

January 2020

Dental Professionals Survey 2019

Research report prepared for the General Dental Council

Appendix – Technical Details

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1.1 Methodological Approach:

As with previous surveys of Dental Professionals (registrants) a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative approaches was undertaken in the form of an online survey, focus groups and in-depth interviews.

As stated in the report, the purpose of detailed survey research containing a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions is to determine as reliably as possible what any given population believes about certain issues, by collating the views of a sample of that population. For the purposes of this report, this meant a representative sample of Dental Professionals registered with the GDC.

By analysing the results of a such a survey, we can make assumptions and conclusions on what the overall population of Dental Professionals perceives in answer to specific questions, subject to certain margins of error. The qualitative research (focus groups and in- depth interviews carried out with a much smaller number of Dental Professionals) provided an opportunity to explore in-depth topical issues and key themes highlighted in the online survey.

Online Fieldwork

Overall, 7,848 Dental Professionals responded to the survey, of which 76 were further invited and participated in the qualitative elements. The profile of the survey respondents and the qualitative participants is presented in the tables in section 1.2 of the report. However, as the response rate to the online survey was large (7,848 Dental Professionals), the margin of error when interpreting the results is low.

Samples from any given population – whatever its type – do not need to be large in order to achieve high levels of accuracy in the results as long as they are truly random. Where samples cannot be truly random the usual approach – as in the case of the present survey – is to use random sampling from a stratified population to ensure representativeness. This current sample – conducted against an agreed stratification frame – is very large and is therefore accurate at the 95% confidence interval, with an overall margin of error of +/- 3.2%. Due to its size this also meant that margins of error for cross-tabulations were between +/-3.2% and +/-4.3.

Questionnaire and Interview/Topic Guides

The process undertaken was to design the questionnaire for 2019 with the previous survey in mind for comparison purposes thus gathering further reactions of Dental Professionals to key longitudinal themes. It was co-designed at a workshop with a cross-mix of GDC staff (in early 2019). At this workshop other key themes were discussed including those presented in the 'Shifting the Balance, report,' a key document for the GDC (published in 2017 and referenced in the 2017-2018 survey). All of this resulted in largely the same length of questionnaire [52 questions] as was utilised in 2017-2018. The questionnaire was tested and piloted and amended.

Following deliberations around GDPR, the survey went live in June 2019.

Sampling

A stratified random* sample was used to ensure a representative sample was achieved in terms of job role, number of years registered, geographical location and key demographics. The sample responding to the survey was representative of the GDC registrant database.

However, weights have been applied to the data received to ensure that it is as close to the profile of registrants as possible, using the GDC registrant database supplied by the GDC to Pye Tait Consulting in 2019.

Weighting adjusts the proportions of certain groups within a sample to match more closely to the proportions in the target population. A full set of the unweighted and weighted tables were presented to the GDC and will be available on the website in due course.

Focus Group and Interview discussion guides:

These were also co-designed with the GDC and focused on themes of:

- Public Confidence
- Local resolution of complaints
- Advocacy
- Consumer vs Patient
- Regulation, dentistry and the dental profession
- Scope of Practice
- CPD

*to the extent that the sample was limited to those with email addresses. There were 987 bounce backs in total.

1.2 Topline Findings

General Dental Council – Dental Professionals Survey 2019

Report Summary

This report was generated on 12/08/19. Overall, 7848 respondents completed this questionnaire which ran as an online survey from Monday 3rd June 2019 to 31st July 2019.

This analysis is based on the data in its raw, unweighted form and does not include partial completions. 461 partial completion were received, however, those respondents had not (for whatever reason) chosen to submit the questionnaire and as such, they have not provided consent for the data therein to be used.

For those questions which feature ratings (for example Q6), we have included the mean, median and mode averages (Mean – total of all the values, divided by the number of values; Median – the middle number in the list ordered from lowest to highest; and Mode – the value that appears most often in the dataset). In some instances, the responses may not add up to 100%. There are several reasons why this might happen: the question may have allowed each respondent to give more than one answer – (multi-response) which we have analysed on responses not by respondent and only the most common responses may be shown in the table or chart.

