

# Overview of Chiropractic Education 2026



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## Executive Summary

The 2024–25 academic year highlighted both the continued strengths and the emerging challenges facing chiropractic education across the UK. Annual monitoring activity identified consistently positive student experiences across providers, with students describing supportive learning environments, strong relationships with staff, and valuable clinical learning opportunities.

This overview also demonstrates progress in delivering strategic aim one of the GCC's Strategy 2026–2030: *We will uphold professional standards throughout the education and career of every chiropractor*. In particular, it highlights the GCC's continued focus on assuring high standards in chiropractic education through the application of its Education Standards, supporting recognised programmes to produce graduates who are safe, fit to practise and able to deliver high-quality care in the best interests of patients.

Providers continue to demonstrate innovation in areas including assessment design, simulation, digital learning technologies, interprofessional learning and inclusive educational practice. The increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) within teaching, learning and assessment was a notable theme across institutions, alongside continued development of governance frameworks to support safe and ethical use.

Student engagement remained a significant strength across recognised programmes, with providers demonstrating strong responsiveness to feedback and a commitment to continuous improvement. Students consistently reported feeling well supported academically and pastorally, and many providers demonstrated improvements in areas previously identified through annual monitoring processes.

The year also saw continued implementation of the GCC Clinical Placement Strategy. Work is underway to explore students' perceptions of how placements prepare them for professional practice and the future roles they may wish to undertake, with findings expected in 2026.

At the same time, the sector continues to face significant strategic challenges. Recruitment pressures, particularly within domestic student markets, remain a key concern across providers and reflect wider trends within UK higher education. Institutions highlighted the additional pressures associated with delivering small, resource-intensive healthcare programmes, particularly where these are four-year programmes that extend the period of financial and staffing commitment and where they do not benefit from NHS placement arrangements or student bursary support. The closure of the Teesside University chiropractic programme during the year highlights the ongoing sustainability challenges facing smaller healthcare disciplines.

Despite these pressures, programme teams demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining high-quality educational experiences and supporting positive student outcomes. Through its quality assurance and annual monitoring activities, the GCC continues to assure itself that recognised programmes meet the Education Standards and produce graduates who are safe, fit to practise and able to meet the needs of patients, employers and the wider profession.

Looking ahead, forthcoming changes to higher education funding arrangements through the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) may create new opportunities and challenges for chiropractic education providers, potentially influencing patterns of student recruitment, participation and programme delivery.

## Chiropractic Programmes in the UK

1. At the time of reporting there remain six recognised education providers in the UK delivering chiropractic qualifications:
  - Coventry University
  - Health Sciences University
  - London South Bank University
  - McTimoney College of Chiropractic
  - Teesside University
  - University of South Wales (Welsh Institute of Chiropractic)
2. Over the past year, the GCC Council has approved one new satellite degree programme at McTimoney College's Hong Kong campus. A full programme analysis and an in-person approval visit was undertaken in October 2025. The approval report can be found [here](#).
3. The GCC was notified in February 2026 by the Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences at Teesside University of the formal closure of the MSci Chiropractic programme, following significant challenges in student recruitment. The programme entered an immediate teach-out phase, with recruitment ceasing and arrangements put in place to ensure continuity of delivery and successful completion for current students. The GCC has introduced enhanced monitoring of the programme throughout the teach-out phase to provide assurance that Education Standards continue to be met and that appropriate support is in place for students until the final cohort has completed the programme.
4. At the time of reporting there were 1,499 chiropractic students enrolled across 12 approved chiropractic programmes, a decrease of 52 students compared to the same time last year.

## Clinical Placements

5. Following the publication of the GCC Clinical Placement Strategy in December 2024, which provides a framework for the consistent delivery of high-quality clinical placements across the UK chiropractic education landscape, work has continued to progress the strategy's key objectives.
6. In 2025, the GCC developed and published a Clinical Placements Toolkit to provide comprehensive guidance and support for individuals and institutions engaging in, or seeking to develop, clinical placements in chiropractic education. The toolkit aims to support educators, clinical supervisors and students by providing practical advice, examples of good practice and resources to enhance the quality and effectiveness of clinical placements. It has been designed to align with the GCC's Education Standards and to support high-quality learning experiences, effective supervision and patient safety.
7. As part of the ongoing implementation of the strategy, research is currently underway to explore students' views on how clinical placements prepare them for professional practice and the future roles they may wish to undertake. The study is scheduled for completion in December 2026.

