

General Chiropractic Council

Monitoring report

2024/25

The General Chiropractic Council regulates
Chiropractors in the UK.

There were:

3,993

chiropractors on the register
as at 30 June 2025

This report covers
the period 1 July 2024
to 30 June 2025

Key findings and areas for improvement

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The GCC continues to perform well against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Standard. It has carried out an impressive volume of activity for a regulator of its size. The GCC's work on EDI is clearly recognised and welcomed by its stakeholders, some of whom mentioned starting to see evidence of positive impacts within the profession. A gap which we identified last year in the GCC's fitness to practise guidance remains, but the GCC is working to address this through updates that will also support the implementation of its new Code of Professional Practice for registrants. We will monitor the GCC's work to address this gap.

The Code of Professional Practice

After extensive pre-consultation work last year and a public consultation this year, the GCC published its new Code of Professional Practice, which sets the standards expected of registrants. The GCC is updating its existing guidance to support the implementation of the new Code and is also identifying topics where new guidance may help registrants to apply the standards. We will monitor the implementation of the new Code, which takes effect from 1 January 2026, and the accompanying guidance.

Fitness to Practise timeliness

The GCC did not meet Standard 15 last year because it was taking too long to investigate fitness to practise cases. The GCC implemented improvement measures last year and introduced further measures this year to improve timeliness. Improvements have not yet materialised and timeliness remains largely the same as last year. We concluded that the GCC did not meet Standard 15.

Risk management and interim orders

The GCC took action to address our concerns from last year about its interim order process and its guidance. It has a risk assessment process in place and takes action when it identifies risk. We identified issues on an extremely small number of cases (one this year and one last year), but did not consider this to indicate that the GCC is failing to identify and prioritise serious cases. We decided that Standard 17 is met. Next year is a periodic review, which provides an opportunity for us to review the GCC's risk management in more detail.

Standards met: 17 out of 18



**General
Standards**

5 out of 5



**Guidance and
Standards**

2 out of 2



**Education
and Training**

2 out of 2



Registration

4 out of 4



Fitness to Practise

4 out of 5

Previous years

2023/24

17 out of 18

2022/23

18 out of 18

Our performance review process

We have a statutory duty to report annually to Parliament on the performance of the 10 regulators we oversee. We do this by reviewing each regulator's performance against our Standards of Good Regulation and reporting what we find. The judgements we make against each Standard incorporate a range of evidence to form an overall picture of performance. Meeting a Standard means that we are satisfied, from the evidence we have seen, that a regulator is performing well in that area. It does not mean there is no room for improvement. Where we identify areas for improvement, we pay particular attention to them as we continue to monitor the performance of the regulator. Similarly, finding that a regulator has met all of the Standards does not mean perfection. Rather, it signifies good performance in the 18 areas we assess.

Our performance reviews are carried out on a three-year cycle; every three years, we carry out a more intensive 'periodic review' and in the other two years we monitor performance and produce shorter monitoring reports. Find out more about our review process [here](#). We welcome hearing from people and organisations who have experience of the regulators' work. We take this information into account alongside other evidence as we review the performance of each regulator.

General Standards

The GCC met all five General Standards this year.

These five Standards cover a range of areas including: providing accurate, accessible information; clarity of purpose; equality, diversity and inclusion; reporting on performance and addressing organisational concerns; and consultation and engagement with stakeholders to manage risk to the public.

This section of our report mainly focuses on Standard 3 because this is our second year of using our new approach to assessing the regulators against this Standard. More information is available on [our website](#), including our guidance document and our evidence framework.

The GCC's communications and information-sharing

Last year, we received reports that some people experienced difficulties contacting or getting responses from the GCC. By the end of the last review period, the GCC had filled staff vacancies and made improvements to its registration system to help people get information. We said we would monitor for any evidence that the actions taken by the GCC had been effective.

The GCC's monthly pulse surveys¹ indicate that some registrants do not yet have full confidence that the GCC is approachable and easy to contact. The GCC has explained that during particular times of year, such as when annual retention or CPD submissions are due, there is increased demand for their services which can create challenges for a small team. In its draft Corporate Strategy, the GCC recognises the feedback from registrants and commits to finding ways to improve their experience of the GCC and its processes.

