

## **General Dental Council Patient and Public Survey 2014**

### **Topline Results**

- This document details results from an Ipsos MORI omnibus survey conducted with 1640 adults aged 15 and over in the United Kingdom between 7 and 20 November 2014.
- Booster interviews were carried out to ensure at least 100 interviews each in Wales and Northern Ireland.
- All respondents were interviewed face-to-face, in their homes.
- Similar surveys took place between 27 September and 7 October 2013, 31 August and 16 September 2012, and between 8 April and 17 April 2011. Data from questions that were also asked in those surveys are included in this document.
- Results are taken from the 2014 survey unless otherwise stated.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated (1640 in 2014, 1603 in 2013, 1609 in 2012 and 1563 in 2011).
- The 2014, 2013 and 2012 data is weighted to the known population profile for the United Kingdom.
- Respondents were asked to choose one answer code for each question unless otherwise stated.
- Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to respondents being able to give multiple responses to a question or computer rounding.
- An asterisk (\*) indicates a percentage of less than 0.5% but greater than zero.

## Statistical Significance

It should be remembered that a sample and not the entire population of adults aged 15 and over living in the United Kingdom has been interviewed. Consequently, all results are subject to potential sampling tolerances (or margins of error), which means that not all differences between results are statistically significant. For example, for a question where 50% of the people in a weighted sample of 1640 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than plus or minus two percentage points from a census of the entire population (using the same procedures).

Indications of approximate sampling tolerances for this survey are provided in the following table. As shown, sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the size of the percentage results (the bigger the sample, the closer the result is likely to be to the result that would be obtained if the entire population was asked the same question).

This survey used a quota sampling approach. Strictly speaking the tolerances applied here apply only to random samples with an equivalent design effect. In practice, good quality quota sampling has been found to be as accurate.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels			
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
Size of sample on which survey result is based	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
300 interviews	3	5	6
400 interviews	3	5	5
500 interviews	3	4	4
600 interviews	2	4	4
700 interviews	2	3	4
800 interviews	2	3	4
900 interviews	2	3	3
1640 interviews	2	2	2
1603 interviews	2	2	2
1609 interviews	2	2	2
1563 interviews	2	2	3

Different groups within a sample (e.g. men and women) may have different results for the same question. A difference has to be of a certain size in order to be statistically significant though. To test if a difference in results between two sub-groups within a sample is statistically significant one, at the 95% confidence interval, the differences between the two results must be greater than the values provided in the table below. Again, strictly speaking the sampling tolerances shown here apply only to random samples with an equivalent design effect. In practice, good quality quota sampling has been found to be as accurate.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentages			
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
Size of sample on which survey result is based	±	±	±
100 and 100	8	13	14
100 and 200	7	11	12
100 and 300	7	10	11
100 and 400	7	10	11
100 and 500	7	10	11
200 and 200	7	10	11
200 and 300	5	8	9
200 and 400	5	8	9
200 and 500	5	8	8
300 and 300	5	7	8
300 and 400	5	7	8
300 and 500	4	7	7
400 and 400	4	6	7
400 and 500	4	6	7
500 and 500	4	6	6
1640 and 1603 (2014 and 2013 surveys)	2	3	3
1603 and 1609 (2013 and 2012 surveys)	2	3	4
1603 and 1563 (2013 and 2011 surveys)	2	3	4
1609 and 1563 (2012 and 2011 surveys)	2	3	4



## Use of Dentists and Dental Care Professionals

### A1 When was the last time you went to the dentist?

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %	2011 %
In the last 6 months	50	51	50	53
In the last 7-12 months	14	15	16	12
In the last 1-2 years	10	10	10	10
More than 2 years ago	13	11	10	15
I used to go to the dentist but I don't any more	8	9	8	7
I have never been to the dentist	5	4	7	3
Don't know	*	*	1	N/A

