

## Code of Conduct - Members of the GCC

### Corporate Responsibilities

1. Members of Council are elected/appointed to perform the statutory duties of the Council set out in:
  - The Chiropractors Act 1994 and associated Statutory Instruments
  - All other legislation which imposes general or specific duties on the Council as a public body and as an employer.
2. Members of Council have corporate responsibility for ensuring that the Council complies with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of its funds.
3. The Council is accountable to the public and the Crown through Parliament and the Privy Council.

### Duties of Individuals

4. Members must demonstrate their adherence to the principle of collective responsibility in respect of all decisions made by the Council and by any Council committee or working group to which they may be appointed.
5. In respect of advice or recommendation to the Council, Members of the committee or working group concerned should express their individual view as Council members only when they wish to act on their own conscience in relation to a serious issue arising from the relevant committee or working group's advice. Views on such issues should be expressed in a responsible manner; the chair of the committee having been notified beforehand.
6. Members must make themselves reasonably available for service on the Council and any of its committees and working groups to which they may be appointed.
7. Members must ensure that all their decisions and actions safeguard the Council's reputation and maintain public confidence in professional regulation.
8. Members must notify the Chief Executive & Registrar if they:
  - a) have been adjudged bankrupt or have made a composition or arrangement with their creditors
  - b) are a person to whom a moratorium period under debt relief order under Part VIIA of the Insolvency Act (debt relief orders) applies, or are the subject of a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restriction order under Schedule 4ZB to that Act (debt relief restrictions order and undertaking)

- c) have been convicted in a court of law of a criminal offence
  - d) have been found guilty of misconduct by another professional or regulatory body
9. When members receive information identified as confidential to the Council, they must observe that confidentiality.
10. Members must complete and maintain their entry in the Council's Register of Members' Interest and declare any related party transactions.
11. Members must be committed to the development and demonstration of the competencies required for the effective performance of their role on Council and on any of the Council's committees. In performing their statutory duties, members must uphold the following seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles)

### **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

All candidates for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service. The seven principles of public life were first identified by the Nolan Committee in its first report on standards in public life in May 1995 (the Nolan principles) and updated by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its report of January 2013, *Standards Matter*. The seven principles of public life are:

#### **Selflessness**

*Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest.*

*They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.*

- Members of the public and members of the chiropractic professions are entitled to expect that you make decisions based on your conscientious assessment of what is in the public interest, without regard to your own interests or those of other organisations or individuals.
- Do not exploit your association with the GCC for your own gain or that of others and avoid any situation in which you might - even accidentally- give the impression that you are in a position to trade influence or access.
- If you have any involvement with a chiropractic business or organisation whose value, prospects or well-being might be affected by GCC decisions or policies, take responsibility for ensuring that your motivation and actions could not be challenged.

#### **Integrity**

*Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.*

- Do not accept payments, gifts, hospitality or favours where the nature of the person or organisation concerned, or the circumstances of the exchange, could give rise to a concern about your integrity.

- Do not put yourself - or allow others to put you - in a position in which your advancement or personal interests, or those of anyone close to you, could be seen as being linked to any decisions or actions you might take in the course of your GCC work.
- Assess your own behaviour by reference to these standards and make sure that you are seen to be following them.

## **Objectivity**

*In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.*

- When making recommendations and decisions, do not allow any non-GCC interests to influence the choices you make.
- Consider available options on their merits. Do not allow yourself to confuse the interests of the chiropractic profession, or any other particular sector of society, with the public interest.
- Take full account of all available evidence which is relevant to the decision you have to make in the course of your GCC work. This can include evidence of the opinions, wishes and concerns of people who may be affected by the decision. Make sure that you can distinguish clearly between the weight which is properly given to such evidence, and any undue, inappropriate or undeclared influence.

## **Accountability**

*Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.*

- You have a responsibility to explain your actions when asked. Engage constructively and positively with appropriate opportunities to explain the ways in which you have managed your interests.
- If you are asked about an interest, or the way in which you have managed it, avoid taking a defensive or narrowly legalistic approach.

## **Openness**

*Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.*

Make a full and open declaration of interests when asked to do so. If in doubt about whether or not you need to declare an interest, err on the side of openness and let others make an assessment of relevance. Perceptions vary, and you may not be best placed to make an objective assessment in your own case.

- Complying with the formalities is important but is not enough on its own. Take active steps to assure yourself that those who need to know about your interests on any particular occasion are aware of the situation.
- Demonstrate that you are open not only to disclosing any interests you may have but also that you are open to discussing their significance. Reflect on any feedback and advice

you receive and act on any learning points that emerge from your experience and the views of others.

