal data and public, patient and registrant research.

Two C

To work with education providers and stakeholders to continue the development and promotion of professionalism in registrants, from the start to end of their careers.

Purpose of Aim

For the GCC to focus its resources on preventative projects and actions, thereby reducing the level of its regulatory interventions. This aim will be achieved by directing GCC resources upstream, most notably increased and enhanced communication and engagement with the profession.

Although the GCC has made progress in this area, more can be done to shift the focus from short-term, case-by-case interventions, to identifying and addressing systemic issues that may exist within the profession, for example concerning advertising, consent and communication. The GCC will review its guidance, education standards and strengthen CPD, as well as introduce a range of supportive resources to assist the profession.

Rationale for Aim

Professionalism and excellence are ever-moving goals. There are legitimate expectations from the public, patients and Government, that registrants from all the regulated healthcare professions will continue to develop and evolve. Promoting excellence and professionalism in chiropractic does not suggest widespread issues with the profession, but an acceptance that all registrants will continue to develop their skills and abilities in line with other healthcare professions and professionals. In doing so, they will continue to contribute the value of chiropractic to the health and social care system.

Professionalism encompasses a core set of qualities, skills, competences and behaviours that all health professionals are expected to uphold. This includes working to defined standards of performance, consistently demonstrating evidence-based clinical reasoning and decision-making, managing sensitive information, and considering complex ethical and moral issues.

Chiropractors demonstrate professionalism by adhering to the GCC Code, working within their capabilities and competence, maintaining and developing professional relationships and expertise and, most importantly, delivering safe, effective and compassionate care to their patients.

Upholding and maintaining professionalism is essential, as serious failings in conduct or performance have the potential to undermine public confidence in the chiropractic profession. In turn, this affects the willingness of patients to seek chiropractic care, and deters people from entering the profession.

Three: The GCC

To regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively. This Aim will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

Three A

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.

Three B

To set and promote educational, professional and registration requirements, to ensure they remain appropriate and fit for purpose.

Three C

To be a sustainable and effective organisation committed to social equality, diversity and fairness.

Purpose of Aim

For the GCC to undertake its statutory duties more effectively and efficiently, continuously reviewing, streamlining and improving fitness to practise and registration processes, taking robust action in the face of poor practice, and setting the highest expected standards for chiropractic, all of which benefit patients, practitioners and the profession.

Key to this is recruiting, developing and retaining skilled, professional employees and partners, passionate about maintaining the highest levels of patient care and the development of the profession. In the right environment, a diverse, dedicated and enthusiastic team working collectively towards a shared vision can achieve more than their respective individual roles.

Rationale for Aim

Although the GCC is constrained under the provisions of the Chiropractors Act 1994, the organisation can continue to seek improvements in how it operates and supports the profession.

As the health and social care sector evolves, recognising and adjusting to ever-changing patient, technological, political and environmental needs, so must the GCC and the chiropractic profession. Core to this is ensuring the GCC's regulatory functions and actions continue to be fit for purpose, and relevant to the environment in which it operates. This includes ensuring educational standards align with today's ever-more complex and diverse UK health and social care requirements, and that registrants continue to develop and enhance their skills and abilities throughout their careers, as expected with all regulated professions.

Through social and legislative initiatives, the UK is slowly adapting and working towards becoming a more inclusive and accepting society. With this, the GCC will embed social equality, diversity, inclusion and fairness throughout its functions and processes, ensuring these elements are core to all that it does.

Four: The Profession

To enhance the nature and form of regulation for the profession for the future. This Aim will be achieved through the delivery of three objectives:

Four A

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.

Four B

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

Four C

To take forward the development of rules to be applied upon agreed legislative change.

Purpose of Aim

For the GCC to share and input its knowledge, experience and expertise without prejudice, and to influence the future direction and shape of the regulation of the profession. Working collectively and collaboratively, when possible, the GCC aims to position chiropractic as an ever-more essential and valuable component of the UK health and social care system, for the benefit of the public, NHS and the profession.

Rationale for Aim

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 – to strengthen the reform proposals and improve the current health and social care regulatory system.

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.

The GCC must be ready to take swift advantage of the ability of regulators 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.

Deliverables

Success in delivering all 12 objectives will be seen in:

Patients & Public

- Greater use of insights and experience to help others learn.
- Greater knowledge and skills in communicating and collaborating with other health and social care professionals.
- Patients trusting that they are considered an important constituent and valuable voice within the chiropractic profession.
- Greater patient confidence and equal participation in the regulation of chiropractic.
- Patients placed at the centre of their care.

Chiropractors

- Fewer avoidable complaints from patients leading to formal fitness to practise considerations.
- Greater collaboration and co-operation between the regulator and those who represent chiropractors.
- Greater direction for CPD, with a focus on areas that matter the most.
- More resources and guidance collaboratively developed, to help manage patients' legitimate expectations.
- Chiropractic care that is safer, more effective and more compassionate.

The GCC

- Effective regulator meeting PSA standards of good regulation.
- Fit-for-purpose and informed standards, guidance and regulatory processes for the chiropractic profession.
- Maintaining financial discipline and rigour, exploiting efficiencies and limiting the financial burden on registrants.
- Recognised as a diverse, inclusive and fair regulator by employees and other stakeholder groups.

The Profession

- Greater protection of patients and the public.
- Recognising specific risks while seeking to protect the rights of professionals.
- GCC 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.



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Chiropractic
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