We received positive comments from the GCC's stakeholders about the GCC's communications. Some highlighted the newsletter and LinkedIn channels as particularly helpful sources of information. There is clear evidence of the GCC sharing information about its work through a number of different channels. Its standards, guidance and FTP decisions are easily accessible on its website. It held several in-person events this year as it developed changes to its standards for registrants, *The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for chiropractors* (The Code).

We concluded that the GCC's overall performance in providing information about its work was positive and it met Standard 1.

Our assessment of the GCC's performance against Standard 3

As part of our new approach, we have broken down the Standard into four separate outcomes. For a regulator to meet the Standard, we would need to be assured that the

¹ In November 2023, the GCC started sending monthly pulse surveys with its newsletter to a rotating sample of 10% of registrants. Respondents are asked to rate their confidence in different aspects of the GCC's work, using a scale of 1 – 5. Findings are reported at every public Council meeting.

regulator has met all four of the outcomes. Our assessment of the GCC's performance against the four outcomes is set out below.

Outcome 1: The regulator has appropriate governance, structures and processes in place to embed EDI across its regulatory activities

The GCC's EDI Working Group led on the implementation of the EDI action plan 2022-24, with Council maintaining oversight through regular progress updates. The action plan ended in December 2024 and the GCC is developing its future EDI plans in conjunction with the development of its new Corporate Strategy, which it recently consulted on. In the meantime, the GCC continues to carry out EDI-related activities, such as recruiting EDI Champions. When it consulted on proposed changes to The Code, the GCC published an Equality Impact Assessment with a detailed analysis of the anticipated impacts on different groups.

Outcome 2: In terms of EDI, the regulator ensures that registrants and students are equipped to provide appropriate care to all patients and service users, and have appropriate EDI knowledge and skills

The GCC's **Education Standards** and **The Code** for registrants contain requirements which ensure registrants and students are equipped to provide appropriate care to all. Last year, we identified a number of examples of good practice against this Outcome, including: the focus on EDI in the GCC's Education Standards; additional guidance produced for education providers; and EDI learning resources produced for registrants.

This year, we noted the GCC's work to update The Code (discussed further under Guidance and Standards) which will strengthen the EDI requirements for registrants, such as by including a new active requirement to promote EDI and challenge discrimination. The changes come into effect in January 2026 and the GCC will be updating its existing guidance and developing new guidance to support the changes. We will monitor this work.

Outcome 3: In terms of EDI, the regulator makes fair decisions across all regulatory functions

The GCC provides mandatory EDI training to all staff and partners, including Investigating Committee (IC) and Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) members. Training is tailored according to role.

The GCC also collects and uses EDI data and other evidence to reduce the potential for bias in its processes and ensure it is making fair decisions. This year, it undertook a thematic review of 50 cases closed by the PCC between 2020 and 2024. It found no statistically significant links between EDI issues and PCC cases. The review recognised the limitations of the analysis due to the small numbers and made recommendations for future studies, which the GCC is considering. The GCC is also using the findings from the 'Witness to Harm' research² to inform a review of its FTP templates and materials.

² **Research conducted to understand the experience of people acting as witnesses in fitness to practise processes.**

Ongoing Opportunity for Improvement

Last year, we noted that the GCC's three key FTP guidance and process documents have clear references to The Code but do not mention racist or other discriminatory behaviour apart from in the context of criminal proceedings or vulnerable witnesses. The GCC had identified this gap for itself and committed to updating these documents as part of its planned work to update all its guidance to reflect the new Code. This work is underway but will extend beyond this review period, so the gap remains for now. We will monitor progress.

Outcome 4: The regulator engages with and influences others to advance EDI issues and reduce unfair differential outcomes

The GCC carried out a range of activities relevant to this Outcome: including:

- engaging with diverse stakeholders and applying findings from last year's EDI surveys of registrants and the public during its work to update The Code
- working with its Patient Community as part of research on patients' perspectives of professional boundaries
- reviewing the focused reflection on EDI in its 2023/24 CPD year
- making use of university research projects.

The GCC plans to expand membership of its EDI Working Group in 2025, introducing paid roles for patients and students. We welcome this decision as it is a way of making these roles more accessible to a wider range of people.

Stakeholders were complimentary about the GCC's EDI work. The GCC was described as having "set a great example to the profession by taking a robust approach to ED&I" and "leading in this area."

