

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS CHAMPIONING PERINATAL CARE: CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

General Practitioners Championing Perinatal Care

Also known as GPCPC

2. ABOUT GPCPC

GPCPC is a network of UK General Practitioners (GPs), who have volunteered their time to work collaboratively on quality improvement in the field of perinatal care in primary care.

GPCPC is an Unincorporated Charitable Association.

We consider that better perinatal care will reduce healthcare inequalities, improve women's health in the shorter and longer term and reduce adverse childhood outcomes and experiences.

The aims of GPCPC are:

- To promote mutual support and education (both within our group and to other health care professionals) using the knowledge and experience of our members
- To promote evidence-based care, unbiased by commercial interest
- To view maternal and infant mental and physical health as interdependent
- To connect with other GPs who are interested in perinatal care
- To raise the profile of GPs within maternity care by representing the interests of our group in national and international fora
- To create change within General Practice and within other healthcare professions to recognise the central importance of GPs in maternity care, through action and collaboration
- To promote the work of not-for-profit organisations which share our aims
- To actively encourage multidisciplinary working between primary care, secondary care and the voluntary and community sectors to put the interests of women and families at the centre of their care e.g. in maternity and mental health care hubs
- To address health inequalities in perinatal care by actively recognising and working to reduce adverse maternal outcomes in groups at risk of marginalisation* according to a protected characteristic or inclusion health status, through advocacy, quality improvement, education, and collaboration with communities and healthcare providers

*The MBRRACE report (2024) highlights inequalities in maternal mortality in Black women, Asian women, those living in the most deprived areas, women >35 years old, those overweight and obese, those facing multiple disadvantage, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and those facing access issues due to language barriers. GPCPC also recognises perinatal health inequalities are faced by those in inclusion health groups, families who identify as LGBTQ+ and those with disabilities or neurodiverse conditions. GPCPC acknowledges the evolving nature of marginalisation in healthcare provision/health outcomes and remains committed to prioritising equality, diversity and inclusion in all of its activities.

GPCPC is not:

- A professional body or healthcare licensing body
- Affiliated with any political party or political movement
- Directly associated with the pharmaceutical industry, breastmilk substitutes or baby food industry
- Charging for information it provides

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to GPs, GP Speciality Trainees and retired GPs in the UK who are registered with the General Medical Council.

Membership is defined as having completed the membership form including any declarations of interest. At this stage there is no annual membership fee. If this is introduced in the future it would be agreed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and will be payable by all members.

A list of all members and their declarations of interests will be kept by the Membership Secretary.

Members may resign at any time in writing to the Secretary with immediate effect.

If a membership fee is introduced, any member who has not paid their membership fee for one year will be contacted by the Board, who will then decide whether that member is deemed to have resigned.

Any member behaving in an offensive way or acting in breach of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement in public or in their workplace may have their membership with GPCPC terminated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Board, accompanied by a colleague, before a final decision is made.

4. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

GPCPC will constantly strive to make sure everyone is treated with dignity and respect. GPCPC welcomes and values diversity in its membership. Commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):

- GPCPC will prioritise EDI in all activities. We aim to create an environment of respect and value, free from bias or discrimination, and where diverse needs are recognised and addressed.
- GPCPC has established a 'Health Inequalities Steering Committee' to maintain focus on inclusion and achieving equitable health outcomes.
- GPCPC is committed to improving access and inclusion for all patients. This includes recognising barriers to healthcare by focusing on the individual, within their social, community, language, cultural and/or spiritual context, whilst also advocating for system-level changes to promote equity in perinatal care.
- GPCPC members are expected to take personal responsibility for maintaining their own awareness and competency in EDI. Members can do this by completing suitable training, regularly update their knowledge, and seek opportunities to enhance their understanding of EDI through continuing professional development.
- GPCPC will implement reviews of its EDI policies, ensuring that they evolve in line with the needs of its members and communities it serves.
- GPCPC will endeavor to reflect, learn and update its approaches when deemed appropriate in response to new evidence and feedback.

5. OFFICERS AND BOARD

The business of GPCPC will be carried out by a Board elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Board will meet as necessary and not less than three times a year.

