

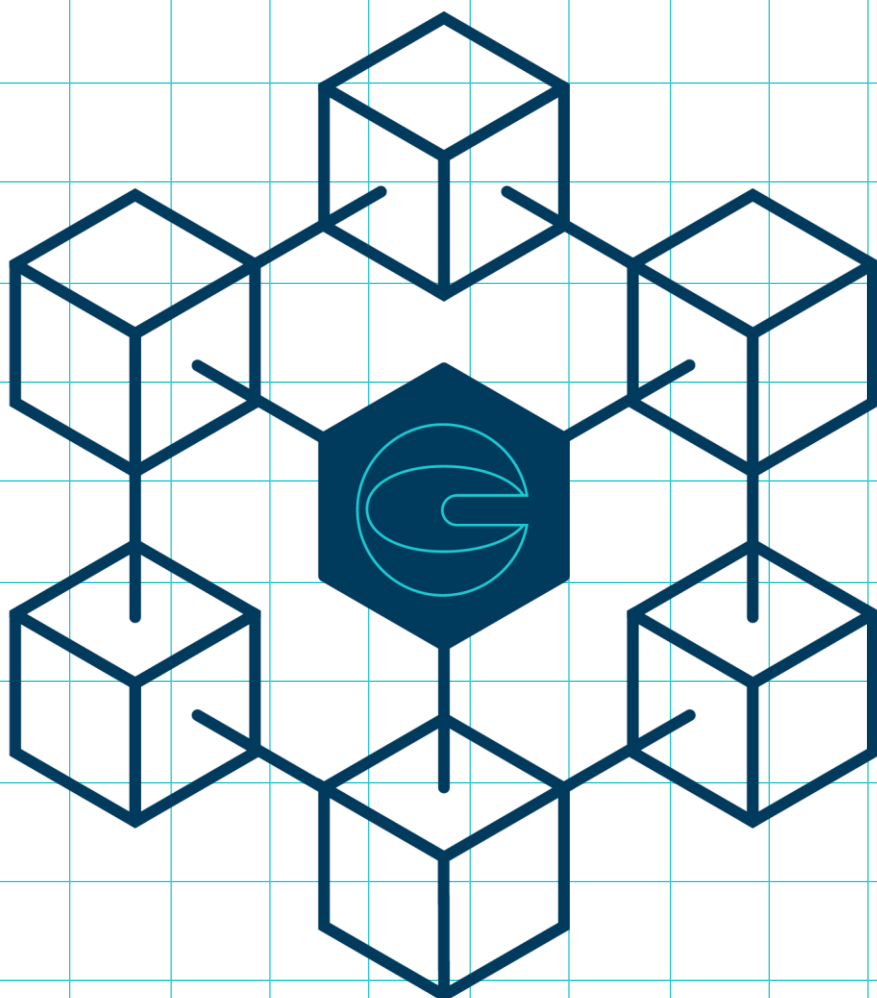
Strategy 2026 - 2030



**General
Chiropractic
Council**

The General Chiropractic Council:

Strategy 2026-2030



Summary

This outline sets out our strategic vision and direction for the next five years, to 2030.

Our vision and mission remain the same: to be a respected regulator of a trusted profession, enhancing professionalism in chiropractic care and ensuring the public can access high-quality care safely and confidently.

We are in a strong position having met the majority of our previous ambitions. However, we recognise there are opportunities for improvement in our work (both internal and external). In response, we propose three strategic aims:

1. We will uphold professional standards throughout the education and career of every chiropractor
2. We will deliver our core regulatory and registration activities to a high standard
3. We will collaborate to shape the profession's future

Each strategic aim is supported by deliverable objectives which we will pursue during the lifetime of this strategy.

Organisational effectiveness

To be an effective regulator, the GCC must be an effective organisation.

The factors we identify as key to our effectiveness as an organisation are our:

- People: the Council Members, staff and partners that deliver our work
- Colleagues and stakeholders in the wider chiropractic system
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Financial sustainability
- Resilience
- Digital infrastructure

We have set deliverable objectives to support our effectiveness as an organisation.

