

We welcome journalists' interest in the work of the General Dental Council and aim to be as open and accommodating as possible if you would like to attend one of our hearings. Because these are legal proceedings which can involve sensitive issues and vulnerable people, we ask you to follow a few simple guidelines.

Attending a hearing

If you are interested in attending a hearing, please inform the press office so we can let our Hearings Team know to expect you and ensure you are properly looked after.

For hearings at the GDC's building at 37 Wimpole Street, please report to the reception desk in order to sign in. You will be asked to directly go to the press room to await the start of the hearing.

The press room, which is next to the Chamber, has Wi-fi internet access for journalists to use; instructions can be found in the press room. Because we have provided you with this area, we kindly ask journalists not to use the reception area or any area other than the press room as a place to work or file reports.

We will endeavour to keep the press room available for around half an hour after the hearing finishes for you to work in but this may not be possible on every occasion. Unless they are actually present at the hearing, journalists are asked to leave the building by 5.30pm as this is when GDC offices close.

When hearings are held at external venues, we will do all we can to ensure there is an area for journalists to work in but we ask that journalists comply with the requests of the GDC's Hearings Officers.

If you are unable to attend a hearing in person, the GDC press office can give you the result of the hearing. The results will also appear on our website.

Dealing with people involved in the hearing - Respect our rules

Journalists may not, under any circumstances, enter the witness area unless accompanied by a properly authorised member of GDC staff. As with all legal proceedings, many witnesses find the prospect of giving evidence daunting and we want to protect them from any additional stress. There could also be legal repercussions if witnesses have had any contact with other parties before giving their evidence. We will enforce this rule and take action against those who do not respect it.

We ask that no photographs are taken on the GDC's premises or on the premises of other external venues as these are considered private property and therefore those inside have an expectation of privacy.

We also ask that journalists and photographers never directly approach those involved in the hearing – whether defendant, witnesses, GDC panellists or complainants. We understand that you may wish to request to speak to people once the case is over and the press office will consider your request if you contact us. Please email an open letter to pressoffice@gdc-uk.org stating which organisation you work for, why you would like to speak to the witness and how the information will be used. We will decide whether it is appropriate to pass on the letter and inform you of this. It is then up to the individual involved to decide whether to respond.

Feedback

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your treatment while at a GDC hearing or have any suggestions for improving access, please contact us.