## Annual Monitoring Reviews

8. Annual monitoring identified strong student outcomes across recognised programmes. All providers reported student continuation and completion data above the Office for Students (OfS) B3 metrics threshold. Additionally, where formal progression data into employment or further study was available, this too was above the OfS threshold.

### Key themes across the sector:

#### 9. Student Experience, Support and Engagement

Feedback from students across all recognised programmes remained overwhelmingly positive. Students consistently described programme teams as approachable, supportive and responsive to feedback. Strong staff-student relationships were repeatedly highlighted as central to the student experience, with many students reporting that staff demonstrated genuine interest in their wellbeing, progression and professional development.

Students particularly valued:

- supportive programme cultures,
- personalised academic support,
- accessible teaching staff,
- strong clinical supervision,
- opportunities for one-to-one feedback discussions,
- and opportunities to contribute to programme development.

Many students also reflected positively on the gradual development of confidence and professional identity throughout their studies, particularly through increasing exposure to practical and clinical learning environments.

Hybrid and flexible learning approaches continued to be valued by students, particularly those balancing study alongside caring responsibilities, employment or long commutes.

Student engagement remained a significant strength across recognised programmes. Students consistently reported that programme teams actively sought and responded to feedback through:

- regular course representative meetings,
- student-staff forums,
- informal communication channels,
- and ongoing curriculum review activity.

Across providers, students recognised improvements resulting directly from feedback, particularly in areas such as:

- timetabling,
- assessment structures,
- communication processes,
- and learning resources.

This responsiveness contributed positively to students' sense of belonging, engagement and partnership within their programmes.

## **10. Clinical Education and Practice-Based Learning**

Clinical learning remained a significant strength across recognised programmes. Students consistently described clinic experiences as highly valuable in developing confidence, communication skills, reasoning abilities and preparedness for independent practice.

Several providers reported continued enhancement of clinical education models, including:

- earlier clinical exposure,
- expanded placement opportunities,
- competency-based approaches,
- simulation-based learning,
- and strengthened rehabilitation and clinical facilities.

Students particularly valued exposure to multidisciplinary and healthcare environments during placements, although opportunities for formal interprofessional learning within curricula remained variable across institutions. These developments support the GCC's strategic objective of ensuring recognised programmes produce graduates who are safe, fit to practise and prepared to deliver high-quality patient care.

## 11. Recruitment and Sustainability

Recruitment pressures continued to represent one of the most significant strategic concerns across the sector. Multiple providers reported ongoing challenges in domestic recruitment despite extensive outreach activity, marketing initiatives and engagement with schools and prospective students.

Programme teams highlighted broader sector pressures affecting recruitment, including:

- demographic changes,
- increased competition across higher education,
- financial pressures on prospective students,
- and the absence of NHS bursary arrangements available to some allied health professions.

Several institutions also reflected on the sustainability challenges associated with delivering small, clinically intensive healthcare programmes requiring specialist facilities and staffing.

Despite these concerns, providers demonstrated proactive approaches to widening participation, diversifying recruitment pathways and strengthening engagement with prospective students.

## 12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Providers continued to demonstrate strong engagement with equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) priorities. Institutions described a range of approaches to:

- widening participation,
- supporting students requiring additional support,
- addressing attainment gaps,
- embedding inclusive teaching approaches,
- and promoting diverse patient perspectives within curricula.

A number of providers highlighted increasing numbers of students requiring additional support, particularly in relation to neurodiversity, wellbeing and caring responsibilities. Students generally reported positive experiences of support arrangements and described staff as proactive in signposting institutional services.

Inclusive assessment design, flexible learning approaches and individualised support planning were identified as areas of continued development.

## 13. Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation

The growing influence of artificial intelligence within higher education and healthcare emerged as a major theme across annual monitoring discussions.

Providers reported increasingly structured approaches to AI integration, including:

- institutional AI frameworks,
- assessment guidance,
- ethical governance arrangements,
- and opportunities for students to critically evaluate AI within healthcare practice.

Students described using AI tools to:

- support revision,
- clarify concepts,
- generate ideas,
- and test understanding.

Programme teams emphasised the importance of ensuring students develop critical evaluation skills and avoid overreliance on AI-generated content.

Alongside AI developments, institutions continued to expand the use of digital technologies including:

- simulation laboratories,
- electronic health records,
- digital anatomy platforms,
- interactive teaching spaces,
- and digital clinical documentation systems.