### A2 On average, how often do you go to the dentist?

*Base: People who go to the dentist: 2014 (1422); 2013 (1376); 2012 (1320)*

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Once every six months	53	54	52
Once a year	26	24	27
Once every two years	6	9	8
Less than once every two years	15	13	12
Don't know	*	*	*

### A3 And how long have you been with your current dentist or dental practice?

*Base: People who go to the dentist: 2014 (1422); 2013 (1376); 2012 (1320)*

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
One year or less	9	11	14
Over one year, up to two years	9	9	13
Over two years, up to five years	23	20	22
Over five years, up to 10 years	18	19	18
Over 10 years, up to 15 years	12	12	11
Over 15 years, up to 20 years	9	9	7
Over 20 years	18	18	14
Don't know	2	2	1

- A4 **As you're probably aware, dental care is available both through the NHS and privately. Sometimes during one visit to the dentist, you may even have a combination of NHS and private treatment.**

**Thinking about the last time you visited your dentist or dental practice, which of these options best describes the type of care you think you received?**

*Base: People who go to the dentist at least once every two years: 2014 (1216); 2013 (1188); 2012 (1145)*

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
NHS dental care that I paid for	45	48	45
NHS dental care that was free	26	24	31
Private dental care only in the UK	19	20	18
NHS dental care and additional private dental care in the UK	7	6	5
I had treatment abroad	1	1	1
I'm not sure what type of care I received	1	1	*

- A5 **The term 'dental care professional' covers a range of different professions within dental care. Dental care professionals are: dental nurses, dental technicians, clinical dental technicians, dental hygienists, dental therapists and orthodontic therapists.**

**Have you ever had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist? By this we mean an appointment where the dentist was not present.**

*Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2014 (1564); 2013 (1524); 2012 (1464)*

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Yes	32	37	27
No	68	63	73
Don't know	*	*	*

- A6 **You said you have had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist. Which dental care professional or professionals did you see? Please select all that apply.**

Multi-code question except for 'Don't know/can't remember' answer code.

*Base: People who have had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist: 2014 (481); 2013 (519); 2012 (340)*

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Dental hygienist	80	77	72
Orthodontic therapist	13	14	15
Dental nurse	8	8	9
Dental technician	5	7	8
Clinical dental technician	2	2	3
Dental therapist	*	1	1
Other	2	1	1
Don't know/can't remember	1	*	1

## Satisfaction with Dental Care

**Q1 Now thinking about your own experience, how satisfied or otherwise are you with your dental care or treatment?**

*Base: People who go to the dentist at least once a year: 2014 (1129); 2013 (1063)*

	2014 %	2013 %
Very satisfied	62	61
Fairly satisfied	34	35
Fairly dissatisfied	2	2
Very dissatisfied	1	1
Don't know	*	*

**Q2 Which of the following, if any, best describe why you feel satisfied with your dental care or treatment? Please select as many or as few as apply.**

Multi-code question

*Base: People who are satisfied with their dental care or treatment: 2014 (1089); 2013 (1018)*

	2014 %	2013 %
The dental professional behaved in a professional way	77	80
The dental professional provided good quality treatment	73	73
I received a clear explanation about my dental treatment	56	58
The dental professional had good communication skills	56	57
The dental professional knew my dental history	54	56
I received good follow up treatment	40	41
The cost of my dental treatment was reasonable	38	37
I received clear information about the cost of my treatment	37	37
Other	2	1
None of these	*	*
Don't Know	*	1

**Q3 Which of the following, if any, best describe why you feel dissatisfied with your dental care or treatment? Please select as many or as few as apply.**

Multi-code question

*Base: People who are dissatisfied with their dental care or treatment: 2014 (39)\*; 2013 (43)\**

	2014 %	2013 %
The dental professional provided poor quality treatment	50	50
I received poor follow up treatment	22	7
The dental professional had poor communication skills	19	23
I did not receive a clear explanation about my dental treatment	18	9
The dental professional behaved in an unprofessional way	17	8
The cost of my dental treatment was unreasonable	14	27
The dental professional did not know my dental history	8	12
I did not receive clear information about the cost of my treatment	8	6
Other	20	15
Don't know	0	0
None of these	0	0

\*The small base sizes means comparison of figures and trends is indicative only.

