

WORKING WITH THE GDC TO SUPPORT DENTAL NURSES

BADN Presidential Column by **Debra Worthington**,
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The British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) has recently been contacted by dental nurses who have been erased, or are at risk of being erased, from the Register, for not submitting accurate or timely records of their continuing professional development (CPD). We are working to support these dental nurses; on 20 January the BADN Chief Executive and I met with the General Dental Council (GDC) to discuss the matter.

We outlined the cases of some of the dental nurses who had contacted the BADN office. Some had extenuating circumstances for not completing their CPD, for example sickness, family circumstances and maternity. The GDC emphasised that there can be no leeway as the legislation is so tight: anyone not recording ten hours' CPD in any two years must be erased. The main purpose of the GDC is to maintain patient safety and public confidence in dentistry. One of the ways of achieving this is by maintaining the Register; registrants must meet all the requirements to practise.

We went on to discuss the lack of information surrounding how much CPD must be completed, the recording of CPD and how to appeal should a registrant be faced with erasure. The GDC confirmed that a proforma to lodge an appeal is inserted with the notice of erasure.

It was acknowledged that there was a large volume of information when the DCP Register was first opened and again when Enhanced CPD was launched. The GDC confirmed that such information is not routinely sent to registrants when they initially join the Register, but it is available on their website. We have therefore asked the GDC to provide a series of articles for the *British Dental Nurses' Journal* to inform our members of GDC processes. We have also invited the GDC to speak at the Dental Nurse Forum at the Dentistry Show in May.

We went on to discuss the amount of time it is taking for dental nurses to be reinstated to the Register, which appears to be around six months. To be restored to the Register, dental nurses must undertake a specified amount of CPD – we have

asked the GDC how this specific amount of CPD is calculated, to enable us to support and inform our members through the process.

Remember to inform the GDC if you change address. It is an easy one to forget. Add it to the list, as you would for your driving licence, passport and utility bills. The GDC reports that registrants forget to inform them and therefore communications do not reach registrants. The same goes for your email addresses. Don't forget to update your details with the GDC if you change your email address. Did you register using your work address and email? gain, don't forget to update your GDC records if you move jobs. Registrants can amend their details on the eGDC section of the GDC website. (If you are a BADN member, remember to inform us as well!)

We then went on to discuss CPD certificates. BADN has been made aware that some learning providers are not including GDC Learning Outcomes on their certificates. When undertaking CPD remember to check your certificates contain:

- CPD subject, learning content, aims, and objectives
- Participant's GDC registration number
- Anticipated GDC development outcome(s) delivered by the activity
- Date the CPD was done
- Total number of CPD hours
- Name of the person who participated in the CPD activity
- Confirmation that the CPD has been quality assured, including the name of the person or body responsible
- Confirmation the information is full and accurate.

BADN is already discussing certificates with one of the major providers who failed to include GDC Learning Outcomes. ✦



MP supports dental nurses

Following a meeting with British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) President Debra Worthington in February, Labour MP Cat Smith (Fleetwood & Lancaster) – who spoke recently in the House of Commons about the state of NHS dentistry in her constituency and the difficulties faced by her constituents on accessing NHS dental care – wrote to both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

In her letter to the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care, the Right Honourable Steve Barclay MP, Ms Smith addressed the issues of pay and lack of recognition by the NHS of dental nurses, leading to the current crisis in dental nurse recruitment and retention. In her letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Right Honourable Jeremy Hunt MP, Ms Smith requested that tax relief on CPD costs for employees be introduced in the next Budget.

Debra Worthington said: 'Cat Smith has spoken publicly about problems with access to NHS dentistry. Following our meeting, she now understands fully that the crisis in dental nurse recruitment and retention is exacerbating these access problems, and that the crisis has been caused by lack of recognition of dental nurses as vital members of the dental team, the ridiculously low levels of pay – particularly in general dental practice – and the costs dental nurses have to meet in order to be able to practise their profession.'

'The British Association of Dental Nurses welcomes Ms Smith's recognition of the importance of dental nurses in the provision of oral health care and thanks her for her continuing support.' ✦

