

GDC: more support needed to realise full benefits of Enhanced CPD

New research by Cardiff University and commissioned by the General Dental Council (GDC) has shown while many dental professionals take a positive and proactive approach to their own learning and development, more needs to be done to ensure the full benefits of the Enhanced CPD scheme are realised.¹

The Enhanced CPD scheme established a more flexible and personalised approach to lifelong learning for the dental team. The research was undertaken to help the GDC understand the experiences of dental professionals and how the scheme has operated since its introduction in 2018.

The findings indicate that most dental professionals do not find CPD requirements difficult to achieve and that compliance rates are high. Researchers also found that further guidance could improve understanding of some key features introduced by the Enhanced CPD scheme, such as Personal Development Plans (PDPs), grace periods at the end of a CPD cycle, and the application of recommended topics.

The research found that significant numbers of dental professionals are motivated by their own sense of professionalism and a desire to learn, but the view was not universal. The findings also suggest that some registrants take a more compliance-based approach to CPD, completing the minimum number of verifiable CPD hours, with limited regard for the quality of the activity or relevance to their own learning or development needs.

The GDC will now look at how understanding of the Enhanced CPD scheme can be improved, particularly those features that provide flexibility for the dental team and drive personalised approaches to learning and development.

The PDP is the centrepiece of the Enhanced CPD scheme and must be completed by all dental professionals. The research indicates that the dental team could benefit from more support in creating and maintaining an effective PDP to ensure it is tailored to their needs, regularly updated, and supports the selection of high quality CPD activities.



The regulator now plans to engage with dental professionals on the value of creating a PDP that meets their own learning and development needs, supports career progression and improvements in

the quality of care. It will also build on current guidance so more dental professionals can feel the benefits of a customised PDP.

Based on the findings, the GDC will also consider:

- Creating additional guidance on how to make CPD activities verifiable, including peer learning
- Updating its guide for employers and managers of the dental team, to put more emphasis on supporting staff to find the right CPD and sufficient time to complete it
- Updating the information provided on recommended topics.

GDC Executive Director, Strategy, Stefan Czerniawski, said: 'Lifelong learning and continuing improvement in knowledge and skills are central to what it means to be a professional. Our CPD requirements are intended to support dental professionals to develop their professionalism.'

'The results of this research are encouraging and underline the importance of the CPD scheme in ensuring that the dental team is well-trained and delivering high standards of care. The research also offers us valuable insights into the motivations and priorities of dental professionals when it comes to CPD, which will help to inform updates to our support and guidance.'

References

1. General Dental Council. Evaluating Enhanced CPD: Final Report. 22 June 2023. Available at: <https://www.gdc-uk.org/about-us/what-we-do/research/our-research-library/detail/report/evaluating-enhanced-cpd-final-report> (accessed July 2023).

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Indemnifiers: seek advice from the right sources

Dental indemnity organisations have issued a consensus statement encouraging dental professionals to make sure they seek advice from appropriate sources when patient safety incidents occur.

The organisations – BDA Indemnity, the Dental Defence Union, Dental Protection, the Medical & Dental Defence Union of Scotland, All Med Pro, Densura and Professional Dental Indemnity – formed a working group as part of 'Project Sphere', an NHS England-led patient safety forum, in order to help move away from the 'blame culture' in the profession.

The consensus statement, which is hosted by the College of General Dentistry (CGDent), discourages use of social media and other

informal information sources – which have the potential to leave dental professionals misinformed – and reassures dental professionals that 'there is no limit to the number of times you can call for advice, and the frequency of calls does not impact individual indemnity fees'.

Project Sphere is chaired by Jason Wong FCGDent, Deputy Chief Dental Officer for England, and the College is represented in the project by Dr Mick Horton FCGDent, former Dean of the Faculty of General Dental Practice UK (FGDP) and now Chair of the College's Board of Trustees.

The full consensus statement is available to view or download at <https://cgdent.uk/indemnity-consensus-statement/>.