The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'. Some charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. The results are those from Questions 1 to 42.

About you

Q1 Please tell us which of the following roles apply to you (please select all that apply) (multi response)

	%
Dentist	51
Dental nurse	33
Dental hygienist	7
Specialist	6
Dental therapist	3
Dental technician	3
Orthodontic therapist	1
Clinical dental technician	1

Q2 Please tell us in which specialism you work (please select all that apply) (multi response)

	%
Orthodontics	31
Oral surgery	25
Periodontics	11
Prosthodontics	11
Restorative dentistry	9
Special care dentistry	9
Endodontics	7

Other	6
Paediatric dentistry	6
Oral medicine	3
Dental public health	2
Oral and maxillofacial pathology	2

Q3 In what context do you work? (please select all that apply) (multi response)

	%
As part of a dental practice	68
In a hospital	10
Practice owned by a multiple	9
Community/Community dental services	8
Dental school/university/college	6
Other	3
Locum	3
Not currently working	2
In a dental laboratory	2
Salaried primary care dental services	2
Armed forces	1
Retired	1

Q4 What type of dental care do you provide? (please select all that apply) (multi response)

	%
Mixture of NHS and private care	58
NHS only	22
Private only	19
Private plan	5
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Q5 What best describes your route to registration? (single response)

	%
Dentist UK qualified	40
DCP UK qualified	32
EEA qualified dental professional	10
Don't know/prefer not to say	7
Overseas registration examination	6
Other	4
Dentist assessment (Sections 15 and 16 Dentists Act)	1
DCP Assessment (Section 36 Dentists Act)	1

Q6 How many dentists (including yourself, if applicable) work in the dental practice where you work? (single response)

Count	Mean	Median	Mode
6901	7.48	4	4

Q7 Approximately how many hours per week do you normally work? (*single response*)

	%
35-40	36
30-34	16
More than 40 hours	15
20-24	10
25-29	10
15-19	6
Fewer than 15	5
Not currently working/retired	3

Q8 How long have you been on the GDC register? (*single response*)

	%
6 to 10 years	19
11 to 15 years	19
3 to 5 years	13
16 to 20 years	9
31 to 35 years	8
21 to 25 years	7
26 to 30 years	7
1 to 2 years	7
36 to 40 years	5
Less than 1 year	3
41 to 45 years	2
46 years or over	1

Q9 As part of your work, do you provide any dental care in the following contexts?
(Please select all that apply) (*multi response*)

	%
I don't provide any services outside the surgery	80
Residential care/nursing home	12
Private homes	9
Special needs facilities	8
Schools	6
Other	5

Regulation, dentistry and the dental profession

Q10 The GDC has three key purposes. To what extent do you agree that the GDC is fulfilling each purpose? (*single response*)

To protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public

	%
Strongly agree	35
Tend to agree	40
Tend to disagree	12
Strongly disagree	9

Don't know/prefer not to say	4
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To promote and maintain public confidence in the profession

	%
Strongly agree	33
Tend to agree	31
Tend to disagree	16
Strongly disagree	15
Don't know/prefer not to say	4

To promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of those professions

	%
Strongly agree	36
Tend to agree	37
Tend to disagree	13
Strongly disagree	11
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Q11 Are you aware of the GDC's publication 'Shifting the Balance'? *(single response)*

	%
No, I am not aware of it	41
Yes, I am aware of it	36
Yes, I have read it	19
Yes, I have used it to inform my practice	5

Q12 On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely') to what extent do you think the GDC is... *(single response)*

Consistent:

Count	Mean	Median	Mode
7610	6.45	7	8

Efficient:

Count	Mean	Median	Mode
7615	5.76	6	8

Fair:

Count	Mean	Median	Mode
7590	5.60	5	5

Responsive:

Count	Mean	Median	Mode
7533	6.17	7	5

Transparent:

Count	Mean	Median	Mode
7521	5.72	6	5

Q13 How confident are you in the way that you as a professional are regulated by the GDC?
(single response)

	%
Very confident	22
Fairly confident	39
Not very confident	18
Not at all confident	19
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Q14 How confident are you in the way the dental profession is regulated by the GDC? (single response)

	%
Very confident	19
Fairly confident	37
Not very confident	21
Not at all confident	20
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Q15 Where on this scale best represents your views on what a regulator for dental professionals should focus on? (single response)

		%
1	A regulator for dental professionals should focus mainly on preventing bad practice in dentistry	25
2		4
3	A regulator for dental professionals should focus equally on preventing bad practice and taking action against dentists that have serious complaints raised against them	61
4		2
5	A regulator for dental professionals should focus mainly on taking action against dentists that have serious complaints raised against them	9

Q16 On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely') to what extent do you feel confident to raise a concern about another dental professional? (single response)

Count	Mean	Median	Mode
7665	5.89	6	5

Patient protection and learning

Q17 Which types of CPD activities have you undertaken in the last 12 months? (please select all that apply) (*multi response*)

	%
e-learning	83
Courses and lectures	80
Reading journals	71
Training days	71
Attending conference(s)	52
Clinical audit	47
Peer review	29
Other	4

Q18 To what extent have you used the GDC's 'recommended CPD topics' to guide your CPD in the last 12 months? (When referring to recommended topics, we are including those that are 'highly recommended' as well) (*single response*)

	%
I have covered all the recommended topics, plus others	42
I have covered some of the recommended topics, plus others	35
I have covered some of the recommended topics	7
I am aware of the recommended topics, but I haven't used them to guide my CPD	5
I have covered all the recommended topics only	5
I am not aware of the recommended topics	3
Don't know/prefer not to say	2

Q19 How much, if anything, would you say you know about the Scope of Practice guidance published by the General Dental Council? (*single response*)

	%
A great deal	15
A fair amount	47
Just a little	20
Have heard of it, but don't know much about it	11
Never heard of it	4
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Q20 Which of the following best describes how often you have referred to the Scope of Practice guidance? (*single response*)

	%
Once or twice a year	32
Every two or three months	22
Less than once a year	17
Monthly	11
Don't know/prefer not to say	7
Never	5

Q21 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

My practice/place of work... (if you work at more than one workplace, please answer about the workplace where you conduct most of your work) *(single response)*

Encourages feedback from patients (positive and negative):

	%
Strongly agree	61
Tend to agree	32
Tend to disagree	3
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Has a clear, written procedure for handling complaints:

	%
Strongly agree	70
Tend to agree	25
Tend to disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Q22 How is feedback (positive and negative) at your practice/place of work typically collected? (please select all that apply) *(multi response)*

Positive feedback:

	%
Comment cards for patients to fill in	67
Through written correspondence	44
Surveys	39
Via social media	29
Don't know/prefer not to say	5
Other	4
We don't collect feedback	3

Negative feedback:

	%
Comment cards for patients to fill in	62
Through written correspondence	51
Surveys	37
Via social media	24
Don't know/prefer not to say	6
Other	4
We don't collect feedback	3

Q23 How are complaints typically received at your practice/place of work? (please select all that apply) (*multi response*)

A serious complaint:

	%
Through written correspondence (6254)	82
Verbally (3331)	44
Complaint cards for patients to fill in (1296)	17
Don't know/prefer not to say (517)	7
Via social media (423)	6
Other (116)	2
We don't collect complaints (61)	1

A less serious complaint:

	%
Verbally	71
Through written correspondence	52
Complaint cards for patients to fill in	26
Via social media	11
Don't know/prefer not to say	6
Other	1
We don't collect complaints	1

Q24 Are patients asked what action they would like to see in response to their feedback? (*single response*)

	%
Yes	63
No	11
Don't know/prefer not to say	27

Q25 Are patients asked what action they would like to see in response to their complaint? (*single response*)

	%
Yes	71
No	5
Don't know/prefer not to say	24

Q26 As part of your complaints process, have you (or your practice) signposted patients to advocacy services in the last 12 months? (*single response*)

Patient advocacy services (such as those provided by organisations such as Healthwatch, Patient and Client Council NI, Welsh Community Health Councils and the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance) promote and protect the interests of patients and can help a patient make a complaint to the right organisation.