### Friends and Family Test

**Q4 We would like you to think about your most recent experience of visiting your dental practice. How likely or unlikely are you to recommend your dental practice to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?**

*Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2014 (1564)*

	2014 %
Extremely likely	40
Likely	35
Neither likely or unlikely	14
Unlikely	5
Extremely unlikely	5
Don't know	1

### Regulation of Dental Professionals

The following questions will be asked about your views on the regulation of different types of services. By 'regulation' we mean where there is a set of rules that govern behaviour, actions and conduct, and where action may be taken if these rules aren't met.

**Q5 Now please think about services generally and not just dental care or healthcare services. How confident, if at all, are you that regulation of services in general works effectively?**

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	15	14	13
Fairly confident	60	56	58
Not very confident	15	21	18
Not at all confident	3	3	5
Don't know	6	6	7

In 2012, the question was worded: 'How confident, if at all, are you that regulation in general works effectively'.

**Q6 Now thinking about healthcare, how confident, if at all, are you that regulation of this works effectively?**

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	17	14	14
Fairly confident	58	57	58
Not very confident	16	20	17
Not at all confident	4	4	6
Don't know	6	5	6

In 2012, the question was worded: 'How confident, if at all, are you that healthcare in general works effectively'.



**Q7 Which of the following best describes how aware you were of the General Dental Council before this survey?**

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %	2011 %
I had definitely heard of the General Dental Council before	17	15	20	10
I think I had heard of the General Dental Council before	16	27	21	15
I had not heard of the General Dental Council before	65	58	57	70
Not sure	1	1	2	5

In 2012 and 2011, the answer codes were worded: 'I have definitely heard of the General Dental Council before', 'I think I have heard of the General Dental Council before', and 'I have not heard of the General Dental Council before'.

**Q8 How confident, if at all, are you that the General Dental Council is regulating dentists and dental care professionals effectively?**

*Base: People who have heard of the General Dental Council before: 2014 (558); 2013 (644); 2012 (602)*

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	14	15	12
Fairly confident	61	62	66
Not very confident	12	16	13
Not at all confident	1	1	3
Don't know	11	5	6

**Q9 During the last year, have you been aware or not of the General Dental Council taking disciplinary action against a dental professional because they do not meet the standards required or are not fit to practise?**

*Base: People who have heard of the General Dental Council before: 2014 (558); 2013 (644)*

	2014 %	2013 %
Yes, definitely	23	13
Yes, maybe	14	16
No	63	70
Don't know	1	1

**Q10 The Dental Complaints Service is an independent dental complaints service funded by the General Dental Council. Its purpose is to assist private dental patients to resolve complaints about private dental services.**

**Which of the following best describes how aware you were of the Dental Complaints Service before this survey?**

	2014 %	2012 %
I have definitely heard of the Dental Complaints Service before	11	9
I think I have heard of the Dental Complaints Service before	10	12
I have not heard of the Dental Complaints Service before	71	77
Not sure	8	1

## Complaints

**Q11 Have you ever complained about a dental professional?**

*Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2014 (1564); 2013 (1524); 2012 (1464)*

	2014	2013	2012
	%	%	%
Yes	2	4	3
No	97	96	95
Don't know	*	*	1
Prefer not to say	0	0	1

**Q12 Have you ever considered complaining about a dental professional?**

*Base: People who have not, don't know or prefer not to say if they have complained about a dental professional: 2014 (1523); 2013 (1467); 2012 (1422)*

	2014	2013	2012
	%	%	%
Yes	5	8	5
No	95	92	93
Don't know	*	*	1
Prefer not to say	0	0	1

**Q13 Thinking about the most recent time you complained or considered complaining, what type of dental professional did you complain or consider complaining about?**

