



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**
- **111,128** dental professionals on register
- Annual registration fee: **£890** (dentists); **£116** (dental care professionals).

Standards of good regulation

Core functions

Annual performance review 2016/17

Met

(number of Standards)

Guidance & Standards

4/4

Education & Training

4/4

Registration

6/6

Fitness to Practise

9/10

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www.professionalstandards.org.uk/performancereviews

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

The improvement in the GDC's performance we noted last year has continued and this year the GDC has met all but one of our 24 Standards of Good Regulation.

GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS

The GDC has not published any new guidance this year. However, it continues to use its website to highlight how registrants can apply its standards, including case studies and learning points. The website was redesigned and its accessibility features enhanced to make it easier to find information. It now includes quick links to popular topics as well as leaflets available in different languages.

REGISTRATION: REGISTRANTS ARE REQUIRED TO STAY FIT TO PRACTISE

The GDC's new continuing professional development (CPD) scheme is due to come into effect in 2018. We realise that the GDC wants to minimise any risks in replacing its existing scheme, but we have concerns about how long it is taking to introduce the new scheme – the draft rules for it were originally agreed in 2013. Despite this lack of progress, this Standard remains met as the GDC does have a CPD system in place which ensures that registrants maintain their fitness to practise.

Shifting the balance

In January 2017, the GDC published *Shifting the balance*, a discussion document which sets out proposals to change the GDC's model of regulation and invites stakeholders to contribute their views. The GDC proposed to move the emphasis of its work 'upstream', to prevent harm from occurring rather than taking action after something has gone wrong.

REGISTRATION: PROCESS IS FAIR, EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT

We carried out a targeted review to check how the GDC was coping with a larger volume of registration appeals. The GDC identified two main causes: applicants appealing against decisions to refuse registration due to unsatisfactory evidence of their knowledge of English; and appeals from dental professionals who qualified outside the UK. The GDC has reviewed and changed its registration appeals process. Time taken to resolve these appeals has decreased – now averaging three months instead of five. Based on the information we saw, this Standard is met.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

We carried out a targeted review of fitness to practise Standards 3, 5, 6, 8 and 10, in order to look at how the GDC had addressed some of the issues we had raised in our previous report. We also wanted to see how the GDC had implemented the introduction of case examiners, and the referral of some complaints to the NHS concerns scheme.

The GDC has provided assurance to us that it has measures in place to audit and evaluate these new processes. Additionally, we have seen that the guidance and resources for case examiners are published on the GDC website, as well as decisions they make to agree undertakings. This transparency is important. We will continue to look at how the GDC uses its new powers in future reviews.

Last year, the GDC did not meet the Standard for prioritising serious complaints – we were concerned about how long it was taking to make decisions about interim orders. This year we have seen that the GDC is making decisions more quickly and we have been assured about the GDC's risk assessment process. We have also seen evidence that the GDC continues to maintain the improvement in the timeliness of its case progression.

The GDC did not meet Standard 10 (which relates to information security) last year, and this year has failed to meet it again. We have not as yet seen enough progress in the GDC's work towards compliance with an established information governance framework.