	%
Yes	43
No	57

Q27 Please explain why you have not signposted patients to advocacy services in the last 12 months (*single response*)

	%
I didn't need to signpost advocacy services	59
Don't know/prefer not to say	19
I didn't know patient advocacy services existed	11
Other	9
I didn't know which advocacy services to signpost people to	5

Q28 How are feedback and complaints used? (please select all that apply) (*multi response*)

Feedback:

	%
To improve services in the workplace	83
As a learning experience	74
In staff meetings	6
In staff appraisals	42
Reported externally	11
Don't know/prefer not to say	5
They are not used	2
Other	0

Complaints:

	%
To improve services in the workplace	83
As a learning experience	74
In staff meetings	61
In staff appraisals	37
Reported externally	14
Don't know/prefer not to say	6
They are not used	1
Other	1

Q29 In your experience, which are the TOP THREE ways in which patients wish their complaint to be addressed? (*multi response*)

	%
Written apology	73
Verbal apology	67
Reassurances offered	67
Financial compensation	45
Don't know/prefer not to say	7
Disciplining of the dental professional (within the practice)	6
Financial penalty for the dental professional	2
Other	2
Restrictions or limitations on the professional's registration	1
Prosecution	1

Q30 In your opinion, who should be responsible for resolving each of the following types of concerns? (*single response*)

Clinical care that falls far below expected standard:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	53
The GDC	44
Other	3
No-one	0

Clinical mistake that does not result in permanent harm:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	93
The GDC	5
Other	2
No-one	1

Cross-infection issues (e.g. dirty equipment):

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	62
The GDC	30
Other	8
No-one	0

The dentist is under the influence of drink or drugs:

	%
The GDC	82
The practice where the complaint is made	13
Other	5
No-one	0

Mistakes in prescribing:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	58
The GDC	35
Other	7
No-one	0

Being overcharged:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	90
The GDC	7
Other	3
No-one	1

The dentist failing to provide a treatment plan:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	83
The GDC	13
Other	3
No-one	0

The dentist failing to obtain valid consent before treatment:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	66
The GDC	29
Other	4
No-one	0

Bad communication (e.g. not providing full explanations):

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	90
The GDC	6
Other	3
No-one	0

Poor and/or inaccurate record keeping:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	66
The GDC	29
Other	5
No-one	0

A patient being kept waiting for their appointment:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	94
No-one	4
Other	1
The GDC	1

Dental professional being rude to a patient:

	%
The practice where the complaint is made	86
The GDC	11
Other	2
No-one	1

Discrimination (e.g. based on age or race):

	%
The GDC	49
The practice where the complaint is made	44
Other	7
No-one	1

Q31 Before today, how aware were you of the principles? (*single response*)

	%
Very much	32
Somewhat	38
Neutral	13
Not really	11
Not at all	11

Q32 Which of the following statements best describes your use of the leaflet? (please select all that apply) (*multi response*)

	%
Our complaints procedure is based on it	50
Practice staff are encouraged to read it	39
I have independently read and referred to the leaflet	30
The leaflet is visible to patients	23
I have only read the leaflet, but I/my workplace have/has not used it	19
The principles contained in the leaflet have made a positive impact in the practice	18
The principles contained in the leaflet have made no impact in the practice	4

Refocusing fitness to practise

Q33 How confident do you feel in your understanding of the following, as defined by the GDC? (*single response*)

