## Purpose of paper

This paper asks the Council to seal The General Dental Council (Continuing Professional Development) (Dentists and Dental Care Professionals) Rules Order of Council to allow the Enhanced CPD scheme to be implemented from January 2018 for dentists and July 2018 for dental care professionals. It also provides updates on further developments in the light of *Shifting the Balance*.

## Status

Public session

## Action

For decision

## Corporate Strategy 2016-19

Professionals – Objective 3: To support dental professionals in keeping their skills up to date throughout their career.

## Business Plan 2017

2017 Initiative 4: Implementation of Enhanced Continual Professional Development scheme for our registrants

## Decision Trail

- **August 2012**: Council considered the draft consultation on Enhanced Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- **March 2013**: Council approved the GDC’s response to the consultation
- **September 2013**: Council considered the final report of the Revalidation Working Group
- **December 2013**: Council considered the consultation on the draft CPD Rules Order of Council
- **December 2013 – March 2014**: Consultation
- **February 2015**: Council approved the draft Rules in principle but also requested options for a pilot
- **April 2015**: Council decided on its preferred option to pilot the Enhanced CPD scheme over a period of six months
- **March - August 2016**: Pilot period
- **October 2016**: Council considered the results of the pilot and:
  - agreed the suggested changes to the draft Rules arising from the pilot;
  - agreed to postpone the sealing of the Rules until 2017;

agreed that the new scheme should come into force on 1 January 2018 for dentists and 1 July 2018 for DCPs.
1. Executive summary

1.1. Following development, discussion and consultation over a period of several years, the Council agreed in April 2015 to pilot the proposed Enhanced Continuing Professional Development scheme (ECPD). After a productive six-month piloting exercise, which saw over 1,700 registrants enrol in the scheme and 486 complete all the pilot activities, some amendments to both the policy and the draft Rules for the new scheme were suggested.

1.2. In October 2016, Council accepted the suggested changes and agreed that the sealing of the rules should be postponed until 2017, with a coming into force date of January 2018 for dentists and July 2018 for DCPs. This sealing date would enable the GDC to assure itself of its readiness, with both the production of improved guidance and further development of operational processes both forming part of the Business Plan for 2017.

1.3. Further developments in CPD, including the concept of CPD choices based on data and intelligence made available to the profession, form part of the work to implement Shifting the balance, which the Council published in January. There was therefore a question as to whether ECPD should be implemented and operationalised as planned, or whether it should be delayed with a view to launching a single package of measures at a later date.

1.4. A number of options were identified for discussion by the Policy and Research Board (PRB). The PRB was very clear that it expected ECPD to be implemented in 2018 as per Council’s decision, with the further ideas in Shifting the balance being developed with stakeholders in parallel.

1.6. The processes and infrastructure required to implement ECPD can be in place and are included in the Business Plan for 2017.

1.7. The Department of Health has confirmed that it is still possible for the Rules to be approved by the Privy Council in time to come into force as needed, despite the General Election having been called. We therefore need to have the draft Rules sealed in order that this process can begin.

2. Introduction and background

2.1. The GDC’s current CPD scheme was introduced in 2000 and has not changed significantly since that time. It is an hours-based scheme which requires dental professionals to undertake both verifiable and non-verifiable activities, record them and make a declaration.
of compliance. It includes certain topics which dental professionals are strongly encouraged to include (though this is not compulsory) because they have an impact on patient safety, including medical emergencies and disinfection and decontamination.

2.2 A considerable amount of work was put into the development of a potential Revalidation scheme for dental professionals in the last decade, until it became clear that we were unlikely to get the legislation required to introduce it. It was then decided to move towards a similar outcome in different ways, including the requirement for annual declarations as part of the Annual Renewal process and an updated CPD scheme.

2.3 The history of the development of the new CPD scheme is summarised on the cover sheet. As noted in 1.1 above, the proposed new scheme was piloted in 2016 and some amendments to both the system and the draft Rules were made as a result. The amendments were agreed by Council in October 2016 but the sealing of the draft Rules was postponed until 2017.

