

Guidance for the Management of Dental Professionals

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Type of business	To note
For Council only:	Public session
Issue	To provide the Council with an update on the work to develop guidance for the management of dental professionals.
Recommendation	The Council is asked to note this update

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In Shifting the Balance, we signalled our intention to develop and publish non-statutory guidance to encourage managers and employers of dental professionals to take an active role in promoting professionalism within dentistry and supporting dental professionals to deliver high-quality care.
- 1.2 In November 2018, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) considered a detailed plan for the development of guidance, including stakeholder engagement. The Policy and Research Board was also given the opportunity to comment on this. Given the particular importance of external buy-in and input to this project, the majority of work in 2019 was directed toward building relationships with stakeholders and forming a consensus around the purpose and outline of the document. We are therefore confident that drafting, led by the GDC, can move swiftly in 2020.
- 1.3 Currently this project is known as Guidance on the management of dental professionals (GMDP), but this is a working title only.
- 1.4 This paper gives an update on the project and outlines the proposed content.

2. Guidance: purpose, content and format

- 2.1 As the regulator of all dental professionals it is important that we recognise that there are a number of actors within the system who influence the practice and conduct of those we regulate. Employers are one of those actors and we are seeking to emphasise the importance of their role in supporting registrants to maintain high standards of professionalism and ensuring a continuous focus on patient safety. We can also offer a useful view on the importance of professionalism for non-registrant staff members and how employers can support this by promoting and supporting good practice on a day-to-day basis.
- 2.2 Producing this guidance gives us an opportunity to bring together and promote the latest thinking on issues such as professionalism and CPD, and how these contribute to building

and sustaining a well-trained, motivated and competent dental team to deliver safe, high-quality care to patients.

2.3 We have worked with a range of stakeholders to identify key issues for inclusion in the guidance (a full list is provided at appendix 1). We will continue to work with many of them to develop supporting case studies. In due course we would also hope to encourage the collection and dissemination of best practice where there is a consensus to support it.

2.4 Having listened to our stakeholders, we propose to cover the following topics in the guidance:

- **Promoting professionalism in the workplace**
 - GDC guidance on the definition of professionalism and how to support it in practise (in development)
- **Applying the *Standards for the Dental Team* in practice**
 - GDC advice on how understanding the *Standards for the Dental Team* can support effective working in a practical context
 - Effective working across the dental team, including non-registrants
 - Examples of best practice as to how non-registrants can support the delivery of dental care
 - Examples of how managers and leaders can support registrants and their professional development
- **Good practice in supporting professionals to undertake CPD**
 - Examples of the benefits of granting employees time off for CPD
 - Examples of opportunities within a practice for CPD, peer learning and the whole of the practice to undertake CPD together
- **Employment of DCPs in training**
 - Clarification of route to registration for trainees, and what trainees can do in a practice before and while awaiting registration
- **Developing the skills of trainees**
 - Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of trainees
 - Examples of opportunities for employers and managers of trainees to develop their skills
- **Understanding and utilising the skills mix of the dental team**
 - GDC advice on how understanding the scope of practice can support effective working in a practical context
 - Examples of best practice from the profession re: teamworking and skills mix within the dental team
- **Direct access**
 - GDC guidance and policy on direct access, with examples of how direct access can support the effective working of a dental practice
- **Lone working arrangements for hygienists and therapists**
 - Clarification of GDC position on lone working for hygienists and therapists
- **Performance management and appraisals of registrants**
 - Examples of best practice from the profession
 - How CPD can support performance management and/or appraisal
- **Reflective practice**
 - Overview of current research/thinking into reflective practice, with best practice examples

- **Understanding human factors in dentistry**
 - Overview of current research/thinking into “human factors” in healthcare, and their relevance to ensuring patient safety
- **Handling patient complaints and feedback locally**
 - Promotion of local resolution of patient complaints, and the benefits of welcoming feedback from patients and colleagues
- **Handling fitness to practise disclosures and self-referrals**
 - How and when to refer fitness to practise concerns (about self or colleagues) to the GDC, or other appropriate organisations
- **Whistleblowing**
 - GDC guidance on whistleblowing
- **Duty of candour**
 - GDC guidance on duty of candour
- **Use of dental titles**
 - GDC guidance around use of dental titles, including in advertising
- **Clinical governance**
 - Overview of clinical governance framework, with signposting to appropriate resources
- **Significant event reporting and learning**
 - Signposting to external resources
- **The benefits of joining professional membership organisations**
 - Membership organisations and resources available to profession
- **Understanding regulatory responsibilities**
 - Overview of relevant regulatory agencies that affect dental practice, and suggested ways to stay up to date with developments in regulation
- **Diversity and inclusion**
 - Raising awareness of the relevant legal and other obligations and the need to ensure compliance with these
- **Mental health and well-being**
 - Raising awareness of the relevant legal and other obligations and the need to ensure compliance with these.