The meaning of 'fitness to practise':

	%
Very confident	46
Fairly confident	43
Not very confident	6
Not at all confident	3
Don't know/prefer not to say	2

The fitness to practise process:

	%
Very confident	31
Fairly confident	43
Not very confident	18
Not at all confident	6
Don't know/prefer not to say	2

The meaning of 'impairment':

	%
Very confident	29
Fairly confident	44
Not very confident	19
Not at all confident	5
Don't know/prefer not to say	3

Q34 Have you, or any one you know, been through the fitness to practise (FTP) process? (Please select all that apply) (*multi response*)

	%
I have not been through FtP myself	58
I do not know of anyone directly, who has been through FtP	49
I have heard about someone who has been through FtP	20
I know someone who has direct experience of going through FtP	20

Q35 How confident do you feel about the following aspects of the fitness to practise process? *(single response)*

How cases are examined by the GDC's Case Examiner teams*:

	%
Very confident	11
Fairly confident	32
Not very confident	27
Not at all confident	18
Don't know/prefer not to say	12

How cases are investigated:

	%
Very confident (830)	11
Fairly confident (2315)	30
Not very confident (2121)	28
Not at all confident (1499)	19
Don't know/prefer not to say (952)	12

How hearings are conducted:

	%
Very confident	11
Fairly confident	29
Not very confident	28
Not at all confident	19
Don't know/prefer not to say	14

Q36 Based on your knowledge of the fitness to practise process, how well does it balance thoroughness, time and cost involved (to the professional and to the regulator)? *(single response)*

	%
Very well balanced	5
Well balanced	25
Not well balanced	21
Extremely unbalanced	17
Don't know/prefer not to say	33

Q37 Are you aware of the support available from the GDC to those facing proceedings? *(single response)*

	%
Yes	28
No	73

Q38 If you were facing proceedings, who would you contact for support/ethical and professional guidance? (Please select all that apply) *(multi response)*

%

A defence organisation	65
Your own professional membership body	45
A colleague	45
The General Dental Council	30
Your Dental college or faculty	10
Practitioner Advice and Support Scheme (PASS)	8
Mental health charity/support organisation	8
Additional support organisation	8
BDA Benevolent Fund	6
Dentists' Health Support Programme (DHSP)	5
NHS Practitioners Health Programme	5
Other voluntary organisation	3

Finally...

Q39 Would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about the future of your profession over the next two years? (*single response*)

	%
Very optimistic	10
Quite Optimistic	21
Neither Optimistic nor pessimistic	24
Quite Pessimistic	24
Very Pessimistic	18
Don't know/prefer not to say	2

Q40 Which areas do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about? (*single response*)

That the profession is regarded positively by patients and the public:

	%
Optimistic	58
Pessimistic	42

Changes in oral health needs:

	%
Optimistic	65
Pessimistic	35

The quality of learning and development available to the profession:

	%
Optimistic	82
Pessimistic	18

The integration of technology into practice:

	%
Optimistic	82
Pessimistic	18

The impact of Brexit:

	%
Optimistic	27
Pessimistic	73

That regulation will be fair and proportionate:

	%
Optimistic	41
Pessimistic	59

Increased accountability to patients:

	%
Optimistic	48
Pessimistic	52

The availability of suitable staff:

	%
Optimistic	34
Pessimistic	67

New NHS dental contract:

	%
Optimistic	22
Pessimistic	78

Employment opportunities:

	%
Optimistic	45
Pessimistic	55

The financial resilience of your practice:

	%
Optimistic	46
Pessimistic	54

The ability of the practice to respond to local population changes:

	%
Optimistic	62
Pessimistic	38

Q41 What are the greatest professional challenges in your current daily practice? (Please select all that apply) (*multi response*)

	%
Meeting the demands of regulation	51
Keeping up to date with changes in guidance, rules and the law	50
Meeting patients' expectations	50
Finding time and opportunities to develop	49
Administration, including record keeping	45
Recruitment and retention of staff	42
Meeting NHS contract requirements	36
Preparing for changes to dentistry within the NHS	35