## **Honesty**

*Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.*

- In all that you do on behalf of the Council, demonstrate the same high standards of professionalism and personal probity which the Council expects of registered chiropractors.
- Answer any questions asked of you about your interests truthfully and in a spirit of openness.

## **Leadership**

*Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.*

- Let your approach to managing your interests provide an example of good practice within the Council, enhancing the Council's standing as a model of good practice for the chiropractors we regulate.
- Provide leadership by ensuring that your actions match the words which we have agreed to live up to. Speak and act in ways which promote and encourage a culture of open discussion about issues concerning interests. Help promote a culture of accountability, in keeping with the spirit of this guidance.
- Support others with leadership roles within the Council, so that they are empowered and supported to fulfil their responsibilities on behalf of the whole organisation, in the public interest.

## **Specific code of conduct**

1. In addition to complying with the general guidance, those covered by the Code should observe the following specific guidance in carrying out their various functions:

### **Confidentiality and information security**

2. Council Members, GCC Partners, GCC staff and any others covered by the Code will sometimes be party to discussions or information of a confidential nature. They may also receive confidential information from other bodies. Confidential information will ordinarily be marked to show that it is "confidential" but even information without such a marking may in fact be confidential.
3. It is the duty of all Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff to ensure that all such information, whether in electronic or paper form, is only used in proper discharge of their duties, and that it is held and disposed of securely. Any loss or accidental disclosure, and the circumstances leading to the loss or disclosure, must

immediately be notified to the Chair and the Chief Executive. They must also use their best endeavours to prevent unauthorised disclosure or use of confidential information by third parties.

4. Confidential information also must not be disclosed without the consent of a person authorised to give it, unless there is a legal requirement to make such a disclosure. In the event of such disclosure being requested, anyone to whom the Code applies must co-operate with the GCC regarding the manner of such disclosure and any legal action that the GCC may take to challenge the lawfulness of a disclosure request. In any cases of uncertainty about handling confidential information, the Chair/Chief Executive and Registrar should be consulted.
5. On written demand by the GCC, anyone to whom the Code applies must immediately return any information in material form to the GCC without keeping copies, and hand over to the GCC all notes/memoranda they have prepared (together with any copies).
6. Details of private deliberations by the Council or committees must never be discussed or disclosed.

#### **Media, public speaking engagements and communications with external organisations**

7. Council Members should, if possible, discuss any media contact related to work for the GCC in advance with the Chair or the Chief Executive and Registrar. GCC Partners are expected not to make any statements about their work for the GCC without obtaining advance authorisation from the Chair or the Chief Executive and Registrar.
8. In speaking or writing about the work of the GCC, all those covered by the Code should ensure they reflect current policies of the GCC. This applies in any dealings with the media, or when in a public forum or in an informal discussion. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff should make sure that their comments are accurate, well-considered and well-informed and that they do not undermine confidence in the GCC.
9. No public or press statement should be made that relates to a matter that has been investigated or heard by a statutory committee.

#### **Collective decision-making**

10. Members of Council, committees and ad hoc working groups must abide by any decisions made by a quorate majority even if they personally disagree with them. This does not preclude an individual from expressing a dissenting view, but he/she should not, by commenting in public or by other means, attempt to frustrate the implementation of decisions properly made.
11. In respect of advice or recommendations made to the Council, members of the committee or working group concerned should express their individual view as Council Members only when they wish to act on their own conscience in relation to a serious issue arising from the relevant committee or working group's advice. Views on such matters should be expressed in a responsible manner, the chair of the relevant committee/working group having been notified beforehand.

#### **Personal behaviour**

12. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff must adhere to the Code of Conduct. They are expected to ensure that they understand the GCC's' functions and the statutory framework within which it works.
13. Council Members are expected to ensure that they have knowledge of the GCC's key stakeholders and their priorities, and the nature and objectives of independent professional regulation.
14. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff must not act in a way which is likely to bring the GCC into disrepute. They must ensure that their decisions and actions safeguard the GCC's reputation and maintain public confidence in professional regulation. At all times their behaviour must demonstrate the standards expected of holders of public office, including complying with the seven principles of public life.

