



# Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2017/18

Regulator reviewed: **General Chiropractic Council**

## Key facts & figures:

- Regulates the practice of **chiropractors** in the **United Kingdom**
- **3,255** professionals on register and recognises and assures the quality of **five degree programmes** at **three educational institutions**
- **£750** fee for initial registration; the fee for retention is **£800**. (The GCC offers a reduced fee of **£100** for those not intending to practise.)



## Standards of good regulation

### Core functions

Annual performance review 2017/18

### Met

(number of Standards)

Guidance & Standards

4/4

Education & Training

4/4

Registration

6/6

Fitness to Practise

10/10

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[www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performancereviews](http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performancereviews)

# Focus on: **Activities and actions demonstrating how the GCC is meeting the Standards**

The GCC has met all 24 of our Standards of Good Regulation. This is an improvement in its performance.

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## **GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS: ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE HELPS REGISTRANTS APPLY STANDARDS**

The GCC updated its *Guidance on Advertising to the Public* in January 2018 to reflect guidance issued by the Advertising Standards Authority/Committee on Advertising Practice in relation to chiropractic treatment of babies and children. The GCC/ASA sent a joint letter to all GCC registrants and also shared it with the four professional chiropractic associations and with the Royal College of Chiropractors ahead of publication.

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## **REGISTRATION: EVERYONE CAN EASILY ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT REGISTRANTS**

We carried out a targeted review of this Standard following the GCC's review of data published on its website search function. Two issues gave us cause for concern: irregularities we identified as part of a random search of the register; and possible confusion caused by the GCC's decision to publish two separate sources of information about its registrants to comply with its legislation. The importance of allowing public access to accurate and up-to-date information about registrants is an integral part of public protection. We obtained further information from the GCC. The GCC investigated and worked to resolve the issue around irregularities; it also explained how it would clarify to the public the two different sources of information on its registrants. We concluded that the GCC has taken sufficient steps to resolve these issues and therefore consider this Standard remains met.

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## **FITNESS TO PRACTISE: THE REGULATOR WILL DETERMINE IF THERE IS A CASE TO ANSWER**

We carried out a targeted review of this Standard to learn how the GCC is managing complaints about registrant advertising. Since 2015 it has received 339 complaints – all from the same complainant. The GCC categorises these complaints and is processing them in batches of 50. We audited four advertising cases closed by the Investigating Committee and identified significant delays in each case. Whilst the progress has clearly been slow, the throughput of the cases needs to be considered in the context of the GCC's fitness to practise process which does not allow for the closure of such cases at an early stage. Further, as a small regulator with limited resources, we understand that these cases have put the GCC under significant pressure. Our review assured us that the GCC has developed a plan to progress these cases and, therefore, this Standard is met.

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## **FITNESS TO PRACTISE: CASES ARE PRIORITISED/DEALT WITH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE**

Last year we conducted a targeted review of this Standard due to an increase in the median time taken from receipt of complaint to the final IC decision, an increase in the number of older cases, and because the GCC had not been meeting its own internal target of concluding 90 per cent of IC cases within nine months of receiving the complaint. As part of our audit for Standard 3, we identified significant delays in the four advertising cases closed by the IC. We concluded that although there were delays present in the advertising caseload, these were not representative of the GCC's wider caseload. We will monitor the GCC's progress with its advertising caseload over the next performance review period as well as the relevant data about its wider fitness to practise caseload.

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## **FITNESS TO PRACTISE: ALL PARTIES ARE KEPT UPDATED ON PROGRESS**

The GCC has failed to meet this Standard in its three previous performance reviews due to significant shortcomings in customer service. Our review of 23 cases highlighted some continuing concerns. However, many of these concerns relate to activity that took place some time ago. The GCC has introduced changes to its fitness to practise processes which should prevent similar concerns arising in the future. Although the audit continued to identify concerns with the customer service provided by the GCC, we consider that the concerns identified have reduced when compared to our last audit. We did not identify any serious customer service concerns and considered that there was evidence that the GCC took account of the needs of parties, as well as provided a generally good level of customer service in its communications. The GCC was able to demonstrate an improvement in customer service provided. This evidence has enabled us to conclude that this Standard is met.