Keeping within a budget	35
Increased accountability to patients	32
Keeping up to date with changes in technology and best practice	31
Communication barriers with patients	20

Q42 Which of these do you feel is the greatest challenge? (Please select one) (*single response*)

	%
Meeting Patients expectations	16
Meeting the demands of regulation	15
Recruitment and retention of staff	12
Finding time and opportunities to develop	11
Keeping up to date with changes in guidance, rules and the law	9
Administration, including record keeping	8
Meeting NHS contract requirements	7
Preparing for changes to dentistry within the NHS	5
Keeping within a budget	5
Increased accountability to patients	4
Keeping up to date with changes in technology and best practice.	3
Local population changes	2

1.3 Topic Guide for focus groups

INTRO – 5 mins

Public Confidence – 20 mins

1. Thinking about public confidence

What do you understand by the term public confidence?

Can you think of an event that has affected public confidence in an institution or organisation (non-dentistry)?

What about in healthcare/medicine?

Prompt Bawa Garba case if not mentioned

Thinking about within dentistry – what do you understand by the term public confidence?

What do you feel promotes public confidence in dentistry?

What do you think maintains public confidence in dentistry?

What is the responsibility of the regulator?

2. In order to deepen our understanding on public confidence we would like to take you through a scenario as we are very interested in your views

NB. Run through one scenario in each group

Edinburgh, London, Birmingham, Cardiff

Scenario 1: You see a story on a news website about a local woman who has attacked an ex-boyfriend's new girlfriend on a night out. It includes a video of the two-woman yelling at each other, and one of them being physically restrained by some friends. The story includes the news that she has been arrested for assault. When you go to a new dentist a week later, you recognise her as the dental nurse in the surgery. You mention having seen the story to one of the senior members of staff, and they are clearly surprised, as they did not know this had happened

Edinburgh, Leeds, London

Scenario 2: You see a news story about dental technicians in remote areas doing work they are not qualified to do. This includes a mention of a recent case where a dental technician was reported for making dentures without a Dentist referral.

Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds

Scenario 3: You see a news programme discussing how people use social media. As an example, one of the guests mentions a dentist at their local surgery who had posted pictures of themselves on Facebook with small bags of white powder and the heading "Ket Sundays".

(NB Ask after running through each scenario)

To what extent did it affect public confidence? Why?

Why did this affect opinions of everyone, not just the individuals specifically involved?

What is it about these that made people worried about them, or talk about them? (PROBE ON: the roles and responsibilities of the people involved, tapping into existing fears, impact, number of cases, role of regulation, amount of media coverage etc.)

Would this impact your feelings about dentistry as a whole? What makes you say that? (PROBE ON: the roles and responsibilities of the people involved, tapping into existing fears, impact, number of cases vs one individual, role of regulation, amount of coverage etc.)

Would it be different if you discovered that person had been punished by a regulator? Why do you say that?

What would you expect to happen to them? Does it give you more confidence in the profession? Why/why not?

Would you do anything differently after hearing these stories?

What can dental professionals do to promote public confidence?

3. Patient and Public Report (to be put on handouts/flipchart)

Patients were also asked about public confidence in a range of circumstances. These key points that I am about to take you through reflect patient's thoughts and feelings around public confidence from discussion around general examples, a range of professional examples, dentistry examples.

A. The scale of the case or scandal impacted public confidence

the more people involved in a case and the longer it went on for, the more this was seen to impact public confidence as if many professionals were involved, it signified something inherently wrong in that profession overall or where there were multiple victims

B. The greater the perceived risk to the public, the more it was seen to impact public confidence

For example, there was more concern about misuse of public money than corporate finances when patient death was mentioned.

