

General Dental Council

Working patterns data

Summary of key highlights and insights*

October 2025

*Dentist data published in April 2025 and dental care professional (DCP) data published in October 2025

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Introduction

As part of their annual renewal, we ask dental professionals to answer a short survey on how they work, where they work and how long they work for each week.

The data presented in this document is a summary of all data collected since the survey opened in November 2023 and presents two rounds of working patterns data collection.

The insight and information from the data helps improve the sector's understanding of dental professionals' working patterns and informs discussions about future workforce resource planning.

30,066 dentists (66% of the dentist register) and 56,184 DCPs (70% of the DCP register) have answered the working patterns questions at least once. For DCPs, this represents 63,968 (70%) of the total number of registered DCP titles.

The data is published on the [GDC website](#) and can be viewed on a national and individual country level. This can be viewed at dentist and total DCP level, as well as by individual DCP title.

All percentages in the document are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where the numbers are less than five, they have been removed to avoid identification of any individuals. These are identified by '...' in the data summary tables.

The key highlights and insights should not be considered as a comprehensive review of the findings from the data, rather they are a summary of some of the highlights based on a UK wide analysis.

We would encourage stakeholders and professional bodies to review the data as there may be other highlights or information that would support workforce discussions that have not been highlighted in the tables that follow.

Key highlights and insights

Dentists (initially published in April 2025)

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	The vast majority (99%) were working in the dental sector. Less than percent were looking for work
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	Four out of five (80%) worked in England, 11% in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 4% in Northern Ireland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	Nearly nine-in-ten (89%) were working primarily as a dentist, and a further 9% were working as a specialist.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	More than half (59%) were self-employed/agency or working as a locum. Around a fifth (20%) were employees.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	More than four-fifths (86%) were working predominantly (over 75%) or fully in clinical roles, a further 10% were undertaking a mix of clinical and non-clinical work.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	More than two-fifths (44%) worked 30 hours/week or less.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Nearly three-quarters (74%) worked in a general or specialist dental practice. Around 6% worked in a dental hospital, 4% in other hospital settings and 5% in community dental services.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	Almost four in ten (39%) regularly worked in more than one location, with 61% commonly working in one location.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	Nearly a fifth (20%) provided only private care, with no NHS and a further 14% said they worked predominantly (over 75% of their time) in private care.

Total DCP response numbers

The total number of DCPs who have completed the survey at least once is 56,184 (70% of the DCP register). Some DCPs are registered with more than one professional title and the survey results represent 63,968 of DCP titles (70% of all registered DCP titles).

Role	Total number of titles	Total number who completed survey	Working patterns response rate
Clinical dental technician	440	299	68%
Dental hygienist	11,089	7,795	70%
Dental nurse	65,862	46,474	71%
Dental technician	4,899	3,051	62%
Dental therapist	8,485	5,384	63%
Orthodontic therapist	1,258	965	77%
Total	92,033	63,968	70%

All DCP titles

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	Nearly all (99%) of the responding DCPs are currently working in the dental sector.
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	More than four out of five (82%) responding DCPs work in England, 10% in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 3% in Northern Ireland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	Over three-quarters (77%) of respondents are working as dental nurses in the UK. The next largest cohort is dental hygienists at 1 in 10. Less than 1% of respondents are working as clinical dental technicians.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	Nearly four-fifths (79%) of responding DCPs are employed, while around 15% of all DCPs are self-employed/locum agency workers. This however varies significantly by professional title. Around 8% of those working in 'NHS only' clinical roles were self-employed /locum/agency. This is compared to 30% of those working in 'Private only' clinical roles, and 19% of DCPs who worked in a 'Mix of NHS and Private' clinical roles.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	Just under half of all responding DCPs (48%) are working fully in clinical roles.