We will provide more detailed information on how we will achieve each aim in our annual business plans and through our website.

Setting the Scene

In our previous strategy (2022-2024) we set four strategic aims, to:

1. Place patients and their care at the centre of our work
2. Promote continuing chiropractic best practice, professionalism and value within the health and care system
3. Regulate effectively, efficiently, innovatively and inclusively
4. Enhance the nature and form of regulation for the future

We made significant progress by:

- Developing a stronger “patient voice”
- Introducing new education standards.
- Updating the Code to set enhanced standards of professionalism for registrants.
- Supporting the growth of the profession through the approval of new education programmes.
- Completing our first EDI action plan.

and shared details of our achievements in our annual reports¹ and publications on our website.

Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Reports

Our progress was recognised externally by the Professional Standards Authority:

- In 2022 we met 17 out of 18 PSA Standards.
- In 2023 we met all 18 of the PSA standards.
- In 2024 we met 17 of the 18 PSA standards
- In 2025 we met 17 of the 18 PSA standards, falling short on Standard 15 due to delays in fitness to practise investigations.

The pressures we face

We have been strongly advocating for regulatory reform for several years and will continue to do so. However, there is no prospect of wholesale legislative change over the next three years.

Our current rules and legislation are inflexible, outdated, and sometimes restrictive. This impacts both patients and registrants.

As a very small health and care regulator, we lack economies of scale, making our registration fees high. While we have never increased our fees, our income is put under pressure by rising costs. Our lean workforce impacts on our resilience with key individuals carrying significant responsibility, and we know that sometimes it can be difficult to contact us.

While we have invested in a “self-serve” online registration system, and an online case management system for Fitness to Practise, registrants tell us there are other areas for improvement and the interface is not always intuitive.

Acknowledging these challenges inspires us to make practical, lasting and meaningful improvements to how we serve our registrants, and how we protect patients and the public.

¹ General Chiropractic Council Publications. <https://www.gcc-uk.org/about-us/publications>

Our Aims

We will uphold professional standards throughout the education and career of every chiropractor

A fundamental role for a regulator is the setting of standards. We now have contemporary standards in place within the Code of Professional Practice, and Education Standards. Our task now is to build on those foundations and encourage and incentivise compliance to help chiropractors provide safe, high-quality care in the best interests of patients. We will work as part of the chiropractic system, alongside professional associations and the Royal College of Chiropractors, to develop and promote guidance, advice and best practice.

Chiropractors must keep their skills and knowledge current and their practice safe and effective through continuing professional development (CPD). Our model for CPD, and the processes in place for recording it, do not always align with the expectations of the profession. This is a missed opportunity.

The recent growth of chiropractic education programmes in the UK, and the expansion of domestic and international satellite programmes by existing UK providers, has been a success. However, we recognise the wider challenges within healthcare education and the impact on providers. Our focus is on maintaining quality and we do not have a role intervening in the oversight of the education market. We have a finite capacity to process new applications, which we do not anticipate changing.

We see the benefits of working within an international model of education that minimises the duplication created by accreditation bodies but not to the detriment of the high standards and statutory basis of GCC approval.

We will achieve this by

- Supporting registrants to meet the new standards within the Code of Professional Practice with learning, guidance and information.
- Supporting registrants to embed a culture of safety based on openness, candour, consent and inclusion.
- Working with the profession to redefine Continuing Professional Development (CPD) so that chiropractors remain fit to practise throughout their career, and patients and the public can have confidence in the profession.
- Seeking to balance our education work between recognition of new and satellite programmes; and the quality assurance of existing programmes; against the Education Standards. We will ensure all programmes produce graduates that are safe, fit to practise, and meet the needs of employers and the profession more widely.
- We will explore with international education accreditation bodies opportunities to minimise the burden on UK education providers in enabling international mobility of their graduates.

We will deliver our core regulatory and registration activities to a high standard

We are concerned, as are the PSA, that we take too long to process complaints in our Fitness to Practise (FTP) work. We have already recognised this and put in place steps to improve our performance, notably investing in a case management system.

