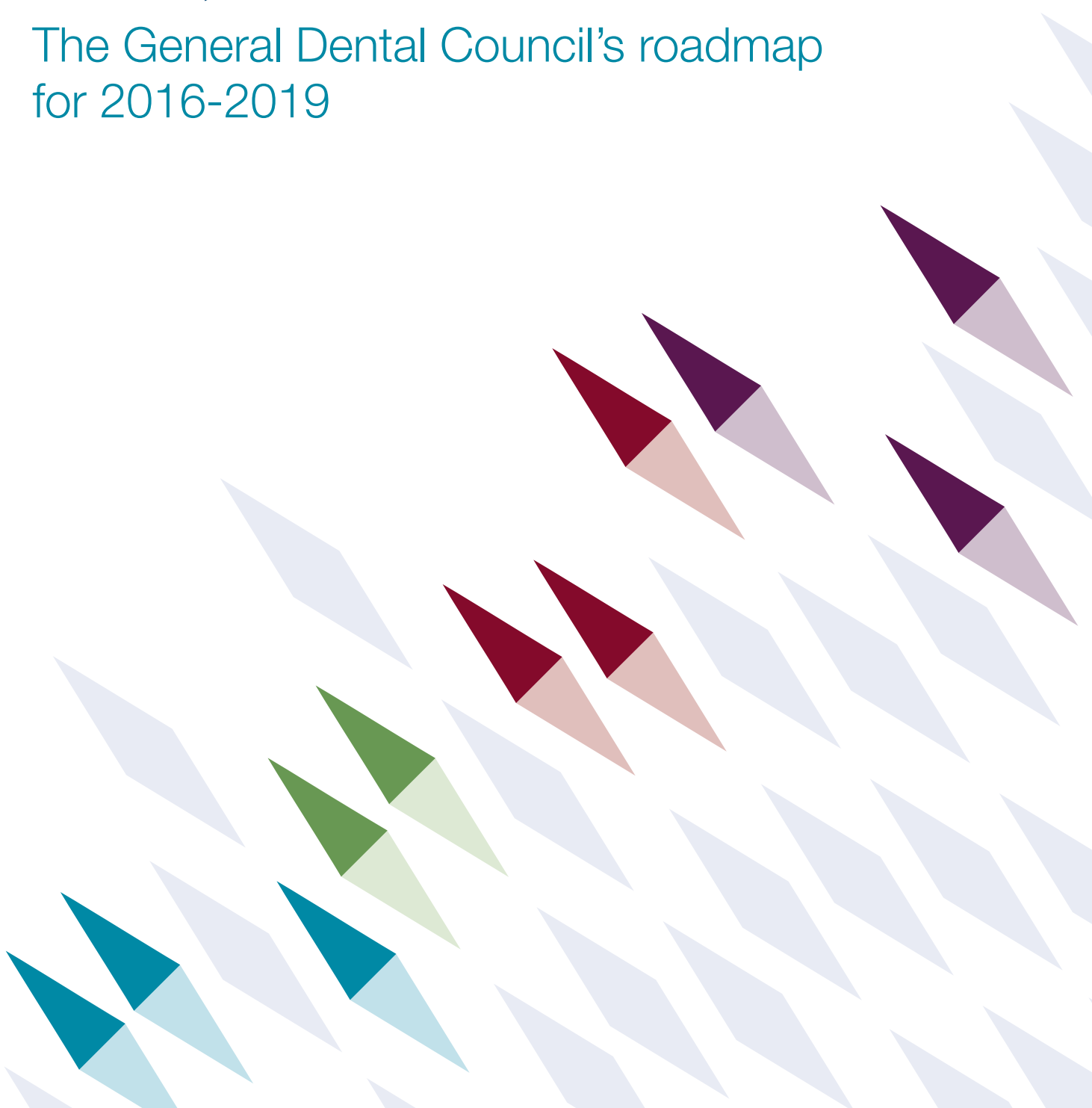


2018 Business Plan


The final year of *Patients, Professionals,
Partners, Performance:*

The General Dental Council's roadmap
for 2016-2019



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Foreword

In 2017 the General Dental Council (GDC) took some significant steps forward on its journey to becoming a more effective and efficient regulator.

The year began with us setting out our vision for how dental regulation should be reformed in *Shifting the balance: a better, fairer system of dental regulation* (Shifting the balance). In addition to the 86 responses we received, wider insight was gained from stakeholder roundtables in each of the nations, discussions at conferences, face-to-face meetings and wider debate through less formal channels such as social media and the trade press.

At the end of 2017 we published a summary of this feedback, which showed broad support for the proposals, and provided the opportunity for us to share our plans on how we intend to progress this work. 2018 will see much of this put into action.

