

General Dental Council Patient and Public Survey 2015

Topline Results

- This document details results from an Ipsos MORI omnibus survey conducted with 1259 adults aged 15 and over in the United Kingdom between 27 November and 10 December 2015.
- 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 7 and 20 November 2014, 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 2015 survey unless otherwise stated.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated (1259 in 2015, 1640 in 2014, 1603 in 2013, 1609 in 2012 and 1563 in 2011).
- The 2015, 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 1259 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than plus or minus three 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
1259 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
1259 and 1640 (2015 and 2014 surveys)	2	3	4
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

GD01 When was the last time you went to the dentist?

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
	%	%	%	%	%
In the last 6 months	54	50	51	50	53
In the last 7-12 months	15	14	15	16	12
In the last 1-2 years	9	10	10	10	10
More than 2 years ago	11	13	11	10	15
I used to go to the dentist but I don't any more	6	8	9	8	7
I have never been to the dentist	3	5	4	7	3
Don't know	*	*	*	1	N/A

GD02 On average, how often do you go to the dentist?

Base: People who go to the dentist: 2015 (1125); 2014 (1422); 2013 (1376); 2012 (1320)

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	%	%	%	%
Once every six months	56	53	54	52
Once a year	24	26	24	27
Once every two years	8	6	9	8
Less than once every two years	12	15	13	12
Don't know	0	*	*	*

GD03 And how long have you been with your current dentist or dental practice?

Base: People who go to the dentist: 2015 (1125); 2014 (1422); 2013 (1376); 2012 (1320)

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	%	%	%	%
One year or less	10	9	11	14
Over one year, up to two years	7	9	9	13
Over two years, up to five years	20	23	20	22
Over five years, up to 10 years	19	18	19	18
Over 10 years, up to 15 years	16	12	12	11
Over 15 years, up to 20 years	8	9	9	7
Over 20 years	18	18	18	14
Don't know	2	2	2	1

GD04 **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: 2015 (982); 2014 (1216); 2013 (1188); 2012 (1145)

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	%	%	%	%
NHS dental care that I paid for	45	45	48	45
NHS dental care that was free	25	26	24	31
Private dental care only in the UK	19	19	20	18
NHS dental care and additional private dental care in the UK	6	7	6	5
I had treatment abroad	2	1	1	1
I'm not sure what type of care I received	2	1	1	*

Satisfaction with Dental Care

GD05 **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: 2015 (898); 2014 (1129); 2013 (1063)

	2015	2014	2013
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	68	62	61
Fairly satisfied	28	34	35
Fairly dissatisfied	3	2	2
Very dissatisfied	1	1	1
Don't know	*	*	*

GD06 What, if anything, would make you feel more satisfied with your dental care or treatment?

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

Base: People who are not very satisfied with their dental care or treatment: 2015 (289)

	2015 %
More reasonable cost of treatment	25
Better quality treatment	22
Being able to access the treatment I need on the NHS	20
Better follow up treatment	13
Better communication from the dental professional	9
More information about dental health in general	8
Being able to access the treatment I need	7
Clearer explanation about my treatment	7
Clearer information about the cost of my treatment	7
The dental professional knowing more about my dental/medical history	6
Other (please specify)	9
None of these	8
Don't know	3
No answer	1

Friends and Family Test

GD07 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: 2015 (1209); 2014 (1564)

	2015 %	2014 %
Extremely likely	45	40
Likely	34	35
Neither likely or unlikely	13	14
Unlikely	4	5
Extremely unlikely	3	5
Don't know	1	1

Putting Patients First

GD08 **Thinking about your most recent experience of visiting your dental practice, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the dental professional put your interests as a patient first?**

Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2015 (1209)

	2015 %
Strongly agree	46
Tend to agree	37
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Tend to disagree	3
Strongly disagree	2
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.