		A further 17% are spending at least three quarters of their time in clinical roles, and nearly 6% of respondents are fully non-clinical.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Just under half (49%) of all DCP respondents told us they work between 30 and 40 hours a week. Slightly less than that (45%) said they work 30 hours or less.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents work in general dental practice, just under 6% work in a community setting, while 5% work in a dental hospital setting. Nearly 12% work in a specialist dental practice.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	Over three-quarters (77%) of all responding DCPs commonly work in one location. Over 20% regularly work in more than one location, with around 1% working in seven or more locations.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	More than a quarter (26%) spent at least 75% of their time delivering NHS care. Just over a third (36%) of DCPs said they provided a mix of NHS and Private care, and the same proportion (36%) said they spend at least 75% of their time delivering private care.

Clinical dental technicians

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	N/A
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	More than four-fifths (87%) of responding clinical dental technicians work in England, with a further 6% working in Scotland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	The vast majority (86%) of respondents told us their primary field of practice was as a clinical dental technician. The rest practise as dental technicians.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	More than two-fifths (41%) of clinical dental technician respondents are owners or part-own a business. Nearly a third (31%) are self-employed/locum/agency workers, while more than a quarter (26%) are employed.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	Nearly two-thirds (63%) of responding clinical dental technicians spend their time on a mix of clinical and non-clinical work. Around 7% are fully clinical.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Just under half (48%) of respondents told us they work between 30 and 40 hours a week. Just under one in ten (9%) said they work between 50 and 60 hours.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Just under half (45%) of respondents work in a lab setting, nearly 8% work in a specialist dental practice and nearly a third 30% work in general dental practice.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	Over half (56%) of responding clinical dental technicians commonly work in one location. Over a fifth (22%) of them regularly work in two locations, with one in ten working in three locations.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	More than three-fifths (61%) of responding clinical dental technicians said they provided only private care, with no NHS, and a further 12% said they worked predominantly (over 75% of their time) in private care. A fifth (20%) said they carry out a mix of NHS and private care.

Dental hygienists

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	Nearly all (98%) of the responding dental hygienists are currently working in the dental sector.
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	More than four-fifths (86%) of responding dental hygienists work in England, with a further 8% working in Scotland, 5% in Wales, and 2% in Northern Ireland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	Two-thirds (66%) of respondents told us their primary field of practice was as a dental hygienist. Nearly a third (30%) practise as dental therapists.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	More than two-thirds (68%) of dental hygienists are self-employed/locum/agency workers, while 27% are employed.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	More than four-fifths (82%) of responding dental hygienists are fully clinical. One in ten (10%) are predominantly clinical, while less than 1% are fully non-clinical.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents told us they work less than 30 hours a week. Around a third said 34% said they work between 30 and 40 hours.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Four-fifths (80%) of dental hygienist respondents work in general dental practice, just over 3% work in a community dental service and 7% work in specialist dental practice.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	Almost two-fifths (38%) of respondents regularly work in two locations, with a similar proportion (39%) saying they work in one location. A further 16% work across three locations.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	Nearly two-thirds (63%) of dental hygienists stated they spent at least 75% of their time delivering private dental care.

Dental nurses

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	Just under 2% of responding dental nurses are seeking work in the dental sector.
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	More than four-fifths (81%) of responding dental nurses work in England, a further 11% work in Scotland, 5% in Wales, and 3% in Northern Ireland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	More than nine in ten (92%) of dental nurse respondents told us they currently practise as a dental nurse and 3% of respondents said they primarily practise as a dental hygienist.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	Nearly nine-tenths (88%) of respondents are employed, while 7% of respondents are self-employed/locum/agency workers. Nearly 3% are on parental leave.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	Nearly half (46%) are fully clinical, while nearly a quarter (24%) of responding dental nurses spend their time on a mix of clinical and non-clinical work.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Half (50%) of dental nurse respondents told us they work between 30 and 40 hours a week. Around 28% said they work between 20 and 30 hours.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Around two-thirds (67%) work in general dental practice, around 13% work in a specialist dental practice and 5% work in a dental hospital.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	Around four-fifths (81%) of responding dental nurses commonly work in one location. 11% of them regularly work in two locations, with 1% even working in seven locations or more.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	More than a third (38%) said they carry out a mix of NHS and private care. More than a fifth (22%) of responding dental nurses said they provided only private care, with no NHS, and a further 11% said they worked predominantly (over 75% of their time) in private care.