## Looking Ahead

The current higher education landscape continues to present significant challenges for chiropractic education providers. Recruitment pressures, financial constraints and changing student expectations are likely to remain key considerations across the sector in the coming years.

In England, the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) from 2027 represents a significant reform of student funding arrangements and may influence future patterns of participation in higher education. While the full implications for chiropractic education remain uncertain, the LLE has the potential to create new opportunities for flexible and lifelong learning pathways, particularly for mature learners and those seeking to retrain. At the same time, it may present challenges for programmes traditionally delivered through integrated full-time study routes.

Annual monitoring activity continues to identify considerable strengths within recognised programmes, including high levels of student satisfaction, strong clinical education, supportive learning environments and continued innovation in teaching and assessment.

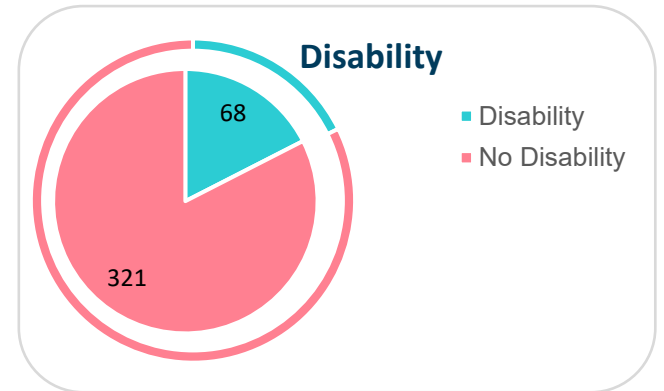
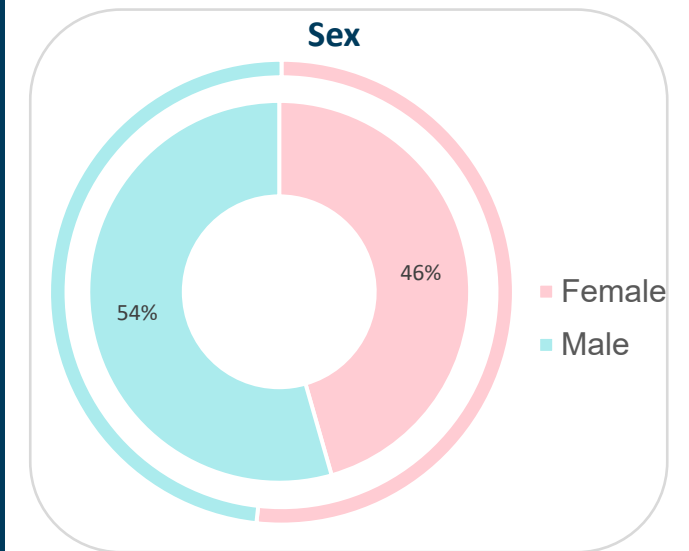
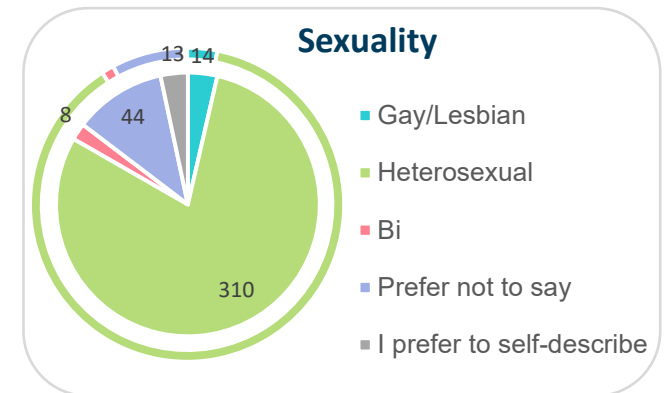
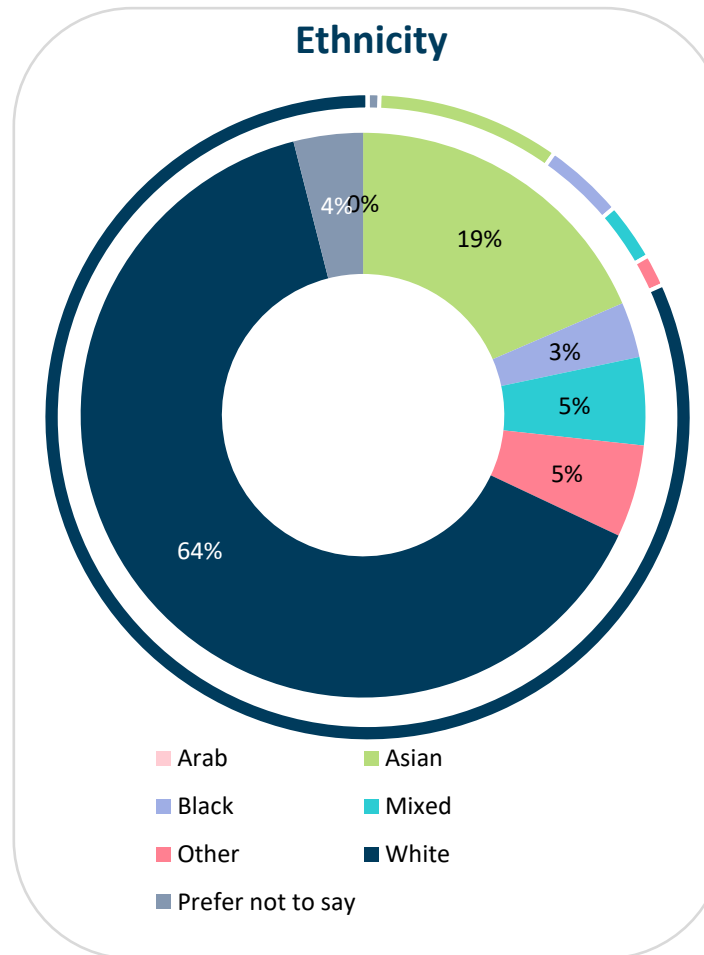
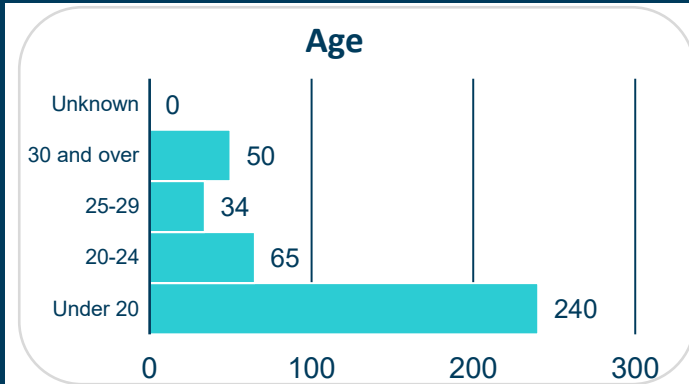
The increasing focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, digital capability and AI literacy also presents opportunities for chiropractic education to continue evolving in response to changing healthcare environments.