“I have observed significant collaboration with diverse professional groups and patient communities which I believe has helped to promote greater awareness and representation within chiropractic practice.”

“...the GCC required all registrants to reflect on their approach to ED&I as part of their directed CPD initiative. This significantly raised and facilitated conversations around ED&I within the profession and this subject regularly features in our meetings and discussions with the profession.”

“Their communications always highlight their focus on EDI. Already there is a perceptible change in the demographics/social backgrounds of the students and new entrants to the profession. That has to be down to the work that the GCC is doing to make the profession more open and welcoming.”

Examples of the impact stakeholders have seen

The GCC continues to perform well against Standard 3 and met all four outcomes. The GCC's work on EDI is clearly recognised and welcomed by their stakeholders, some of whom mentioned starting to see evidence of positive impacts within the profession. We also welcome the GCC's use of the 'Witness to Harm' research as an example of the impact of research on improving practice. The gap in the GCC's fitness to practise guidance remains and needs to be addressed, but the GCC is taking steps to do so. The timescale for this work is understandably tied to the implementation of the new Code and appears reasonable. The volume of activity is impressive for a regulator of the GCC's size. We commend the GCC's commitment to EDI being underpinned by action.

Stakeholder engagement

We have seen lots of examples of the GCC working with its stakeholders to identify and manage risks to the public in respect of its registrants. One notable example this year was its consultation on changes to The Code. It provided a variety of ways for people to give their views and published a **consultation report** explaining how it took those views into

account when finalising the changes. The GCC also engaged with stakeholders across the education sector and the profession to develop a **Clinical Placement Strategy 2025-30** for chiropractic education and formed a working group made up of representatives from multiple stakeholder bodies to inform a response to a coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths report.

The GCC's efforts were very well-received by most of its stakeholders, with particular praise for the way the GCC developed changes to The Code. Two stakeholders indicated a desire for more engagement with the GCC and highlighted aspects that they thought could be improved. We shared their suggestions with the GCC.

“In respect of the Code, the GCC has undertaken a wide-reaching consultation process, engaging not only with experts within the chiropractic profession but also with stakeholders from broader healthcare and regulatory sectors. This inclusive approach has ensured that diverse perspectives have been considered, strengthening the credibility and applicability of the new Code.”

“The GCC actively seeks feedback and remains open to diverse perspectives, particularly in areas such as regulatory updates and professional standards. Their consultative approach fosters meaningful dialogue and continuous improvement within the profession.”

“The Code consultation was one of the most impressive examples of genuine consultation, where people were really listened to. I am grateful for the huge amount of time the GCC team invested in this.”

Stakeholder feedback

Guidance and Standards

The GCC met both Standards for Guidance and Standards this year.

New standards for registrants

Following an extensive consultation process, the GCC published its new, re-named standards for registrants, The Code of Professional Practice (the new Code), in December 2024. It will take effect on 1 January 2026.

The new Code has the same overall structure and intent of the current Code, with overarching principles supported by more detailed standards. The GCC has retained the eight existing Principles and introduced two new ones relating to good governance and working with others. The GCC has also introduced four values to underpin the principles:

1. Patient-centred care
2. Honesty, integrity and transparency
3. Safety and quality
4. Professionalism

Overall, we welcomed the changes – in particular, the explicit patient-centred requirements and requirements for registrants to be more proactive about things like asking what matters to the patient and identifying and controlling risks.

Stakeholders were mostly positive about the way the GCC developed and consulted on changes to The Code, although one group has concerns about the application of some standards in practice. We will monitor the implementation of the new Code. But for this review period, we have not seen evidence that gives rise to concerns about the current Code.

Guidance for registrants

The GCC helps registrants apply the standards by producing its own guidance and providing signposting to other relevant guidance. It published a new Managing Patient Data toolkit for registrants this year. It also used its newsletter and social media channels to signpost registrants to other sources of advice and guidance, such as the Royal College of Chiropractors and the Advertising Standards Authority. The GCC is developing a toolkit for registrants on diagnostic imaging and guidance on maintaining boundaries. It is also identifying topics for further guidance that might be useful in supporting registrants to adapt to the new Code. We will monitor this work.

Education and Training

The GCC met both Standards for Education and Training this year.

