

## Lifelong learning: outcome report response and action plan

<b>Executive Director</b>	Stefan Czerniawski, Executive Director, Strategy
<b>Author(s)</b>	Jessica Rothnie, Policy Manager
<b>Type of business</b>	To note
<b>Issue</b>	An update on the GDC's work on CPD and lifelong learning.
<b>Recommendation</b>	The Council is asked to note this update.

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The GDC signalled its intention in *Shifting the balance* to develop its approach to CPD, with a view to establishing a clearer link between CPD/lifelong learning, professionalism and improved practice. We have reiterated this commitment in our current strategy and the associated corporate plan.
- 1.2 In 2019 we published a discussion document to stimulate debate about developing a future model of lifelong learning for dental professionals. We asked for feedback on how to move towards a more meaningful system of lifelong learning, centred in a portfolio model, in which professionals take ownership and shift away from the current hours-based model which does little to promote beneficial behaviours and activities.
- 1.3 Plans to implement what is now our CPD scheme (formerly known as Enhanced CPD) had been developed prior to the publication of *Shifting the balance*, and we went ahead and implemented those plans in 2018, seeing them as the first step towards a more outcome focused model. This means that we have now seen over two full CPD years for dentists and over one and a half years for dental care professionals (DCPs) on the revised scheme.

### 2. Outline summary of report

- 2.1 We launched a discussion document, *Shaping the direction of lifelong learning for dental professionals*, and invited comments from July to October last year. The discussion document outcome report is due to be published in August. A summary of the content of the report is provided below for information.
- 2.2 The discussion document was informed by a systematic literature review completed by the Association of Dental Educators Europe, the GDC's CPD advisory group, two stakeholder workshops, and feedback to the initial CPD proposals set out in *Shifting the balance* in 2017.
- 2.3 The discussion document received 117 responses in total, 102 from individuals and 15 from organisations. The responses have now been analysed and incorporated into a draft report.
- 2.4 [Aims and model](#)

- There was general agreement with GDC's proposed direction and activities, but there were familiar concerns raised about practicalities, such as associated costs, access to certain activities, time off work and how compliance would be achieved.
- In reference to the proposed portfolio model, there was a general positive consensus, although there were concerns raised about how this kind of model would be monitored, and some felt that more detail from the GDC was required.
- There was a degree of scepticism raised from both registrants and stakeholders about their colleagues. A significant number of respondents raised concerns that a system with more freedom and flexibility means that some professionals will inevitably "cheat the system" or do the bare minimum.

#### 2.5 Elements of the portfolio model

- There was a divided opinion about removal of the minimum hourly requirements in a future system. Some felt this was important to ensure individuals were doing a basic minimum of development, whilst others felt that it should be left to individual's own judgment. There was a concern raised by an association that removal of hours might dissuade employers from further supporting staff to do their CPD.
- Incentives such as time off, free CPD from the GDC, or a discounted ARF were common responses for how to motivate professionals to adopt positive but non-compulsory changes into their practice.

#### 2.6 Recommended topics

- Opinion was divided on the removal of the recommended topics, amongst both individuals and stakeholders. When asked where the responsibility lay for driving CPD activities and recommended topics for dental professionals, individuals and stakeholders all felt that a wide range of organisations had a role to play and this should not be solely within the GDC's domain.

### 3. **Future plans**

3.1 Following discussion of the issue, the senior leadership team (SLT) decided that:

- a. The report on the responses to the discussion document should be published as factual summary of the responses received.
- b. We should carry out an evaluation of the 2018 CPD scheme in order to inform our policy response.
- c. Further work to develop the scheme for CPD/lifelong learning should be undertaken following that evaluation, and that the focus on Council engagement on the topic should come when developing that policy response.

3.2 This decision was taken not only to enable the evaluation to take place, but also to enable the appropriate and effective use of staff time and focus within the relevant teams and to enable the right alignment between the CPD work and other parts of the upstream portfolio (e.g. professionalism). However, we envisage that an evaluation of the current scheme will need to take place before any reforms can or should be proposed.

3.3 We will also be giving some consideration to how the current scheme can be made more flexible and include a broader range of learning activities, within the current legislative framework e.g. reflective practice and peer learning.

**4. Legal, policy and national considerations**

- 4.1 We are considering several ways in which we might gather the required information from professionals to undertake an evaluation. We will collaborate with registration and legal colleagues to establish the various options available in accordance with the legislation. The cost-benefit of these options will be weighed up as the evaluation is designed.

**5. Equality, diversity, inclusion and GDPR considerations**

- 5.1 Equality, diversity, inclusion and GDPR will be considered when devising the evaluation. For any published material from a research standpoint, routine measures will be taken to ensure all registrant information is anonymised.

**6. Resource considerations and CCP**

- 6.1 We are proposing to externally commission the evaluation of the Enhanced CPD scheme. This will be financed from the research budget.
- 6.2 This decision has been reflected in the corporate planning round, with the work on the development of the CPD scheme being resumed in 2021.

**7. Development, consultation and decision trail**

- 7.1 The relevant decision was taken by the SLT in March 2020.

**8. Next steps and communications**

- 8.1 A communications strategy and engagement plan has been developed to share the outcomes of the discussion document, and the report will be published in August 2020.

Jessica Rothnie, policy manager  
jrothnie@gdc-uk.org  
Tel: 071676129

21 July 2020