Our FTP costs are high and consume a disproportionate share of our and others' time and resources. We aspire to a more proportionate approach that balances public protection with fairness and timeliness for complainants and registrants, while providing regulatory certainty and following good regulation practice.

Feedback from the monthly Pulse survey of registrants tells us that routine registration processes are harder than they need to be, and we can be difficult to contact and slow to respond. We want to increase our registration team capacity and develop better systems.

A small proportion of the register opt to pay a reduced (also known as non-practising) fee. We do not believe this option is in the best interests of the chiropractor (who remains subject to our CPD, standards and FTP requirements) or (if practising abroad) their patients (as we cannot guarantee indemnity insurance). Nor is it cost-effective for the GCC (as the fee does not cover the cost of administering registration). However, we acknowledge we do not fully understand the different circumstances of those who choose to pay this fee.

Registrants consistently tell us that they want us to act quickly and decisively in dealing with alleged breaches of protection of title (Section.32). While our current caseload is at a historic low and we act in every case, our enforcement policy is outdated, and we want to do more to enhance the value of registration and protect the public from unregistered individuals.

We will achieve this by

- Developing a more proportionate approach to fitness to practise – including exploring the adoption of an early resolution model to address concerns before they escalate to a complaint. We want to work alongside the complainant to reach an appropriate resolution. By dealing with risks, concerns and complaints proportionately we believe we can continue to safeguard the public, minimise the harms to complainants and provide a timelier resolution for registrants.
- Taking a customer-focused approach to routine registration processes, using insights from best practice, research and benchmarking to incrementally improve our services.
- Researching, and better understanding, the circumstances and motivations of registrants who pay the reduced fee. We will look to formalise our relationships with jurisdictions outside the UK that require GCC registration as a condition of practising as a chiropractor and consider if there is a case for continuing to offer the reduced fee.
- Developing and (following consultation) implementing a new approach to enforcing the protection of title of chiropractor to protect patients from unregulated and unregistered individuals.

We will collaborate to shape the profession's future

As a trusted and established regulator of a maturing profession, we strive to engage openly and inclusively with stakeholders to inform our direction. We listen to a wide range of views to inform our work in support of the development of the profession.

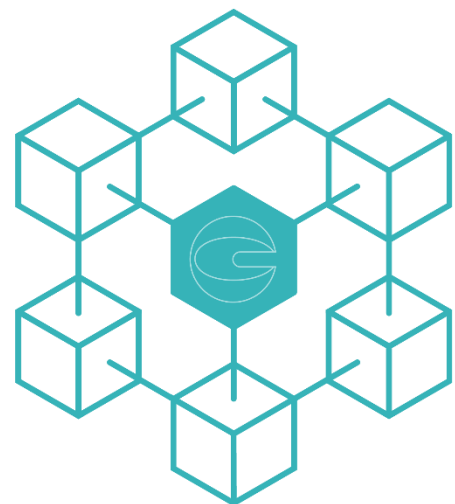
However, we recognise that our engagement can be reactive rather than structured and forward-looking. We want to strengthen relationships with patients, registrants, educators, and partner bodies to better inform our work, identify emerging concerns and act proportionately.

We value accessible healthcare for all patients. The Code of Professional Practice embeds our expectation that, as a healthcare professional, each chiropractor will continue to work to create inclusive workplaces and care provision where people are valued and barriers to care are removed. We can support the profession by helping to measure progress and highlight good practice.

Our current legal framework is a barrier to modern regulation. We want to develop a more inclusive and agile approach based on the principles of Right Touch Regulation set out by the Professional Standards Authority².

We believe we can be bolder, especially when there is a consensus for change. We will actively explore test and challenge the boundaries of our legal framework and develop policies and processes that meet the needs of modern regulation.

We recognise the value of recent research making the case for chiropractic care in meeting the growing musculoskeletal needs of the UK population within the wider public health and care system. We can leverage our resources, alongside other stakeholders in the system, to support the development of the profession.