In particular, Council Members and GCC Partners must in carrying out their duties:

- deploy appropriate time, knowledge, skills, experience to the business of the GCC.
  - play a full role in meetings and hearings and support a decision-making environment.
  - analyse issues properly and rationally, give proper consideration to all the information and evidence available to them, and seek clarification where appropriate.
  - give due consideration to guidance issued by the GCC.
  - exercise independent and impartial judgment
  - listen carefully to and consider all advice provided by those with a statutory advisory role; and
  - support the closure of individual items of Council business.
  - Question assumptions and established orthodoxy.
  - Challenge in a constructive, confident, principled and proportionate manner; and
  - be fair, open-minded and arrive at decisions untainted by bias or prejudice and avoid acting in a discriminatory way.
15. The statutory rules about membership of the Council and statutory committees set out certain circumstances which disqualify an individual from membership, or which may lead to suspension or removal from membership. Where a Council member or a member of one of the statutory committees becomes aware that any of those circumstances apply to them (for example where they are convicted of certain criminal offences or are made subject to a regulatory sanction or become bankrupt) they must inform the Chair of the Council at the earliest opportunity. Should the Chair of the Council be on leave or otherwise unavailable at that time, the Chief Executive and Registrar should also be informed.
  16. GCC Partners (other than statutory committee members) are expected to notify the Chief Executive and Registrar at the earliest opportunity should they become subject to similar circumstances.
  17. Where any other matter involving a Council Member or GCC Partner has the potential to undermine confidence in the GCC or may be relevant to their potential suspension or removal from their role with the GCC (as set out in statutory rules or otherwise), the member should inform the Chair/Chief Executive and Registrar about

it at the earliest opportunity.

### **Roles of executives and non-executives**

18. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff must recognise that staff members are part of a line management structure responsible to the Chief Executive and Registrar for the implementation of corporate decisions, and not to any individual non-executive. Care must be taken to ensure that the distinct roles and responsibilities of executives and non-executives are respected.

### **Equality and diversity**

19. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff will be expected to follow best practice on equality and diversity issues, defined as complying fully with the GCC's responsibilities under anti-discrimination legislation and ensuring the GCC's equality and diversity policy is implemented.

### **Conflicts of interest**

20. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to any individual or organisation which might affect (or be thought to affect) their ability to act impartially and objectively. They must be alert to the possibility of such a conflict of interest and must declare any interest in/association or connection with any person (whether financial, organisational or personal) which may or does give rise to a conflict of interest to the GCC as soon as possible.
21. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff must promptly make the required written declarations of any professional, personal or business interests which may, or might be seen to, conflict with their GCC responsibilities – which will be added to the Register of Interests that the GCC maintains (which is a public document). Individuals covered by this Code will be invited to update their entries annually but in any case, changes in circumstances necessitating amendments to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Chief Executive and Registrar as soon as they arise. Any conflicts of interests that arises during the course of a meeting/hearing must be promptly declared.
22. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff are free to engage in political activities or to maintain associations with professional organisations provided that such activity does not conflict with the essential purpose of the GCC in protecting the public.

### **Testimonials**

23. Council Members, GCC Partners and GCC staff should avoid providing testimonials, references or acting as character witnesses for individuals who are applicants for registration with the GCC or who are subject to fitness to practise proceedings within the GCC. This is because of the potential for a conflict of interests to arise. There is also the risk of an appearance of bias or undue influence in the event of the decision-maker relying upon a testimonial/reference/character evidence from a GCC Partner or Council Member.

24. Should any individual covered by this Code wish to provide a testimonial/reference/character evidence in a particular situation, they are encouraged to discuss this in advance with the Chair or Chief Executive and Registrar.

### **Attendance**

25. Members of Council and GCC Partners will be expected to make the time commitment necessary to attend all meetings (including hearings, seminars and training events) absenting themselves only for compelling personal or professional reasons. Details of expected attendance levels for Council and committee meetings are set out in the GCC's Standing Orders. Attendance levels are recorded in relevant annual reports.
26. Any cancellation of attendance at a meeting must be notified to the GCC as soon as possible in advance.

### **Appraisal**

27. Council Members and GCC Partners must be committed to the demonstration and continuing development of the competencies required for their respective roles. Council Members and GCC Partners (other than Legal Assessors, Medical Assessors and independent members of committees) are required to participate constructively in the relevant appraisal scheme and training offered by the GCC (see information about the GCC appraisal scheme set out [here](#)).
28. Council Members and GCC Partners will also be expected to report any serious anxieties about the conduct of other Council Members or GCC Partners either to the relevant committee chair or to the Chair or Chief Executive and Registrar.

### **Gifts & Hospitality**

29. All those covered by this Code are required to adhere to the Bribery Act 2010, which explicitly prohibits bribery. Further guidance on the Bribery Act 2010 can be found [here](#).
30. Those covered by this Code must not accept gifts, hospitality or benefits, offered in relation to GCC business which might be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. In case of uncertainty, the Chair or Chief Executive and Registrar should be consulted. Any gifts, hospitality or benefits accepted as a consequence of GCC business must be formally registered on the GCC gifts and hospitality register within 15 days. For further information see [here](#).

### **Complaints**

31. Any complaints made against anyone covered by this Code will be handled in accordance with the relevant procedures. Details of the processes for handling complaints made against Council Members and GCC Partners are set out [here](#).