General Dental Council: Information released under the Freedom of Information Act

Date released: 4 May 2021

Request:

My questions relate to GDC Hearings which have commenced, but not completed.

Question 1. How many hearings were commenced and then adjourned between Jan 1st 2019 up until April 1st 2021?

Question 2. What was the average length of time for these adjournments?

Question 3. How many hearings are currently adjourned?

Question 4. Are there any cases which having been already adjourned, may not be resumed in 2021?

Response:

Thank you for your request for information dated 05 April 2021 regarding:

1. The number of hearings commenced and then adjourned between 1 January 2019 and 1 April 2021.
2. The average length of time for these adjournments.
3. The number of hearings that are currently adjourned.
4. Any cases that are currently adjourned and may not be resumed in 2021.

Your request is being handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act). We can confirm that we hold the information requested.

As with most organisations, the effect of COVID-19 last year resulted in an unprecedented change to the daily operation of the GDC. Most GDC employees had to adapt to working from home and major changes were implemented to the arrangements for fitness to practise (FtP) hearings. Remote hearings were put in place to adhere to government guidelines and ensure cases where concerns reported to the GDC constituted an immediate perceived risk to public safety were still heard. However, there were many other cases, where there was less of a perceived risk, which were postponed. For further information, a blog on the GDC's response to COVID-19 can be accessed here. Also, information relating to remote hearings can be accessed here.

To answer your request, we have interpreted “adjourned” to mean hearings which have been part heard.

1. Between 1 January 2019 and 1 April 2021 there have been 40 cases that have been adjourned. Of the 40 cases, 26 cases have been concluded and 14 have not yet been concluded. Some cases have been adjourned and part heard multiple times.

2. The average length of time of these adjournments is 181 days.

3. As of 1 April 2021, there are 14 cases that are currently adjourned.

4. In respect of the 14 cases mentioned above, all of these have been relisted and are to resume this year.