*Base: People who have complained or considered complaining about a dental professional: 2014 (119); 2012 (116)*

	2014	2012
	%	%
Dentist	83	83
Orthodontic Therapist	6	2
Dental Hygienist	3	1
Dental Nurse	2	1
Clinical Dental Technician	2	3
Dental Technician	1	3
Receptionist	1	7
Dental Therapist	1	0
Don't know/can't remember	1	0

**Q14 Thinking about the most recent time you complained or considered complaining, when was this?**

*Base: People who have complained or considered complaining about a dental professional: 2014 (119); 2012 (116)*

	2014	2012
	%	%
Within the last six months	13	11
Within the last year	9	16
Within the last two years	18	18
Within the last five years	18	14
More than five years ago	42	41
Don't know/can't remember	0	0

**Q15 Thinking about the most recent time you complained or considered complaining, who did you complain or consider complaining to?**

Multi-code question except for 'Don't know' answer code.

*Base: People who have complained or considered complaining about a dental professional: 2014 (119); 2013 (165); 2012 (116)*

	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
The practice where the treatment was carried out	40	41	37
The Dental Complaints Service	7	4	7
The NHS	6	7	3
The General Dental Council	4	9	10
Trading Standards	3	2	1
A Health Ombudsman	0	2	4
The Care Quality Commission	0	1	1
Other	5	9	1
I wasn't sure who to complain to	41	27	32
Don't know	1	2	8

In 2012, the answer code 'The NHS' was worded 'A primary care trust/Health Board'.

**Q16 You said you made a complaint about a dental professional. What motivated you to complain? Please select the top three reasons from the following list.**

Multi-code up to 3 options question except for 'Don't know/can't remember' answer code.

*Base: People who have complained about a dental professional: 2014 (41)\*; 2012 (42)\**

	2014 %	2012 %
To raise concerns about the dental professional's performance	40	47
To ensure that other patients don't have the problems that I had	34	18
So that the dental professional can improve his/her performance	30	16
To get an explanation for what happened	18	12
To change dental professional at the practice	10	16
To get a refund	7	12
To get a contribution to corrective treatment	7	12
To get a written apology	4	7
To gain compensation	3	8
To get a verbal apology	2	5
To get corrective treatment	2	N/A
Other	12	0
Don't know/can't remember	0	0

\*The small base sizes means comparison of figures and trends is indicative only.

**Q17 You said you considered making a complaint about a dental professional. What prevented you from complaining? Please select the top three reasons from the following list.**

Multi-code up to 3 options question except for 'Don't know/can't remember' answer code

Base: *People who have considered complaining about a dental professional: 2014 (78)\*; 2012 (74)\**

	2014 %	2012 %
I didn't know where to start	35	29
I didn't have the time	22	19
I didn't know who or where to go to for information on how to complain	20	26
I didn't believe that the matter would be investigated	12	20
I didn't want to confront the dental professional as I'll have to continue seeing them in the future	12	10
The process for complaining is too long-winded	7	4
I prefer to talk to someone face-to-face about my concerns rather than to go through a formal complaints process	7	7
I didn't understand the information that was given to me or that I found out about how to complain	4	3
I changed dentist	3	N/A
The opening hours of the complaints service were not convenient for me	0	3
Other	11	5
Don't know/can't remember	1	4

\*The small base sizes means comparison of figures and trends is indicative only.

