



# Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2019/20



Regulator reviewed: **General Dental Council**

## Key facts & figures:

- Maintains a register of **dental professionals** in the **United Kingdom**
- **114,406 dental professionals** on the register as at 30 June 2020
- Annual retention fee is **£680** for dentists, **£114** for dental care professionals

## Standards of good regulation met

General Standards	5/5
Guidance and Standards	2/2
Education and Training	2/2
Registration	4/4
Fitness to Practise	3/5

We look carefully at a range of evidence to decide whether each Standard is met or not. The total number of Standards met does not on its own give the full picture of how a regulator is performing. Read the full performance review to find out more.

Find out more about our performance reviews at:  
[www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performancereviews](http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performancereviews)

# Focus on: How the GDC is meeting the Standards

For this review period the GDC has met 16 of the 18 Standards of Good Regulation. Ensuring cases are dealt with as quickly as is consistent with a fair resolution is a key element of one of our Standards. The GDC did not meet this Standard, or our Standard in respect of identifying and assessing risk during the performance review period.

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## GENERAL STANDARDS: THE REGULATOR ENSURES THAT ITS PROCESSES DO NOT IMPOSE INAPPROPRIATE BARRIERS OR OTHERWISE DISADVANTAGE PEOPLE WITH PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

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The GDC has a dedicated webpage on equality, diversity and inclusion which links to its Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy. The GDC collects EDI data from a number of different sources including from registrants, its stakeholders, parties involved in fitness to practise proceedings and its Council, Committee members and staff. The GDC is committed to ensuring that its fitness to practise panel members and staff are representative of the wider population and do not discriminate in their work. To this end, the GDC requires its panel and staff members to undertake regular training on bias and equality and diversity. The GDC takes action when EDI concerns and enquiries are raised with it by stakeholders, it takes into account any feedback it receives on EDI and actively engages with issues raised when developing its EDI work. Processes are in place to make reasonable adjustments for witnesses and registrants involved in its fitness to practise process.

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

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This year, there has been a further increase in the time taken to progress cases through the full fitness to practise process. Whilst the GDC has improved its performance in some areas of the measures we report on and has closed more cases this year than it did in 2018/19, its overall timescale remains one of the highest of the regulators that we oversee. We are concerned that it is taking too long to complete fitness to practise cases. We have therefore concluded that this Standard is not met.

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## GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS: THE REGULATOR PROVIDES GUIDANCE TO HELP REGISTRANTS APPLY THE STANDARDS

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The GDC has commenced a review into the Scope of Practice guidance (the guidance), which was last updated in 2013. The GDC commissioned research to understand the roles within the dental team, how the guidance was used and perceived, and the impact of the guidance and any future changes to the guidance documents. The research found that many professionals and stakeholders were concerned about substantial changes to the guidance as they feared that it would lead to professionals acting outside their permitted area of practice. The views of registrants and stakeholders expressed in the research suggested they do not support the GDC's approach to increased reliance on professional judgement rather than detailed guidance. The GDC will continue its work in this area. The GDC continues to publish additional guidance documents which appear clear and comprehensible and can be accessed from the GDC's website.

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## FITNESS TO PRACTISE: THE REGULATOR SEEKS INTERIM ORDERS WHERE APPROPRIATE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

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This year, there has been an increase in the time taken for cases requiring an urgent decision because the registrant may represent a risk to the public to reach the GDC's Interim Order Committee (IOC) for a decision. The GDC attributed this to an increase in the number of cases being referred to the IOC by Case Examiners. We are concerned that this means that risk was not properly identified and acted on at earlier stages of the fitness to practise process. We have therefore concluded that this Standard is not met.

You can find out more details in the full report which is available on our website [www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performance-reviews](http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performance-reviews)