The Board will consist of 8-12 members and be composed of officers and other Board members, including a GP Trainee and a First 5 GP, if possible. Board terms of office will last until the next AGM, and officers may be re-elected annually. Individuals may be re-elected as Chair or Deputy Chair for no more than three years in each role.

The officers' roles are as follows:

Chair, who will chair both general and Board meetings

Deputy Chair, who will deputise for the chair

Secretary, who will be responsible for taking and circulating minutes and distributing any papers

Membership Secretary, who will maintain a register of members, including declarations of interest

Treasurer, who will be the named significant controller of the GPCPC bank account, maintain the accounts and present them to the Board upon request and to the membership at the AGM.

A Board member will take responsibility for the oversight and organisation of Educational Meetings; this role can be fulfilled by any Board member.

In the event of an officer standing down during the year, or a position being unfilled at the AGM, a member may join the Board by agreement of the Board at a later date, before the next AGM.

6. MEETINGS

6.1. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within fifteen months of the previous AGM.

All members will be notified by email at least 4 weeks before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time. In general, the meeting will be held virtually via an online platform.

Board roles will be advertised a minimum of 8 weeks before the AGM to members.

Nominations for the Board must be made to the Secretary at least 4 weeks before the AGM.

Members wishing to stand for election to a Board position must be 'seconded' by an existing member and submit for circulation to the membership a brief biography of themselves.

Nomination of Board members will also be permitted within the AGM meeting where positions are without nomination ahead of the AGM and the person is seconded by another member in attendance.

Voting forms and nominee biographies will be sent to members a minimum of 2 weeks before the AGM.

Members will have a minimum of 10 days to vote from receiving the voting forms and biographies.

Voting results will be announced at the AGM.

The quorum for the AGM will be at least half of the Board, with representation from non-Board members. Members sending apologies for the AGM and expressing any views on the agenda items in writing in advance will be counted as part of the quorum.

At the AGM:-

- The Board will present a report of the work of GPCPC over the year.
- The Board for the next year will be elected.
- Any proposals given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed.

6.2 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The Secretary will call a Special General Meeting (SGM) at the request of the majority of the Board or at least four other members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.

The meeting will take place within 28 days of the request.

All members will be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting, given the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice will be by email. In general, the meeting will be held on Zoom or other virtual platform.

The quorum for the SGM will be at least half of the Board, with representation from non-Board members. Members sending apologies for the SGM and expressing any views on the agenda items in writing in advance will be counted as part of the quorum.

6.3 EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Educational events will be organised periodically by the Board. A Board member will take responsibility for overseeing the organisation of such events. Information about upcoming events will be circulated to all members by email and, when speakers and the Board are in agreement, may also be open to non-members. Attendees will be required to adhere to the GPCPC 'House Rules'.

6.4 BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings may be called by the Chair or Secretary. Board members must receive notice of meetings at least 7 days before the meeting.

The quorum for Board meetings is at least half of the Board members. Board members may nominate a proxy to vote for them if they are unable to attend a meeting

7. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR MEETINGS

All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.

If a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the Chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

8. FINANCES

GPCPC has a Business Community bank account. The accounts are managed and overseen by the Treasurer in accordance with the GPCPC Financial Constitution.

9. SOCIAL MEDIA AND BEING THE MAIN CONTACT PERSON FOR THE GROUP

GPCPC has a presence on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/gpcpc/>). The Board will be responsible for maintaining the account including the login details. The Board will post on issues aligned with the aims of GPCPC as outlined in the constitution. This includes not promoting the work of organisations who have aims or actions which are in direct conflict with GPCPC aims.

The Chair and the Secretary are the first point of contact for the anyone else interested in the work of the group.

10. ENDORSEMENT OF OTHER CAUSES, SIGNING LETTERS, USE OF GPCPC LOGO

Will be decided by consensus of the Board.

11. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendments to the constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

Any proposal to amend the constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing. The proposal must then be circulated with the notice of meeting.