**Q18 What would or did you expect to achieve from complaining to the General Dental Council's Dental Complaints Service in particular? Please select the top three things you would expect to achieve from the following list.**

Multi-code up to 3 options question except for 'Don't know/can't remember' answer code

	2014 %	2012 %
To ensure that other patients don't have the problems that I had	28	27
To raise concerns about the dental professional's performance	24	19
To get an explanation for what happened	24	21
A written apology	23	20
A contribution to corrective treatment	22	17
To help the dental professional improve his or her performance	21	16
Compensation	15	16
A refund	13	14
A verbal apology	10	9
To change dental professional at the practice	6	8
Not complained/would not complain	2	N/A
Other	5	*
Don't know/can't remember	10	9
None of these	N/A	8
Refused	N/A	9

<b>Standards</b>
------------------

**Q19 Thinking about the last time you went to the dentist, before you had the check-up or treatment, how clear, if at all, were you on what the costs would be for you?**

*Base: People who go to the dentist at least once every two years: 2014 (1216)*

	2014 %
Very clear	53
Fairly clear	30
Not very clear	10
Not at all clear	5
Don't know	1

**Q20 Dental professionals have to make it clear in their practice that they are registered with the General Dental Council in order to practise. Would knowing they are registered with the General Dental Council make you more likely to trust them or would it make no difference?**

*Base: People who go to the dentist: 2014 (1422)*

	2014 %
More likely	57
It would make no difference	42
Don't know	1

## Informing Consent and Decision Making

**Q21 During dental appointments, some patients may want to ask their dental professional questions to help them feel informed enough to make decisions about their care and treatment. We have listed some examples of such questions on this screen.**

**Looking at this list, which questions do you think would be most useful to ask? Please choose up to 3.**

Multi-code up to 3 options question except for 'I would not ask any of these questions' and 'Don't know' answer codes

*Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2014 (1564)*

	2014 %
<b>Treatment options</b>	
What are all of my treatment options?	55
What are the benefits and risks of each treatment option?	35
Can I have more time to make a decision about my treatment options?	6
<b>Aftercare</b>	
Who could I contact for advice after my treatment?	11
<b>Costs</b>	
How much does each treatment option cost?	51
Which treatment options are available on the NHS and which would I have to pay for privately?	17
If there are complications and I need more treatment, would there be extra costs and who would pay?	12
When would I have to pay?	11
<b>Experience</b>	
How many times have you carried out the treatment(s)?	9
Who will be carrying out the treatment(s)?	8
<b>Assurances</b>	
What would happen if I was unhappy with the results of my treatment?	12
Is the work guaranteed for a certain length of time?	7
What kind of insurance do you have?	3
<b>I would not ask any of these questions</b>	9
<b>Don't know</b>	1

**Q22 Are there any other questions, not already mentioned, which you think would be useful to ask a dental professional to ensure you feel informed enough to make decisions about your care and treatment?**

*Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2014 (1564)*

	2014 %
Yes – General advice on dental problems/dental health	1
Yes – Would it be painful?	1
Yes – Other question	3
No	96
Don't know	*

**Q23 Now thinking about these questions again, would you feel confident, or not asking them to a dental professional before making a decision about your dental care or treatment?**

*Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2014 (1564)*

	2014 %
Yes – I would feel confident asking any of these questions	72
Yes – I would feel confident asking some of these questions	19
No - I would not feel confident asking any of these questions	8
Don't know	*

**Q24 Have you ever seen this leaflet before?**

Multi-code up to 3 options question except for 'No' and 'Don't know/can't remember' answer codes

	2014 %
Yes, at my dental practice	10
Yes, online on a different website	1
Yes, online on the General Dental Council website	1
Yes, somewhere else	2
No	87
Don't know/can't remember	1

**Q25 The General Dental Council would like as many people as possible to see this leaflet. With this in mind, which, if any of these, do you think would be the best places for this leaflet to be made available? Please select as many or as few as apply.**

Multi-code up to 3 options question except for 'None of these' and 'Don't know' answer codes

	2014 %
Leaflets in dental practices	80
Online on the General Dental Council website	21
Via social media e.g. Facebook or Twitter	20
On electronic information screens in dental practices	12
Via a mobile phone app	6
Doctor's surgery	5
Posted through door/direct mail	3
Online on different websites	3
Other	10
None of these	3
Don't know	3

**Q26 And of the places you selected, which do you think would be the best place for the leaflet to be made available?**

*Base: People who suggested more than one place for the leaflet to be made available: 2014 (652)*

