



# Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2020/21



Regulator reviewed: **General Dental Council**

## Key facts & figures:

- Maintains a register of **dental professionals** in the **United Kingdom**
- **116,106 dental professionals** on the register as at 30 June 2021
- 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    | 4/5 |

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 17 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.

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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 continued to work to meet the objectives set out in its *Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy*. It has been working to improve the data it holds about its registrants, stakeholders, parties involved in fitness to practise proceedings and its Council, Committee members and staff. This year, it has engaged with stakeholders to explain why it collects EDI data, and explored how best to collect EDI data. We have seen that the amount of data it holds on some groups has increased as a result of this work. It recognises that it still needs to improve the level of data it holds on other groups – including informants in fitness to practise cases – and we will monitor how it does this.

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

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The GDC noted an increasing number of organisations offering ‘teledentistry’ and a growth in organisations providing direct-to-consumer or remote orthodontics using clear plastic aligners. The GDC contacted providers of remote orthodontic platforms in the UK to gain a better understanding of the services provided and the approach to delivery. It also commissioned an expert to do a rapid review of remote dentistry literature. The GDC published a statement on ‘direct-to-consumer’ orthodontic treatment along with supporting information for dental professionals and the public.

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)

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## REGISTRATION: THE PROCESS FOR REGISTRATION, INCLUDING APPEALS, OPERATES PROPORTIONATELY, FAIRLY AND EFFICIENTLY, WITH DECISIONS CLEARLY EXPLAINED

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We identified increases in the median time taken to process UK applications, the number of rejected applications for registration and renewal and the number of registration appeals. The GDC provided an explanation for each change, including setting out the impact of both the pandemic and Brexit, and we are assured that the GDC continues to meet this Standard.

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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, although we note the impact of the pandemic. The GDC has work in progress to improve timeliness, including an action plan focusing on resourcing the team properly, reducing caseloads and addressing underlying resilience issues. It has updated its KPIs and tailored these for different types of cases, and expects this will give a better insight into performance and allow it to plan resources more effectively. However, its overall timescale remains one of the highest of the regulators we oversee and we concluded that it did not meet this Standard this year.

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

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Last year, the GDC did not meet this Standard due to an increase in time taken for urgent cases to reach its 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 rather than at an earlier stage. We were concerned that this meant risks were not properly identified and acted on at earlier stages of the process. This year, the time taken for cases to reach an IOC has decreased, and the proportion of cases referred to the IOC by Case Examiners also decreased. This suggests that the GDC is better identifying risk at the early stages of its fitness to practise process, and we have therefore concluded that this Standard is now met.