² Right Touch Regulation involves assessing the level of risk of harm to the public, and deciding on the most proportionate and effective response to mitigate the risk. It recognises that regulation may not be the most appropriate approach. The principles identified by the PSA are that regulation should be: Proportionate, Consistent, Targeted, Transparent, Accountable and Agile.

<https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/improving-regulation/right-touch-regulation>

We will achieve this by

- Obtaining a consensus across the profession and our own stakeholders for a regulatory approach closer to the principles of Right Touch Regulation.
- Enhancing our stakeholder engagement through the UK Chiropractic Forum (UKCF)³, Chiropractic Patient Voice⁴ and other mechanisms.
- Enhancing our understanding of the public and patient perspective through research, including with people who have lived experience of barriers to accessing care and services. We will also measure and understand how attitudes towards inclusivity within the profession change over time. We will use these insights to shape our policies and decision-making and will share our findings with the profession.
- Encouraging a shared understanding of what 'developing the profession' (as referred to in our legislation) means for a maturing sector, and our role in supporting the development of the profession and growth of the register.
- Supporting the early-phase establishment of the National Centre for Chiropractic Research (NCCR)⁵. The NCCR aims to enable the development of coordinated and collaborative research across the UK education institutions.
- Considering further opportunities to provide short-term strategic resourcing, and other forms of collaboration, that will contribute to shared research and development goals to benefit the UK chiropractic profession.
- Collaborating with professional bodies and other stakeholders as they explore the potential for integration and recognition of chiropractic by the wider health and care sector.

³ The UK Chiropractic Forum is a discussive group bringing together the four UK professional associations, the Royal College of Chiropractors, the GCC and other bodies with an interest in the UK chiropractic profession.

⁴ Chiropractic Patient Voice exists to represent public and chiropractic patient viewpoints.
<https://rcc-uk.org/patients/chiropractic-patient-voice/>

⁵ The National Centre for Chiropractic Research (NCCR) will be based at Health Sciences University (HSU) in partnership with London South Bank University, McTimoney College, Teesside University, and the University of South Wales. <https://www.hsu.ac.uk/collaborative-national-centre-for-chiropractic-research-to-launch-in-2025/>

Our effectiveness as an organisation

To be an effective regulator requires an effective organisation. Being successful requires us to create the right environment to support delivery and enable innovation.

Our Sustainability

We are disciplined in controlling our expenditure and have seen a steady growth in registrations, increasing our income by an average of £91K annually over the last five years. However, providing our services at the current level requires an annual injection of £120K from interest received from our investment portfolio.

One of the reasons for this is the size of the GCC - we do not have the economies of scale of larger regulators. We are also vulnerable to 'single points of failure' - that is, one or two individuals responsible for key areas of work. In other organisations, knowledge and skills are distributed, providing greater resilience.

We are developing a financial strategy that will support a sustainable operating model with greater resilience while preventing increasing of fees. This will set transparent parameters for sustainability, investment and financial discipline as we explore changes to our operating model.

The last strategy period saw investment in IT systems, without which we could not function. We see opportunities to make best use of what we have rather than fundamental change. However, we acknowledge the developments in AI and want to establish operating principles for its use in our work so that we may explore opportunities for further business efficiencies and deeper data-driven insights.

We will achieve this by

- Developing a financial strategy that leverages our strong reserve position to enable investment in the new objectives set out in this strategy.
- Exploring how we can impact the overall financial burden on new graduates, and those taking a break from practice, while retaining our financial sustainability and working within our existing legal framework.
- Exploring alternative operating models (for instance partnerships, outsourcing or shared services) to generate efficiencies, build resilience and reduce the impact of bottlenecks and 'single points of failure'.
- Optimising our IT systems to support the improved FtP and registration processes, creating a streamlined efficient and user focused experience.
- Recognising opportunities to capitalise on the benefits of AI, especially in delivering insights and learning, to drive improvements in safer care.

Our People

We depend on our small staff team and wider network of partners (lay people and registrants serving on GCC committees and panels) to meet our duties and responsibilities.

We value the diversity of our team and recognise the benefits that our different life experiences bring to our work. Our workplace is one where everyone can thrive, contribute fully, and be proud to belong.

