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

Date released: 23 April 2018

Request:

• Please detail the number of initial SAR, made in writing to your organisation, between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018.

• Please detail the number of initial SAR between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018 that were not processed [i.e. the information requested was not relevant to your organisation or the fee/ID was not received].

• Please detail the number of processed SAR between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018 that were processed within the current statutory timescale.

• Please detail the number of processed SAR between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018, that would have been processed within the new, post-May 2018 statutory timescale.

• When a SAR is received and is ready to be processed, do you have designated reps. within each department that collate the relevant information on the behalf of the designated person[s] who responds to SAR?

• If the request is specific [e.g. a registrant puts in writing a SAR relating to the payment of their registration fees over a 5-year period], would you only request that information from the specific department or contact the whole organisation to check for relevant information?

• Have you made, or planned to make any changes to your internal processes in advance of GDPR to speed up and/or streamline the process [such as taking the decision not to redact the names of staff members from released documents]?

• With the abolition of SAR fees and reduction in statutory timescales, do you anticipate a ‘spike’ in SAR once GDPR comes into effect? If so, do you have measures in place to cope with this increased demand.

Response:

Thank you for your request of 26 March 2018 requesting information in relation to the General Dental Council’s (GDC) handling of subject access requests. I can confirm that your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

For ease of reference I will address each of your questions in turn.

• Please detail the number of initial SAR, made in writing to your organisation, between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018.

During this period, the General Dental Council (GDC) received 87 subject access requests.

• Please detail the number of initial SAR between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018 that were not processed [i.e. the information requested was not relevant to your organisation or the fee/ID was not received].

During this period the GDC cancelled six subject access requests. We do not collect a fee, but some requests were withdrawn by the requestor, or represented a duplicate request.
• Please detail the number of processed SAR between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018 that were processed within the current statutory timescale.

The GDC processed 72 of the 87 information requests received within 40 calendar days. Of the remaining 13 requests the deadline may have been extended by the time it took the requestor to provide their confirmation of identity information. During this period there were two requests where the deadline was missed.

• Please detail the number of processed SAR between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2018, that would have been processed within the new, post-May 2018 statutory timescale.

The GDC processed 35 subject access requests in 30 calendar days or less.

• When a SAR is received and is ready to be processed, do you have designated reps. within each department that collate the relevant information on the behalf of the designated person[s] who responds to SAR.

The GDC has designated information representatives who will assist with information searches and collation. Unless the request relates to Human Resources, or specific fitness to practise file and the relevant case owner will have better understanding of the documentation, subject access requests are primarily collated by the Information Governance Team.

• If the request is specific [e.g. a registrant puts in writing a SAR relating to the payment of their registration fees over a 5-year period], would you only request that information from the specific department or contact the whole organisation to check for relevant information?

Searches are tailored to the nature of the request. ‘All information held’ searches will differ from requests for specific case or file information.

• Have you made, or planned to make any changes to your internal processes in advance of GDPR to speed up and/or streamline the process [such as taking the decision not to redact the names of staff members from released documents]?  

The GDC has taken no decisions in respect of reducing the administration associated with processing information requests apart from ensuring the organisation is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and accompanying legislative changes.

• With the abolition of SAR fees and reduction in statutory timescales, do you anticipate a ‘spike’ in SAR once GDPR comes into effect? If so, do you have measures in place to cope with this increased demand.

We do envisage an increase in the number of information requests received as people become more familiar with their data protection rights. We will address resourcing needs of the organisation as and when such an increase becomes apparent.