Clinical Placement Strategy 2025-30

The GCC worked with, and consulted, stakeholders to develop this strategy, which was published in December 2024. It is aimed at ensuring delivery of high-quality and consistent clinical placements across the UK. To achieve this, it sets five strategic objectives and provides examples of activities to meet each one. We welcome the GCC's collaborative approach in working towards high standards for students.

Quality assurance of education and training

The GCC has not changed its quality assurance processes, which we previously considered risk-based and proportionate. The GCC has had a busy year in terms of quality assurance activity:

- continuing to assess existing qualifications against the Education Standards that were introduced in March 2023. All programmes now meet the new standards
- assessing and approving substantive changes notified to them by four education providers
- assessing and approving (with conditions) a new Master of Chiropractic degree programme
- assessing and approving (with conditions) four new satellite programmes
- Carrying out routine monitoring activity.

Registration

The GCC met all four Standards for Registration this year.

Accuracy of the Register

Last year, a serious error in the Register (caused by human error) prompted the GCC to implement new guidance and checks to ensure the accuracy of its Register. We monitored the effectiveness of the GCC's new measures through our routine checks of the Register. We were satisfied the GCC's controls worked effectively this year because all of the Register entries we checked were accurate and as expected.

Registration processes

The GCC continues to process UK and international applications for registration promptly. Stakeholders were positive about the transparency and efficiency of the registration processes but identified room for improvement in the retention process and there were reports of some applicants finding the Test of Competence process challenging and expensive. No concerns were raised about registration decisions or the fairness or proportionality of the GCC's registration processes.

The GCC recognises its registration system needs improvement and has started making incremental changes to improve the experience for registrants. We will continue to monitor this work and its impact.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

On the final weekend for 2023-24 CPD submissions, the GCC's CPD portal experienced a glitch caused by a routine software update. The GCC issued a public apology, extended the deadline, and wrote to registrants who were directly affected. It identified and implemented learning from what happened.

For 2024-25, the GCC has chosen the duty of candour as the topic for registrants' focused reflection. To support registrants with this, it started publishing monthly case studies on this topic in its newsletter from September 2024. One stakeholder has questioned the GCC's approach and remit in setting a 'focused element' of CPD. We will monitor the

outcome of this dialogue but currently remain satisfied that the GCC’s CPD requirements are proportionate.