Any proposal to amend the constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

12. DISSOLUTION

If a meeting, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to dissolve GPCPC, it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the organisation.

If it is agreed to dissolve GPCPC, any remaining funds and other assets, after any debts are paid, will be transferred to another community interest group or charity with similar aims. The organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution. Any assets or funds may not be distributed amongst the Board.

This constitution was agreed at the Inaugural General Meeting of the General Practitioners Championing Perinatal Care on 7/9/21.

Amendments 2022

The following changes were made and agreed at the AGM of GPCPC on 7/9/2022:

- 3. Membership: removal of the requirement to attend at least one meeting annually
- 5. Officers and Committee: addition of a committee member to take responsibility for the organisation of educational events
- 6.1 Annual General Meetings: introduction of requirement for members wishing to stand for committee election to be seconded by another member and submit a short biography
- 6.3 General Meetings changed to Educational Meetings and added the provision to open meetings to non-members on a meeting-by-meeting decision basis. A committee member to commit to organisational oversight of meetings.

Amendments 2023

The following changes were made and agreed at the AGM of GPCPC on 20/9/2023:

- 6.1 Quorum for AGM attendance from 1/2 membership to 1/3 membership.
- 6.1 To allow nomination of committee members within the AGM meeting where positions are without nomination ahead of the AGM and the person is seconded by another member in attendance.
- 5 To allow election of committee members mid-term where a position is unfilled.

Amendments 2024

- 2. At the 2024 AGM, agreement was made in principle to change the wording 'GPCPC is NOT: Associated with the pharmaceutical industry, breast milk substitutes and baby food industry' to reflect that, due to the nature of medical and healthcare organisations that we partner with/may wish to partner with, GPCPC is not 'directly' associated or in receipt of funding or benefit from the above industries. Discussion around the exact wording to use on the website to indicate this, mindful of the experience of families who use formula milk. Wording will be agreed by the Committee at a later date and a change made to the GPCPC Aims.

5. Change in committee numbers from 6-9 to 8-12. Change in re-election duration to committee members eligible to stand annually without time limit, and Chair / Deputy Chair serving a maximum of three years.

6.1 Change in AGM quorum from 1/3 of the membership to half the committee plus representation of non-committee members. Clarification that in the event of an officer standing down during the year, or a position being unfilled at the AGM, a member may join the committee by agreement of the Committee at a later date, before the next AGM.

9. Amended to reflect that LinkedIn and not Twitter is now the social media platform used by GPCPC.

Amendments mid-year 2025

2. In response to the 2024 AGM decision to update this clause, the following wording was agreed by the Committee: GPCPC is NOT: Directly associated with the pharmaceutical industry, breastmilk substitutes or baby food industry.

3. To reflect the practical arrangement of how membership details are collected by the Membership Secretary, this has been changed to: "Membership is defined as having completed the membership form..."

Amendments 2025

The following changes were made and agreed at the AGM of GPCPC on 24/9/2025:

Throughout: 'Committee' changed to 'Board' and other minor amendments to formatting and to reflect current practices.

2. About GPCPC and Aims – update to reflect current workings and inclusion of GPCPC being defined as an Unincorporated Charitable Organisation⁴.

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) – expansion and rewording of the whole section in response to recommendations from the GPCPC Health Inequalities Steering Group, including input from GPCPC Members and EDI expertise.

5. and 8. Role of the Treasurer added to the Board.

5. It was agreed by members at the AGM that for the year 2025-2026 14 members of the Board would be permitted in view of member interest on this occasion. This will be reviewed at the next AGM.

Amendments 2026

The following changes were made and agreed at the SGM of GPCPC on 30/06/2026:

5. Officers and Board – Change to wording updating the role of the Treasurer.

6.1 Annual General Meetings – Change to wording to include new voting structure for Board nominations and elections.

8. Finances – Change to wording to update regarding new bank account for GPCPC and the responsibility of the Treasurer to manage and oversee accounts in line with a Financial Constitution.

12. Dissolution – Change to wording regarding the distribution of remaining assets and funds if GPCPC is dissolved to indicate that remaining funds and assets may not be distributed to Board members.