GD09 **Now thinking about healthcare, how confident, if at all, are you that regulation of this works effectively?**

	2015 %	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	20	17	14	14
Fairly confident	56	58	57	58
Not very confident	16	16	20	17
Not at all confident	4	4	4	6
Don't know	4	6	5	6

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

GD10 **Which of the following best describes how aware you were of the General Dental Council before this survey?**

	2015 %	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %	2011 %
I had definitely heard of the General Dental Council before	20	17	15	20	10
I think I had heard of the General Dental Council before	18	16	27	21	15
I had not heard of the General Dental Council before	62	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'.

GD11 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: 2015 (465); 2014 (558); 2013 (644); 2012 (602)

	2015 %	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	14	14	15	12
Fairly confident	61	61	62	66
Not very confident	9	12	16	13
Not at all confident	2	1	1	3
Don't know	14	11	5	6

Complaints

GD12 Have you ever complained about a dental professional?

Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2015 (1209); 2014 (1564); 2013 (1524); 2012 (1464)

	2015 %	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Yes	4	2	4	3
No	96	97	96	95
Don't know	0	*	*	1
Prefer not to say	0	0	0	1

GD13 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: 2015 (1156); 2014 (1523); 2013 (1467); 2012 (1422)

	2015 %	2014 %	2013 %	2012 %
Yes	8	5	8	5
No	92	95	92	93
Don't know	0	*	*	1
Prefer not to say	0	0	0	1

GD14 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: 2015 (142); 2014 (119); 2012 (116)

	2015 %	2014 %	2012 %
Dentist	89	83	83
Orthodontic Therapist	4	6	2
Dental Hygienist	4	3	1
Dental Technician	2	1	3
Dental Nurse	1	2	1
Clinical Dental Technician	1	2	3
Receptionist	*	1	7
Dental Therapist	0	1	0
Don't know/can't remember	0	1	0

Standards

GD15 Thinking about the last time you needed dental treatment beyond a check-up, to what extent do you agree or disagree that you were given enough information by the dental professional about the treatment options and their related costs to make an informed decision about your treatment?

Base: People who go to the dentist at least once every two years: 2015 (982)

	2015 %
Strongly agree	44
Tend to agree	32
Neither agree nor disagree	11
Tend to disagree	4
Strongly disagree	2
I have never needed dental treatment beyond a check up	7
Don't know	*

GD16 Again thinking about the last time you needed dental treatment beyond a check-up, do you remember receiving a written treatment plan? It may have looked similar to these.

Base: People who go to the dentist at least once every two years and have had dental treatment beyond a check-up: 2015 (912)

	2015 %
Yes	42
No	57
Don't know	*

GD17 And how clear, if at all, were the costs provided in the written treatment plan?

Base: People who received a written treatment plan the last time they needed dental treatment beyond a check-up: 2015 (383)

	2015 %
Very clear	60
Fairly clear	26
Not very clear	2
Not at all clear	1
There were no costs provided in the written treatment plan	9
Don't know	2

GD18 Thinking about the last time you needed dental treatment beyond a check-up, how clear, if at all, was the explanation you received about the risks and benefits of each treatment option?

Base: People who go to the dentist at least once every two years and have had dental treatment beyond a check-up: 2015 (912)

	2015 %
Very clear	47
Fairly clear	35
Not very clear	6
Not at all clear	3
I did not receive an explanation about the risks and benefits of each treatment option	8
Don't know	1

Treatment in Non-Traditional Settings

GD19 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither/nor	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
A People would receive the same level of dental treatment and care in a hospital A&E department as they would in a dental practice	8	24	26	25	11	6
B People would receive the same level of dental treatment and care in a nursing or residential home as they would in a dental practice	6	19	31	23	12	8

GD20 If you had a friend or family member with a long-term health condition that had an impact on their ability to care for themselves, how concerned, if at all, would you be about their long term dental health?