2.5 This is an indicative list at this stage, and not intended as a final list of content. Council members should note that inclusion of a topic does not necessarily mean that the GDC will be providing advice on the issue; it may simply signpost to existing resources provided by other organisations.

2.6 The policy and communications teams are working together to ensure that the format of the guidance makes it usable and accessible to those it is aimed at. It is therefore unlikely that the guidance will simply be published as a single reference document. We will make use of the GDC’s website and other communications channels to both publish and publicise the guidance and/or its constituent parts. We will also encourage our stakeholders to publicise and express their support for the guidance, thus increasing its reach.

2.7 We plan to publish the GMDP in mid-2020, with a revised version to follow in 2021. The revision will be informed by a short period of review and feedback, internally and with stakeholders, on the first published version. It will also allow the GDC to integrate the outputs of any other relevant work, whether by the GDC or externally, that was not reflected in the first version.

2.8 In particular, this will allow the second version of the GMDP to take into account any relevant findings from the Promoting Professionalism project, which is expected to conclude

in late 2020. Promoting Professionalism is moving towards codifying a new definition of dental professionalism, and commissioning research into, amongst other things, how employers and managers can support or hinder registrants in maintaining professionalism. It seems likely that that work will be relevant to the GMDP, though it is too early to say what exactly will result from it.

3. Legal, policy and national considerations

- 3.1 This guidance will be applicable in all parts of the UK, but we may need to tailor some sections of it to be specific in the four nations.

4. Equality, diversity and privacy considerations

- 4.1 The guidance itself is likely to cover at least signposting and emphasis of the standards in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. Any text will be shared with relevant colleagues to ensure appropriate wording and references are used.

5. Resource considerations and CCP

- 5.1 The resources to continue development of the guidance and to communicate it once finalised have been allocated within the CCP and staff have been assigned. There are no other anticipated resource requirements over the life of the project. The review timetable for the guidance will be incorporated into the closeout report for the project and resources allocated in future corporate plans.

6. Monitoring and review

- 6.1 The GDC will own and be responsible for the maintenance and revision of the GMDP, although it will be formulated with significant contributions from stakeholders, and we intend that it will be further developed, supported and promoted by stakeholders as appropriate through regular reviews. The impact of the guidance, including its dissemination, support from stakeholders and access via the website will be monitored and used as part of the review and development process.

7. Next steps and communications

- 7.1 Over the coming months, we will work with stakeholders to develop the content on each of the topic areas.
- 7.2 While the GDC will be the sole owner of the GMDP, we are committed to working closely with stakeholders to ensure the GMDP reflects their input. Our aim is that our stakeholders will be comfortable supporting and promoting the final product and will work with us to ensure it is disseminated and embedded.
- 7.3 We plan to seek approval from Council of the first draft of guidance in early-to-mid-2020, with SLT to be updated beforehand.

Appendices

- a. List of stakeholders involved to date.

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Stakeholders engaged to date

Association of Dental Groups
Association of Dental Hospitals
British Association of Dental Nurses
British Association of Oral Surgeons
British Dental Association
British Orthodontic Society
British Society for Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology
British & Irish Society for Oral Medicine
British Society for Dental Hygiene and Therapy
British Society for Periodontology
Care Quality Commission
Confederation of Dental Employers
Dental Defence Union
Dental Protection
Dental Technologists Association
Health and Social Care Board, Northern Ireland
Healthcare Improvement Scotland
IDH Group Limited
Local Dental Committees Confederation
Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland
MyDentist
National Association of Dental Advisors
NHS Employers
Orthodontic National Group
Rodericks Dental
Simplyhealth Professionals
Society of British Dental Nurses

Further stakeholders from across the professions and four nations have been contacted but have not yet engaged in the project. We will continue to keep them informed of any developments.