While we continued to engage widely on many of the proposed reforms throughout 2017, more rapid progress was possible in several areas and the year saw us implement some key changes. The new Enhanced Continuing Professional Development (ECPD) system, which represents the first steps towards a more meaningful approach to professional development, was launched for dentists in January 2018 and will follow for dental care professionals in August 2018.

A further example of more rapid progress saw us work with patients, dental professionals and stakeholders to develop and implement an online 'self-filtering mechanism' for those wishing to make a complaint. Designed to help them understand the role of the GDC, it signposts towards more effective and appropriate paths when their issue could be better and more quickly dealt with elsewhere.

With a focus on becoming more cost-effective, a number of initiatives were begun – most notably, the development of plans to move a number of GDC roles to Birmingham. This project will reduce the number of GDC locations in London, significantly lowering our operating costs.

Much good work has already commenced, or indeed been completed - but we know we still have a long way to go to realise our goals and 2018 will be a crucial year on this journey.

In this, our 2018 Business Plan, I take great pleasure in setting out our priorities for the coming year.

Ian Brack

Chief Executive of the General Dental Council

Who we are and what we do

The GDC is the UK-wide statutory regulator of the 110,000 members of the dental team. This comprises approximately 41,000 dentists and 69,000 dental care professionals which includes dental nurses, clinical dental technicians, dental hygienists, dental technicians, dental therapists and orthodontic therapists.

We want patients and the public to be confident that the treatment they receive is provided by a dental professional who is properly trained and qualified, and who meets our standards. Where there are concerns about the quality of care or treatment, or the behaviour of a dental professional, we will investigate and take action if appropriate.

Our legislation, the Dentists Act 1984 (which was amended in 2016), sets the following objectives for the GDC:

- To protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public.
- To promote and maintain public confidence in the professions regulated.
- To promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of those professions.

We fulfil our purpose by using our statutory powers to:

- grant registration only to those dental professionals who meet our requirements on education and training, health and good character - only those who are registered with us can practise dentistry in the UK
- assure the quality of dental education and training
- set standards of conduct, performance and ethics for the dental team
- investigate complaints against dental professionals and, where appropriate, take action through our fitness to practise (FtP) process
- protect the public from individuals carrying out dentistry while not registered
- require dental professionals to keep their skills up to date through our continuing professional development (CPD) requirements.

In addition, we fund the Dental Complaints Service (DCS) which aims to support patients and dental professionals in using mediation to resolve complaints where they arise in private dental care.

Through all of the above we aim to demonstrate our values, which are:

Fairness: we will treat everyone we deal with fairly.

Transparency: we are open about how we work and how we reach decisions.

Responsiveness: we can adapt to changing circumstances.

Respect: we treat dental professionals, our partners, and our employees with respect.

In 2016 we published our three-year corporate strategy entitled *Patients, Professionals, Partners and Performance*, which established four key commitment areas for the organisation:

Professionals

We will work closely with the dental profession to identify priority areas for action and use collaborative approaches in tackling them.

Patients

We will put patient and public protection at the heart of what we do. We will empower patients to make informed choices about the care they receive.

Partners

We will work with our partners in the dental sector to protect patients and make the system of dental regulation in the UK more effective.

Performance

We will continue to become a high performing, proportionate regulator which has the confidence of patients, the public and dental professionals.



Our priorities for 2018

The GDC's work in 2018 falls into four major themes:

- Developing our model of upstream regulation.
- Improving our approach to 'enforcement' regulation.
- Building organisational capability and improving our performance.
- Continuing to build a cost-effective and efficient organisation.

Developing our model of upstream regulation

In 2017 the GDC published *Shifting the balance*, where we set out our vision for reforming dental regulation. With the help of patients, dental professionals and our partners, 2018 will see the GDC begin to develop a model of upstream regulation.

In 2018 we will:

- consult on proposed new processes in quality assurance in education which are designed to be proportionate to the risks involved in the delivery and outcomes for individual education and training programmes. They also aim for us to be more responsive to wider issues in the dental education sector, helping us to mitigate future risks
- support dental professionals to keep their skills up to date throughout their career by introducing a new scheme of ECPD, aimed at providing clearer guidance and support. This will directly benefit dental professionals and, in turn, will benefit patients
- review all communications and engagement with dental professionals and patients to help us maximise each engagement opportunity, furthering our aims of protecting patients and maintaining public confidence in dental services

- enhance support for NHS patients at the first stage of complaint-raising by opening up the initial guidance and signposting service provided by the DCS, which is currently available only to private patients.

Improving our approach to enforcement regulation

In *Shifting the balance* we also committed to improving our approach to enforcement regulation. This involves ensuring that the significant powers we have are deployed only when it is appropriate and that the processes associated with them are as efficient as possible.