Dental technicians

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	Around 1% of responding dental technicians are seeking work in the dental sector.
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	More than four-fifths (82%) of responding dental technicians work in England, just over 9% work in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 3.5% in Northern Ireland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	The majority (87%) of respondents told us their primary field of practice was as a dental technician. Just under 10% practise primarily as clinical dental technicians.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	Over three-fifths (61%) of respondents are employed. Nearly 22% are owners or part own the business, while 14% are self-employed/locum/agency workers.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	Over half (55%) of responding dental technicians spend their time fully non-clinical. Around 7% are fully clinical.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Less than three-fifths (59%) of dental technician respondents told us they work between 30 and 40 hours a week. 13% said they work between 40 and 50 hours. Around 19% work 30 hours or under.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Over two-thirds (67%) of respondents work in a lab setting, 10% work in a dental hospital and about 8% work in general dental practice.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	Nearly nine-in-ten (89%) of responding dental technicians commonly work in one location. Around 7% of them regularly work in two locations, with 1% even working in seven or more locations.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	More than a third (35%) of respondents said they carry out a mix of NHS and private care. 15% provide fully NHS care. Around 30% of responding dental technicians said they provided only private care, with no NHS, and a further 10% said they worked predominantly (over 75% of their time) in private care.

Dental therapists

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	More than 2% of responding dental therapists are currently seeking work in the dental sector.
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	Over 86% of responding dental therapists work in England, a further 8% work in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 1% in Northern Ireland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	Nearly three-fifths (58%) of respondents told us their primary field of practice was as a dental therapist. Just under 37% said they primarily practise as dental hygienists.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	More than three-fifths (65%) of respondents are self-employed/locum/agency workers, while 29% are employed and around 1% are owners or part-own a business.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	Nearly four fifths (79%) of responding dental therapists spend their time in fully clinical work, with a further 12% working predominantly clinically (at least 75% of time spent). Less than 1% are fully non-clinical.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Around two-fifths (42%) of dental therapist respondents told us they work between 30 and 40 hours a week. Just over one third (36%) said they work between 20 and 30 hours, with a total of 54% of respondents working 30 hours or less.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	More than three-quarters (79%) of respondents work in general dental practice, 5% work in a specialist dental practice and just over 5% work in community dental services.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	More than two fifths (41%) of responding dental therapists commonly work in one location, whilst a similar proportion (38%) regularly work in two locations.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	Only a fifth (20%) of dental therapists said they spent at least 75% of their time delivering NHS work.

Orthodontic therapists

Q#	Question	High level insight
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	Around 1% of responding orthodontic therapists are seeking work in the dental sector.
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	More than four-fifths (84%) of responding orthodontic therapists work in England, a further 9% work in Scotland, 4% in Wales and 3% in Northern Ireland.
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	More than four-fifths (83%) of orthodontic therapist respondents told us their primary field of practice was as an orthodontic therapist. One in ten (10%) said they primarily practise as dental therapists.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	Three-quarters (75%) of responding orthodontic therapists are employed. 21% are self-employed/locum/agency workers, while 2% are currently on parental leave.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	More than four-fifths (83%) of respondents are fully clinical, with a further 12% spending at least 75% of their time on clinical work. Less than one in ten (4%) spend their time on a mix of clinical and non-clinical work.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Over half (52%) of orthodontic therapist respondents told us they work between 30 and 40 hours a week. 34% said they work between 20 and 30 hours.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents work in a specialist dental practice, while just under a fifth (19%) work in general dental practice.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	Over three-fifths (61%) of responding orthodontic therapists commonly work in one location. More than a quarter (27%) of them regularly work in two locations.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	12% said they provided only NHS care, and a further 6% said they worked fully in private care. More than two-fifths (43%) of responding orthodontic therapists said they carry out a mix of NHS and private care.