We are a responsible and supportive employer with a culture where people feel valued, included, and heard.

Our values:

- Togetherness
- Achievement
- Accountability
- Integrity

guide our day-to-day behaviours and leadership. We invest in learning and development for all, offering training, mentoring, opportunities to volunteer and to personally grow, develop and progress.

In April 2025, we agreed new terms with our partners and see this as an opportunity to develop deeper relationships with our partners and staff based on trust and collaboration.

We will achieve this by

- Strengthening openness, by introducing a 'Speak Up Guardian' role or similar, offering a safe and confidential way for staff and partners to raise concerns.
- Assessing our workplace culture through staff surveys, pulse checks, and feedback loops, and using these insights to foster a responsive and positive environment.
- Strengthening our communication with partners to build collaborative and closer working as well as respecting the role and independence of the decision-maker.

Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As a regulator we must make difficult decisions that can have a substantial impact on people's lives, and this strategy has outlined our aspiration to make these decisions in a more proportionate way. We are seeking fairer, objective and consistent decision-making that recognises and mitigates the risk of bias.

As we develop the policies and processes set out in this strategy to support our regulatory decision making, we will seek out and hear diverse perspectives, to benefit from the lived experience of those that face challenges interacting with us and use their insight to challenge bias in ourselves and others.

We intend to do this early in our development process – we want patients, students and registrants (particularly those with protected characteristics, and those who are directly impacted by a policy) to help us define the scope of the change being considered – not just its eventual impact.

In line with strategic aim 3, we will need to find new approaches and models to collaborate and engage with patients and chiropractors.

We will focus on action, leadership accountability, sharing our learning, and using evidence to drive progress. We do not see Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as an add-on, it is integral to our good governance, culture, and performance.

We will achieve this by

- Exploring how we can apply the model of High Impact Regulatory Decisions (developed by the General Medical Council) to our own work. We will identify and map the regulatory decisions we make, understand the inherent risks for bias and highlight the mitigations in place for those risks. We will train and support our decision-makers and conduct ongoing monitoring and research on the decisions taken.
- We will make our services more accessible. Where our rules are inflexible (affecting people unfairly) we will act. We have identified a specific need to consider how our rules affect registrants seeking time away from practice for maternity or childcare reasons.

As a public authority, our public functions are bound by the general Public Sector Equality Duty⁶, and we must have due regard to how our approach meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The objectives on this page, alongside our objective in strategic aim 3 (enhancing our understanding of the patient perspective), are in line with our legal duty to publish one or more equality objective at least every four years.

⁶ The Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities>

Measuring our achievements

We recognise that we act within a wider system and that regulatory interventions alone will often be insufficient, or inappropriate, to bring change. There may be a significant lag between an intervention and observable change, and it will often not be possible to attribute cause and effect.

Even so, it is important that we demonstrate our progress towards meeting this strategy. We will seek to track the direction of travel in a structured way by using a range of measures that provide a rounded picture of our work. We will acknowledge setbacks as well as progress and will look to measure what is important and relevant, not necessarily what is easy.

We value the opportunities for learning and innovation that external validation can provide, and will engage with statutory and voluntary mechanisms such as:

- Annual monitoring reports and thematic reviews from the Professional Standards Authority
- Reports from other organisations that regulate or consider our activities
- External Financial Stewardship audits
- Independent audits commissioned to consider specific areas of our work
- Participation in academic research projects such as the Witness to Harm project
- Accreditation and recognition schemes such as Cyber Essentials and the Disability Confident employment scheme

We will achieve this by

- Implementing a performance reporting framework that indicates the progress and delivery of business plan activities through public Council papers and in our annual report and accounts.
- Regularly sharing our achievements and progress with stakeholders.
- Measuring our effectiveness, and perceptions of our effectiveness, through qualitative and quantitative feedback including the Pulse survey of registrants
- Using the insights from the PSA Annual Monitoring Process (and other reports) as a catalyst for further development and innovation.
- Commissioning, as appropriate, external experts to audit or review specific areas of our performance.

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