	2014 %
Leaflets in dental practices	57
Via social media e.g. Facebook or Twitter	18
On electronic information screens in dental practices	6
Online on the General Dental Council website	5
Doctor's surgery	4
Posted through door/direct mail	3
Via a mobile phone app	2
Online on different websites	1
Other	7
Don't know	*

### Appointment with a dental professional other than a dentist

**Q27 You can make an appointment to see a dental hygienist without having been referred by a dentist beforehand. How likely or unlikely would you be to do this?**

IF NEEDED: A dental hygienist is a person who professionally cleans people's teeth to keep their teeth and gums healthy. This is usually called 'scaling and polishing'. They also show you the best way to clean your teeth to keep them free of plaque.

	2014 %
Very likely	13
Fairly likely	24
Neither likely nor unlikely	20
Fairly unlikely	21
Very unlikely	22
Don't know	1

**Q28 You say you would be likely to do this. Which of the following reasons, if any, best describe why you would do so? Please select as many or as few as apply.**

Multi-code question except for 'None of these' and 'Don't know' answer codes.

*Base: People who would be likely to make an appointment to see a dental hygienist without having been referred by a dentist beforehand: 2014 (585)*

	2014 %
It would be more convenient	43
It would be easier	35
It could be cheaper for me	12
I would have more choice over my dental treatment	12
I could receive better quality care	11
I would need to make and attend fewer appointments	8
Other	5
None of these	*
Don't know	1



**Q29 You say you would be unlikely to do this. Which of the following reasons, if any, best describe why you would not do so? Please select as many or as few as apply.**

Multi-code question except for 'None of these' and 'Don't know' answer codes.

*Base: People who would be unlikely to make an appointment to see a dental hygienist without having been referred by a dentist beforehand: 2014 (707)*

	2014 %
I trust the dentist to make this decision for me	53
It could be more expensive for me	14
Only dentists have sufficient training to decide whether I should be referred to a dental care professional	10
It could increase the number of appointments I need to make and attend	7
I could receive wrong/unnecessary treatment	6
I could make an appointment with the wrong type of dental care professional	4
No need/not necessary	4
I have no teeth/false teeth/dentures	2
I do not go to the dentist	2
Other	8
None of these	1
Don't know	2

### Re-contacting Respondents for Future Research

**Q30 Both Ipsos MORI and the General Dental Council may wish to carry out some follow up research about this subject within the next 12 months. Would you be willing for us, Ipsos MORI, and the General Dental Council to securely keep hold of your contact details for this period so that either organisation can invite you to take part in the research? Please be assured that your responses to today's survey will remain confidential to Ipsos MORI, and that both organisations would securely delete any re-contact details you agree to provide here after 12 months, unless you agree otherwise during the follow up research.**

	%
Yes	36
No	64

### Demographics

Gender

	%
Male	48
Female	52

Age

	%
15-24	16
25-34	17
35-44	16
45-54	17
55-64	14
65+	20

## Social grade

	%
A	3
B	22
C1	27
C2	22
D	16
E	9

## Marital status

	%
Married/living as	58
Single	28
Widowed/divorced/separated	14

## Working

	%
Working	53
Not working	47

## Occupation

	%
Full-time	37
Part-time	12
Self-employed	5
Not working – housewife	6
Still in education	7
Unemployed	5
Retired	24
Other	5

## Children in household

	%
Yes	32
No	68

Children's ages  
Multi-code question

	%
Aged 0-3	13
Aged 4-5	8
Aged 6-9	12
Aged 10-15	14
None aged under 16	68

## Location

	%
<u>England</u>	83
London	13
North	24
Midlands	18
South	28
<u>Northern Ireland</u>	3
<u>Scotland</u>	8
<u>Wales</u>	6

## Ethnicity

	%
White	88
Non-white	12

 Access to internet  
 Multi-code question

	%
Home	84
Work	29
Total	85
None	15