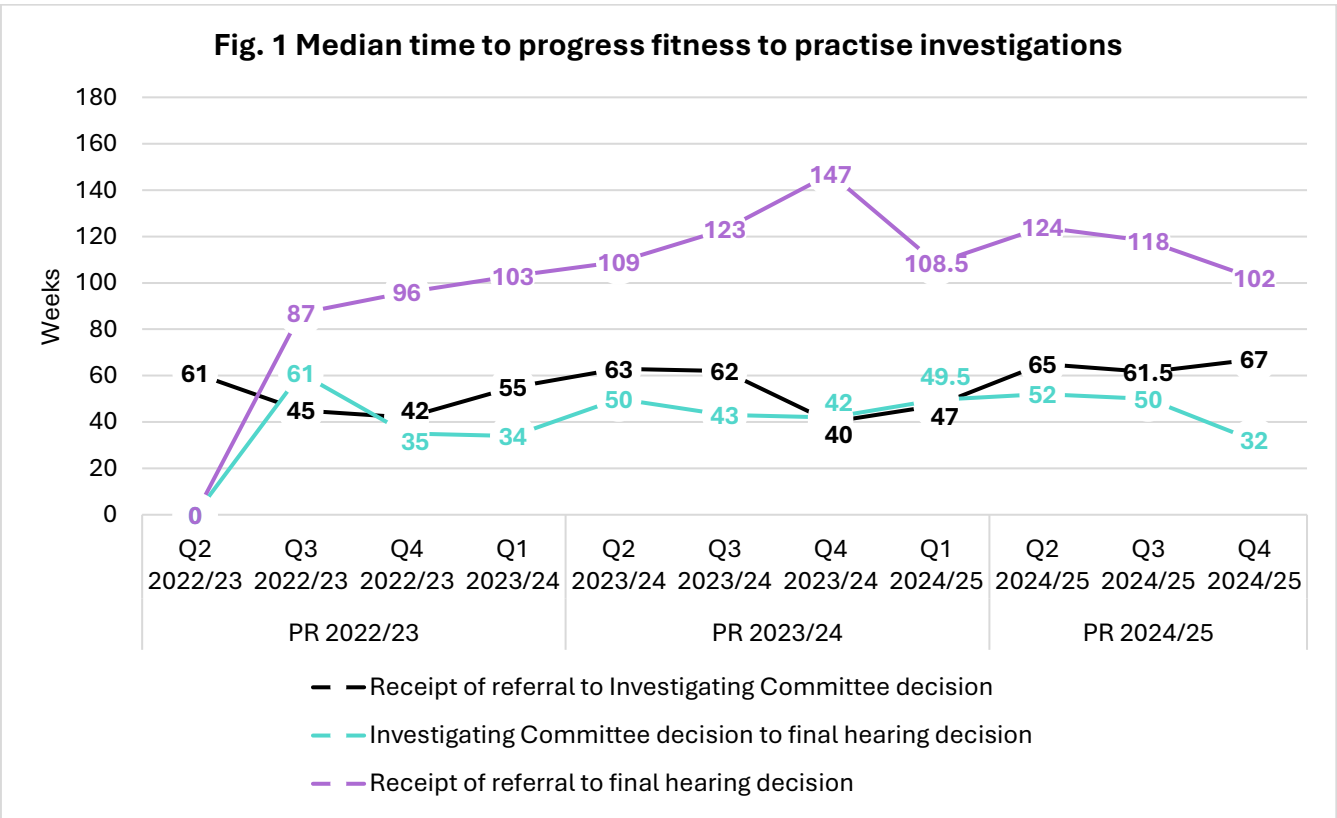
Fitness to Practise

The GCC met four of five Standards for Fitness to Practise. The GCC met Standards 14, 16, 17 and 18 and did not meet Standard 15.

Time taken to progress cases

The GCC did not meet Standard 15 last year because it was taking too long to investigate fitness to practise cases. Figure 1 shows that timeliness has not significantly improved this year, and this was reflected in the feedback we received from stakeholders. The GCC implemented various improvement measures last year but recognises the intended improvements have not yet materialised. It took further action this year to help progress cases, including appointing two new Chairs to the Professional Conduct Committee and launching a new Case Management System. It is positive that the GCC acknowledges the position and is working to improve it.

We do not have any concerns about the GCC’s investigation processes and stakeholders were positive about this aspect of the GCC’s work. However, we decided Standard 15 is not met because timeliness has not yet improved.



Risk management and interim orders

The GCC typically applies for less than 10 interim orders (IOs) each year. Last year, we examined the circumstances of one case in which the GCC took a long time to apply for

the IO. We identified opportunities for improvement in the GCC's process and decision-making guidance and said we expected our concerns to be resolved promptly.

This year:

- We examined another IO case because of the time it took the GCC to apply for the IO. The case had similar characteristics to the case we reviewed last year, in terms of its complexity and the reasons for delays, which were not all within the GCC's control.
- The GCC updated its guidance documents in September 2024 and October 2024 to ensure a clear focus on consideration of risk.
- The GCC discussed IOs at its annual Investigating Committee training day in October 2024, including the points we raised last year.

Evidence from recent years, including data from all of the GCC's IO hearings in 2021/22 and an audit of fitness to practise cases in 2022/23, indicated no concerns about the GCC's approach to managing risk. It is clear that the GCC has a risk assessment process in place and the evidence shows that it takes action when it identifies risk.

The GCC has taken action to address our concerns from last year and we do not consider the issues identified on an extremely small number of cases indicate that the GCC is failing to identify and prioritise serious cases. We decided that Standard 17 is met. Next year is a periodic review, which provides an opportunity for us to review the GCC's risk management in more detail.

Support for people involved in fitness to practise cases

In recognition of the impact the fitness to practise process can have on registrants, the GCC launched a new free Emotional Support Service for registrants under investigation. It is provided by an independent and confidential third-party organisation and registrants can self-refer or be referred for support. This new service complements the existing service available for patients provided by Victim Support.

Quick links/find out more

- Find out more about [our performance review process](#)
- Read the [GCC's 2023/24 performance review](#)
- Read [our Standards of Good Regulation](#)
- Read [our new evidence framework for Standard 3](#)
- Read [Lessons from meeting our EDI Standard for regulators - good practice guide](#)



020 7389 8030
info@professionalstandards.org.uk
professionalstandards.org.uk

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