2.4 As a reminder, the main differences between the current scheme and ECPD are that the latter features:

- the use of a personal development plan (PDP) to identify areas of learning need and guide CPD;
- an emphasis on reflection;
- removal of the requirement to record non-verifiable CPD and a change in the number of hours of verifiable CPD required of different registrant groups; and
- a requirement for CPD activity to be spread more evenly throughout the five-year cycle.

3. Developments

Shifting the Balance

3.1 While Shifting the balance notes that ‘the implementation of ECPD would represent a significant first step in promoting ownership of CPD by dental professionals’ it also states our desire to work with the profession to consider how CPD can become more valuable for them and for their patients. The Shifting the balance proposals involve a fundamental shift in approach, away from an hours-based scheme (with consequences for noncompliance) to a quality-based framework. The proposals in relation to CPD\(^1\) include:

- exploring the possibility of removing recommended topics and instead providing data and evidence to help dental professionals determine their development needs;
- encouraging professional bodies to drive innovations in planning, provision and monitoring of CPD so that the GDC becomes a partner in professional development, allowing local or professional networks to operate around the core scheme;
- exploring the development of a CPD model based on quality rather than on number of hours of learning, allowing professionals to determine their own development needs with the GDC providing intelligence to suggest possible areas of focus;
- encouraging CPD which requires interaction with colleagues; and
- exploring the benefits and risks of incorporating a significant element of peer review into a new model.

3.2 The development of these proposals will take place in conjunction with relevant stakeholders and the professions. The General Medical Council and the General Pharmaceutical Council, as well as some non-healthcare regulators, have recently made changes to their CPD schemes, including moving from hours-based schemes to ones that focus on quality and change of

\(^{1}\) Shifting the Balance: a better, fairer system of dental regulation. GDC, January 2017, pages 26-33
practice. Further developments will be discussed with the PRB and Council as they progress.

Consideration at PRB

The PRB considered a number of options, including:

i) to fully implement ECPD in 2018 as planned, by bringing into force the current draft ECPD Rules ("the draft rules"), while continuing to work up proposals for further changes arising from Shifting the balance in the medium term;

ii) not bring into force the draft rules in their current form, but to implement parts of ECPD and some changes arising from Shifting the balance in 2018 via guidance only, while working on a revised, enforceable model for medium term implementation; and

iii) to abandon the current draft of the rules and not implement ECPD at all in 2018 but to keep the existing scheme in place, while beginning work on a new enforceable model with elements of ECPD and the proposals from Shifting the balance.

3.3 These options were discussed and the risks and benefits of each considered. The Board was clear that it supported Council’s decision to go ahead with ECPD in 2018. PRB also endorsed the further development of the proposals in Shifting the Balance and it was suggested that there should be a two-phase approach, with ECPD as Phase 1. As noted in paragraph 1.6 above, the Executive has confirmed that our systems and processes will be ready.

3.4 During the discussions some concern was expressed about the readiness of the profession for ECPD, although most members were confident of the profession’s ability to make the transition without undue difficulty. We have subsequently taken informal soundings with a number of stakeholders including professional representatives, educators, the NHS and counterparts in the four nations and others. Again, a range of opinions was expressed but the overall view is that registrants will adapt to the requirements of ECPD, although there will need to be greater awareness across the profession and that younger members of the profession are perhaps better prepared as reflective practice is part of their training.

3.5 Awareness raising will be key. We are working on clear messaging and have had many offers of the use of partners’ communication channels (including digital and print) to help with this.

4. Recommendations

4.1. The Council is asked to:

- Agree that The General Dental Council (Continuing Professional Development) (Dentists and Dental Care Professionals) Rules Order of Council should be sealed; and
- Note the plans for further development, in line with Shifting the Balance

5. Appendices

5.1. Appendix 1: The General Dental Council (Continuing Professional Development) (Dentists and Dental Care Professionals) Rules Order of Council.