C. Where other parties were seen to be partly responsible, public confidence in the wider system was questioned rather than public confidence in the professionals

If the environment was seen to encourage the behaviour, or not to prevent or investigate it, this raised concern among participants that this could happen again. This in turn meant they questioned why this was not being monitored or regulated or had not been identified sooner.

D. The relationship between expectations of a profession and the level of trust in that profession affected public confidence

For healthcare professionals, expectations were high, as they were responsible for patient lives, participants themselves identified feeling vulnerable when needing a healthcare professional, including dentists.

What are your thoughts on the patient views expressed? Why do you say that? Is this what you expected patients to say? Why/why not?

Local resolution of complaints – 15 mins

4. In the following scenarios from the DPS, professionals indicated that they thought that the complaint was best handled by the practice when...

NB. Run through one scenario related to customer service and one with a clinical focus in each focus group

Edinburgh

Scenario 1 – The clinical care that falls far below expected standard

Scenario 2 – There is bad communication (e.g. not providing full explanations)

London

Scenario 3 – There is a cross-infection issue (e.g. dirty equipment)

Scenario 4 - The patient is kept waiting for their appointment

Cardiff

Scenario 5 – The dentist failing to provide a treatment plan

Scenario 6 – A dental professional being rude to a patient

Leeds

Scenario 7 – The patient is overcharged

Scenario 8 – The clinical care that falls far below expected standard

Birmingham

Scenario 9 – There is bad communication (e.g. not providing full explanations)

Scenario 10 – There is a cross-infection issue (e.g. dirty equipment)

(NB. Ask after each scenario, only test 3-4 scenarios depending on time)

What action would you expect the practice to take in this scenario? Why?

5. What is the tipping point or threshold for deciding whether the practice should handle it or the GDC?

What factors are important when deciding?

What are the boundaries?

6. What do you see as the role of advocacy is in the complaints process?

Have you used it personally?

Why/why not?

How did they become aware of advocacy services?

In what circumstances would it be appropriate to signpost to advocacy services?

7. In the findings of the DPS we noted that:

a. 43% of respondents signpost to the advocacy service

What are your thoughts on this? Why? Is it high? Is it low? What makes you say that?

Is there a reason for this result?

b. Of the 57% that didn't signpost advocacy, 59% said they didn't need to signpost advocacy service

What are your thoughts on this? Is there a reason for this result? How do you make an assessment whether to signpost to the advocacy service?

Consumer vs Patient – 20mins

8. Now we are going to explore the difference between a patient and consumer

Can you give an example from your lives of when you consider yourself to be a patient and when you consider yourself to be a consumer?

Please think about your own experiences

*probe to hear a range of examples – not just opticians

How would feeling like a patient impact your behaviour/expectations/both?

How would feeling like a consumer impact your behaviour/expectations/both?

What do you feel is the difference between a patient and a consumer?

NB Explore the fact that it is possible to be both

Patient and Public Report (to be put on handouts/flipchart)

NB included for reference to be able to draw participants attention to

- Patients identified the ability to make a choice and being able to feed back as important features of being a consumer.
- The relationship with the service provider, was the key distinction for participants between being a consumer and being a patient.
- Participants thought that consumers were able to actively make choices, patients were felt to have their choices limited due to occurring at times of distress, emergency or need.
- Participants thought that you could be both a consumer and a patient at the dentist. The extent to which this was the case varied by treatment, depending on views of how much they were necessary or a choice.
- To some extent participants valued being consumers and wanted to feel like consumers when visiting the dentist. However, there were concerns about being a consumer in a health setting as this contrasted with expectations around the NHS; participants expected and trusted dentists to make decisions on their treatment and worried that if they were consumers health professionals could prioritise finances over the best treatment.
- The public also had expectations around paying for treatments and levels of care. For example, the majority (68%) said value for money was important to them when thinking about dental treatment.

What do you think of these patient's views?

Why do you say this?

Can you understand how it is possible for them to see themselves as both patients and consumers in relation to dentistry?