Providers will need to consider how developments in student funding, learner expectations and workforce demands may shape the future design and delivery of chiropractic education. The GCC will continue working closely with recognised providers to support high standards in chiropractic education and to ensure that graduates are prepared to practise safely, effectively and professionally within contemporary healthcare systems.

# Appendix A – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion characteristics of student intake



## Diversity of Chiropractic Student Intake - 2023/24 Entry

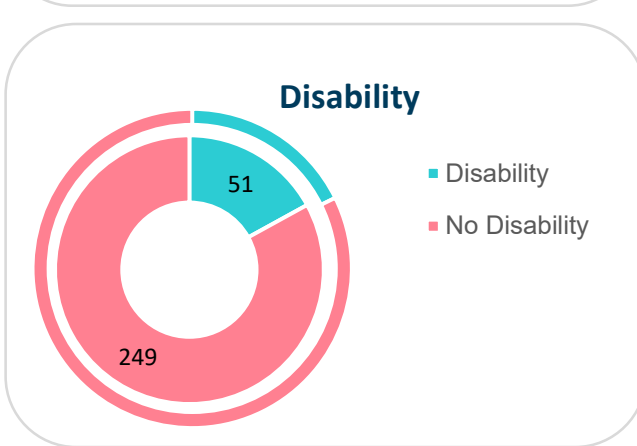
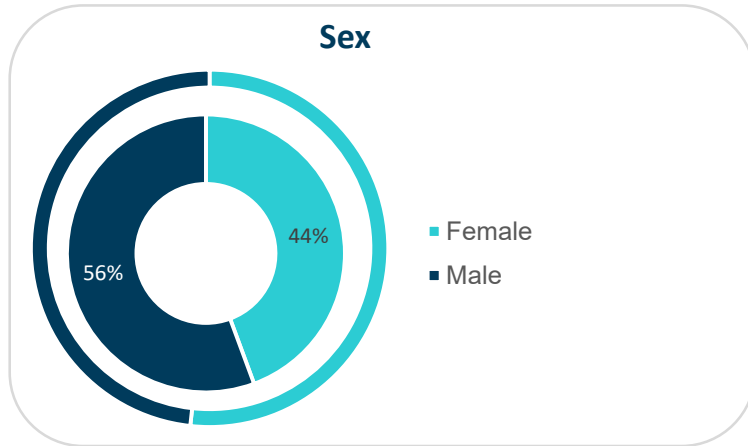
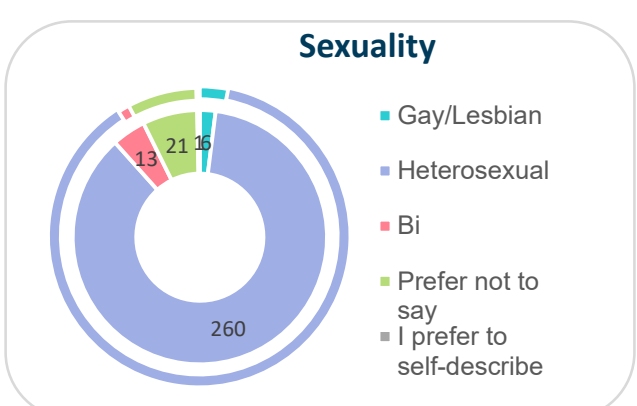
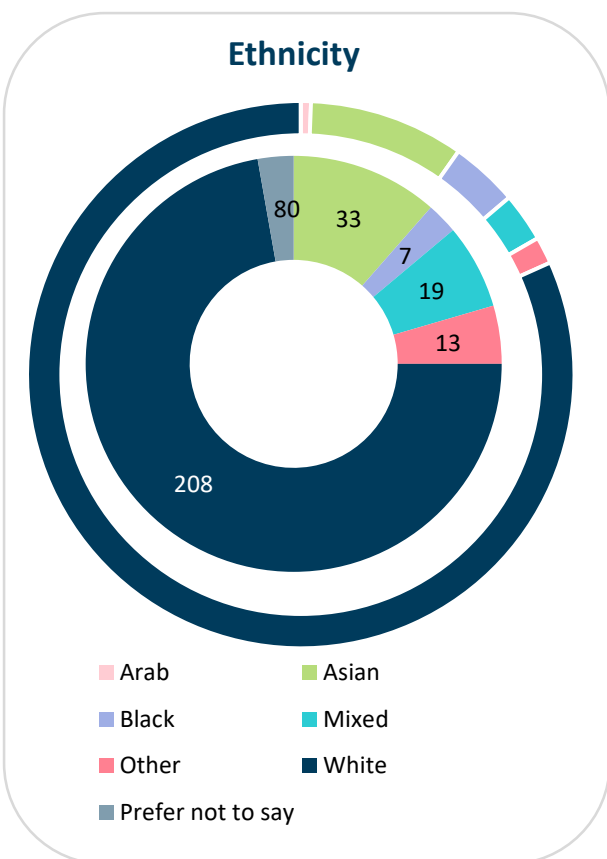
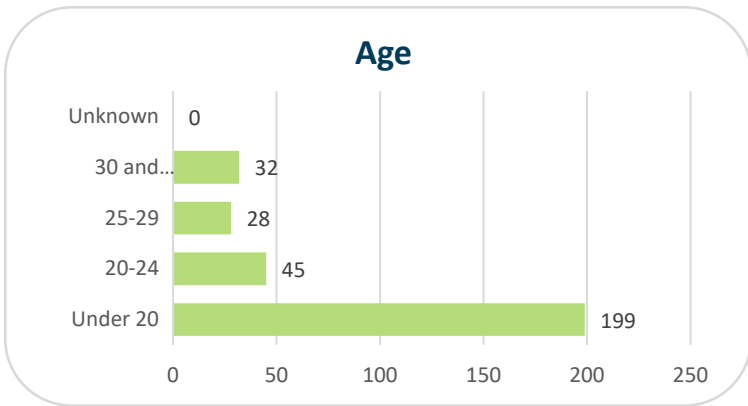


Outer ring shows comparison to UK Population (2021 Census)

### Commentary and items of note:

Ethnicity data from McTimoney College Madrid has been coded as "other" due to UK-centric question wording.

# Diversity of Chiropractic Student Intake - 2024/25 Entry



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