	2015 %
Very concerned	23
Fairly concerned	44
Not very concerned	23
Not at all concerned	6
Don't know	4

GD21 **If you had a friend or family member with a long-term health condition that had an impact on their ability to care for themselves, how concerned, if at all, would you be about their dental treatment and care?**

	2015 %
Very concerned	25
Fairly concerned	43
Not very concerned	23
Not at all concerned	6
Don't know	4

Treatment by Dental Students

We are now going to ask you some questions about dental students. As part of their training, dental students start to treat patients while being supervised by qualified dental professionals.

GD22 **If you were to be treated by a dental student while being supervised by a qualified dental professional, which of the following, if any, would be important to you?**

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

	2015 %
How the dental student is supervised	63
The quality of care provided by the student	54
The student's level of experience	44
The student's behaviour during your appointment	33
Patient confidentiality	28
The student's behaviour in their personal time	9
None of these	2
Don't know	2

GD23 **And which of these would you say is the most important to you?**

People who say at least one of a list of things would be important to them if being treated by a dental student while being supervised by a qualified dental professional: 2015 (1234)

	2015 %
How the dental student is supervised	35
The quality of care provided by the student	33
The student's level of experience	19
Patient confidentiality	5
The student's behaviour during your appointment	4
The student's behaviour in their personal time	1
Don't know	2

GD24 **Still thinking of being treated by a dental student while being supervised by a qualified dental professional, which, if any, of these do you think it is important for you to be told in advance of treatment? You may choose up to three.**

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

	2015 %
How dental students are supervised	53
The student's level of experience	52
Whether or not the student has performed the procedure before	47
The standards of care dental students are expected to meet	32
How to give positive and negative feedback about dental students	10
None of these	2
Don't know	3

Teething Whitening

Commented [GR1]: Typo: Tooth Whitening

GD25 **Please tell me which of the following people, if any, do you think can legally carry out teeth whitening in the UK? Which others?**

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

	2015 %
A dentist	76
A dental hygienist	44
A clinical dental technician	32
A dental therapist	23
I can do it myself	22
A beautician	13
A staff member in a teeth whitening booth in a shopping centre	10
Another medical professional	9
A hairdresser	5
Someone else (please specify)	2
Don't know	2
None of these	9

GD26 Please tell me what type of teeth whitening you were thinking about while answering the previous question?

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

	2015 %
Whitening toothpaste	26
Whitening mouthwash	5
Whitening strips	8
Whitening gel/bleach	
Prescribed/administered by a dental professional	36
Bought from/administered by someone other than a dental professional	12
Whitening UV/laser treatment	
Prescribed/administered by a dental professional	22
Bought from/administered by someone other than a dental professional	5
Other	
Something else (please specify)	4
Don't know	13
None of these	7

Language Requirement

GD27 Dental professionals in the UK must be sufficiently fluent in written and spoken English to communicate effectively with patients, their families and colleagues.

Thinking about your dental experiences over the last 10 years, how often, if at all, have you been treated by dental professionals who were unable to communicate with you because of poor English?

	2015 %
Never	87
Once or twice	6
A few times	3
Often	1
Every time	1
Don't know	1

Re-contacting Respondents for Future Research

GD28 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	38
No	62

Demographics

Gender

	Male	Female	%
			49
			51

Age

		%
	15-24	15
	25-34	16
	35-44	16
	45-54	17
	55-64	14
	65+	22

Social grade

		%
	A	5
	B	22
	C1	27
	C2	22
	D	15
	E	8

Marital status

		%
	Married/living as	57
	Single	28
	Widowed/divorced/separated	15

Working

		%
	Working	54
	Not working	46

Occupation

		%
	Full-time	35
	Part-time	12
	Self-employed	7
	Not working – housewife	6
	Still in education	7
	Unemployed	5
	Retired	24
	Other	4

Patient and Public Survey 2015 - Topline results

Children in household

	Yes	%
		34
	No	66

Children's ages

Multi-code question

	%
Aged 0-3	14
Aged 4-5	9
Aged 6-9	11
Aged 10-15	15
None aged under 16	66

Location

	%
England	73
Northern Ireland	4
Scotland	15
Wales	8

Ethnicity

	%
White	89
Non-white	11