It is considered that there is evidence of there being a continuum, meaning that they can feel themselves to be both a patient and a consumer at the same time. What do you think of this idea?

Elective vs required treatment – does this have an impact?

Costs/Explanation or reasons given for treatment plan/upselling – do these impact whether they are seen as a patient or consumer?

What are the implications for you and your team?

Regulation, dentistry and the dental profession – 10mins

The General Dental Council wants the system of dental regulation to be collaborative, where issues that arise are dealt with as early as possible and in the right place and delivers the right outcomes for patients and the public at the right cost, within an acceptable timeframe and in a proportionate manner.

The GDC focuses on preventing bad practice in dentistry and taking action against dentist that have serious complaints raised against them.

9. In the recent DPS survey it was revealed that:

The survey also revealed that dental practitioners felt that:

- a. 61% felt that a regulator for dental professionals should focus equally on preventing bad practice and taking action against dentists that have serious complaints against them

What do you think about this? Why do you say that? Do you agree/disagree why?

10. What do you think about GDC shifting their focus? Why do you say that?

11. Do you feel that the GDC's efforts are focused in the right place? Why/why not?

NB approach with care, steer discussion away from Annual Retention Fee. If stuck mention that the GDC have consulted on the ARF and an announcement will be made about this imminently.

12. Do they have the right balance?

Scope of Practice – 5 mins

15. What does Scope of Practice mean to you?

Do you feel it enables or hinders professionals from utilising Scope of Practice? Why? How well is it regulated by the GDC? What do you think would happen if the GDC no longer issues SOP guidance?

16. The majority of respondents in the DPS quantitative survey know what Scope of Practice guidance is but only utilise it every few months/a few times a year?

Why do you think this is? Is there anything that could be done to place a greater focus on it?

CLOSE – 5 MINS

1.4 Topic Guide for qualitative depth interviews

Scope of practice

1. What does Scope of Practice mean to you?

Do you feel it enables or hinders professionals from utilising Scope of Practice? Why? How well is it regulated by the GDC? What do you think would happen if the GDC no longer issues SOP guidance?

2. The majority of respondents in the DPS quantitative survey know what Scope of Practice guidance is but only utilise it every few months/a few times a year?

Why do you think this is? Is there anything that could be done to place a greater focus on it?

CPD

3. Review of the new CPD scheme

What do you think of the new CPD scheme? Do you think it will help you develop as a professional? How do you make decisions and choices about CPD? What do you think of the recommended topics?

Regulation, dentistry and the dental profession

The General Dental Council wants the system of dental regulation to be collaborative, where issues that arise are dealt with in the right place and delivers the right outcomes for patients and the public at the right cost, within an acceptable timeframe and in a proportionate manner.

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What do you think about this? Why do you say that? Do you agree/disagree why?

5. What do you think about GDC shifting their focus? Why do you say that?

6. Do you feel that the GDC's efforts are focused in the right place? Why/why not?

NB steer discussion away from Annual Retention Fee. If stuck mention that the GDC have consulted on the ARF and an announcement will be made about this imminently.

7. Do they have the right balance?

Complaints - advocacy

8. What do you see as the role of advocacy is in the complaints process?

If they are familiar with the Advocacy Service ask how they became aware of it. Have you used it personally?

Why/why not?

9. In the findings of the DPS we noted that:

c. 43% of respondents signpost to the advocacy service

What are your thoughts on this? Why? Is it high? Is it low? What makes you say that?

Is there a reason for this result?

d. Of the 57% that didn't signpost advocacy, 59% said they didn't need to signpost advocacy service

What are your thoughts on this? Is there a reason for this result? How do you make an assessment whether to signpost to the advocacy service?

10. With regards to the complaints leaflet (interviewers will have a copy of the complaints leaflet and will be familiar with it)

Have you come across it?

If yes, where did you see it? Source/access?

Do you use it in your practice?

If yes – how do you use it?

If no - why not?

If you haven't seen or come across it do you think it would be useful? Why/why not?