In 2018 we will:

- continue our comprehensive review of the entire FtP process to eliminate inefficiencies and maximise effectiveness. By engaging with the profession, partners and the public, we will ensure changes are implemented for the benefit of all
- develop an explanation of impaired fitness to practise that makes a clear link between patient risk and public confidence
- undertake research to support the development of our approach to 'seriousness' in the FtP process
- re-examine our approach to identifying FtP complaints that could be better handled by the NHS in England. The scheme, known as NHS Concerns, was introduced in 2016, and this year will see us assess the process for possible improvements and investigate whether the same principles can be extended to other models of dental practice.

Building organisational capability and improving our performance

The GDC's work to protect patients and help maintain public confidence in dental services is bolstered by building an organisation that is capable and determined in its approach to continual performance improvement.

In 2018 we will:

- develop and implement a new people strategy. As part of this, we will establish a comprehensive approach to managing staff talent with the aim of improving performance across all functions and ensuring we can be a highly effective regulator
- strengthen our approach to how we organise our workforce to ensure we understand our current model, what the organisation needs now and in the future and how to fill potential gaps
- deploy robust learning and development opportunities for staff within a skills framework, ensuring capability and support is in place to deliver against organisational needs
- implement and deliver our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy to ensure we are meeting our corporate values.

Continuing to build a cost-effective and efficient organisation

Throughout 2018 we will take forward a number of initiatives with the aim of improving our cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

In 2018 we will:

- set the strategic direction for the organisation for the next three years (from 2019) and cost our activity over this period at programme level
- develop, consult on and implement a new policy framework for the setting of fees and to enable a clear and robust articulation of how we allocate resources
- move a number of roles to a new office in Birmingham, enhancing value for money in the management of the GDC's estate
- strengthen our information governance framework to identify and manage information risks and to be able to measure compliance against recognised standards. This will include the NHS Information Governance Toolkit, ISO27001 and the incoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Review of progress against our 2017 priorities

A full review of our progress in 2017 will be available in our 2017 Annual Report and Accounts, published later in the year. Below, we outline some key achievements in 2017.

2017 priority	What we did to achieve it
<p>Drive improvement in dental regulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Launched <i>Shifting the balance</i>, a major public consultation on a package of reform measures for dental regulation. ✓ Established a programme of work to implement these reforms with a clear direction of travel for 2018, taking feedback from the consultation on board. ✓ Prepared the ground for the full implementation of ECPD in 2018. This included preparing guidance, policy and clear communications for dental professionals, our partners and stakeholders. ✓ Carried out an operational review of the DCS and introduced identified improvements.
<p>Improve our overall performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Achieved 23 out of the 24 standards in our latest performance review by the PSA, gaining two additional standards from the previous review. ✓ Successfully recruited our new Council members. This included gaining approval for the process by the PSA and approval of the recommended appointees by the Privy Council. ✓ Improved our witness support services by improving flows of information to increase efficiency. ✓ Improved reporting in our Customer Advice and Information Team, which has enabled insights to be shared across the organisation and influence our processes.
<p>Continue to build a cost effective and efficient organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Established a single process for dealing with corporate complaints to ensure we are learning lessons via comprehensive reporting. ✓ Implemented a new process to expedite Interim Orders, including a new process for this at the triage stage. ✓ Appointed an in-house clinical dental adviser team to speed up the overall FtP process.

Risk management, planning, reporting and the budget process

Risk management

Our risk management function is a live, continual and embedded process that aims to capture, manage and monitor risks and issues at both strategic and operational levels.

Current and upcoming mitigations are established, with formal assurances used to determine their effectiveness – a process that aligns directly with the GDC business planning and performance reporting function. Reviewing existing and potential organisational risk is part of the business planning process in assessing priorities for the upcoming year and where to allocate resource.

Planning and reporting performance

This Business Plan, alongside our Operational Plan, identifies what needs to happen across the GDC to achieve success, what resources will be required for delivery, the outputs and outcomes that are anticipated and any other contributory factors (e.g. actions by partner organisations, risks, resource assumptions etc.).

The GDC's Business Plan is reviewed and approved annually by Council and the Operational Plan provides effective monitoring of projects throughout the year. Each programme of work is developed to programme and project management principles, to ensure the best use of resources across the organisation.

Activity is monitored monthly by the GDC's Executive Management Team and progress is reported to Council and the Finance and Performance Committee on a quarterly basis. The status of projects is reviewed alongside our balanced scorecard which highlights the key performance indicators for the organisation. This aims to provide assurance that the GDC is delivering the work it has committed to and provides the opportunity to identify projects or programmes of work that require attention and support from the Executive Management Team.

Annual budget process

Each year, the GDC produces a budget, which uses internal forecast and income models, to ensure we cost what we set out to achieve. The budget is approved by Council alongside the Business Plan. The budget is reported against every year in the Annual Report and Accounts.

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