



Snapshot

Annual review of performance



Regulator reviewed: **General Dental Council**

Key facts & figures:

- Maintains a register of dental professionals (dentists, dental nurses, dental hygienists, dental technicians, dental therapists, orthodontic therapists and clinical dental technicians) in the **United Kingdom**
- **111,813** dental professionals on register
- Annual registration fee: **£890** (dentists); **£116** (dental care professionals)

Standards of good regulation

Core functions

Annual performance review 2017/18

Met

(number of Standards)

Guidance & Standards

4/4

Education & Training

4/4

Registration

6/6

Fitness to Practise

8/10

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Focus on: **Activities and actions demonstrating how the GDC is meeting the Standards**

For this review period the GDC has met 22 out of 24 of our Standards of Good Regulation. We have seen a deterioration in its timeliness in progressing fitness to practise cases, which meant that we did not consider that Standard 6 for Fitness to Practise was met.

EDUCATION & TRAINING: ACTION IS TAKEN IF CONCERNS ARE IDENTIFIED

We noted that the GDC takes action where concerns about a course provider are identified. In February 2018, for example, it closed down a BDOS (Bachelor in Dental and Oral Science) programme because of concerns that it was not meeting the appropriate outcomes. The GDC worked with the University and other UK training providers to assist students on this programme to transfer to other courses to complete their training to become dental hygienists and dental therapists.

REGISTRATION: REGISTRANTS MAINTAIN THE STANDARDS REQUIRED TO STAY FIT TO PRACTISE

The GDC's Enhanced Continuing Professional Development (ECPD) scheme came into effect on 1 August 2018 for dental care professionals. We have received positive feedback from several third-party organisations regarding the GDC's engagement with stakeholders in developing and implementing the new ECPD scheme. The new guidance was described as 'comprehensive and useful' and the increased emphasis on reflective learning was welcomed. The final stages of the ECPD implementation have run throughout 2018, involving ongoing work to raise awareness about it. We will continue to monitor development of the new scheme in future performance reviews and we are encouraged by the feedback that has been provided so far.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE: THE REGULATOR WILL DETERMINE IF THERE IS A CASE TO ANSWER

The GDC changed its process for deciding whether or not there is a case for registrants to answer in respect of complaints in 2016. It introduced Case Examiners, who work in pairs (one lay, one registrant) to consider cases, replacing the Investigations Committee. We examined a number of processes resulting from this change. Although we had some concerns about what the data demonstrated, and about some individual decisions made, these concerns were not so significant to determine that this Standard is not met. We were also assured that the Case Examiners have been adhering to the Case Examiner Guidance Manual.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE: CASES ARE DEALT WITH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

The GDC met this Standard last year as we had seen improvements in timeliness. However, the dataset for this performance review period showed a deterioration in the GDC's performance. We carried out a targeted review to understand this decline and to seek more information about the GDC's plans to improve. There was also a significant increase in the number of cases where the GDC had to seek an extension to an interim order. Our audit findings also identified delays in around a third of the cases we reviewed. Though we acknowledge that the GDC has taken significant action to address these issues, these had not resulted in improvements for the 2017/18 review. We will report further in our next performance review, but we are clear that, for this performance review year, this Standard is not met.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE: INFORMATION IS SECURELY RETAINED

We carried out a targeted review to see what progress the GDC has made in relation to information security. The GDC has not met this Standard for the past four performance reviews. Despite implementing the ICO's recommendations, there has been a decline in the GDC's performance. Furthermore, though the GDC has implemented annual data protection training for all staff, there have been several serious data security breaches. Although we accept that the ICO has not taken any further action in respect of these breaches and recognise that the GDC has undertaken significant work in this area, these breaches are still a cause for concern. This Standard remains unmet.

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