

## **A view from the Chair**

Lord Toby Harris provides a [round up of the latest announcements](#), including the launch of the Standards for Education consultation, research findings on how the GDC is perceived by registrants, dental students and stakeholder organisations, and a reminder to review the Guidance on Reporting Matters to the GDC before it comes into effect next year.

## **Complete your annual renewal and the working patterns survey**

The annual renewal period for dentists is now open.

To complete [annual renewal](#), you need to make sure you:

- pay your Annual Retention Fee (ARF) by 31 December
- declare that you have, or will have, indemnity in place by 31 December
- make your CPD statement by 28 January.

For the second year in a row, there is a short working patterns survey for you to complete in [eGDC](#). Your response will help us to continue to build an understanding of dental professionals' working patterns. The survey will ask you about:

- how you work
- where you work
- how long you work each week.

We'd be grateful if you could take five minutes to fill it in when you renew.

## **Further analysis of dentists' working patterns**

Today, we have published new analysis of the [working patterns data for dentists](#).

We are committed to improving the sector's understanding of current workforce challenges and informing the debate about the dental workforce. Over half of all dentists responded to the working patterns survey last year, and this latest analysis provides details of:

- employment status
- where dentists work
- the types of treatment being delivered
- workforce variations by protected characteristics.

Dentists are again being asked to provide details about their working patterns this year. The results will be available in spring next year.

### **New Guidance on Reporting Matters to the GDC**

We have published new [Guidance on Reporting Matters to the GDC](#), designed to clarify and consolidate your reporting requirements into a single, comprehensive and accessible document. Covering health, criminal and regulatory matters, the Guidance sets out clear expectations to support you in maintaining patient safety and public confidence.

It will come into effect on 1 February 2025.

The Guidance was developed with input from a 12-week consultation and refined based on the feedback received, including on addressing vexatious reporting and improving clarity. You will find details of the [consultation outcomes](#) on our website.

The new Guidance forms part of our broader efforts to enhance professionalism in dentistry and to shift towards a more preventative approach to regulation. If you have any uncertainties about reporting obligations, we encourage you to [contact us](#) or your indemnity provider.

Please review the Guidance to ensure you are familiar with its content.



### **Standards for Education consultation launched**

We have launched a new [consultation on revisions to the Standards for Education](#). The updated Standards will shape the future requirements for all UK education programmes seeking GDC registration. The proposals include:

- changing structure
- simplifying requirements
- adding new areas relevant to dental education and training.

This is the first revision of the Standards for Education since 2015. We are proposing updates that ensure the Standards stay relevant and take account of the developments in dentistry and the wider healthcare system over the last decade.

We invite everyone with an interest to share their views using the [online survey](#) or by [email](#).

The 12-week consultation will close on 6 February 2025.

### **Stakeholder survey 2023: How do dental professionals view the GDC?**

We have now published the findings from our [stakeholder survey 2023](#), which provides valuable insight into how registrants and other key stakeholders view the GDC. While the survey shows modest progress since 2020, with positive perceptions rising from 16% to 20%, it also highlights areas where further improvement is needed to build trust.

A key finding from the survey is the impact that fitness to practise has on perceptions. Fear of regulatory action, often based on the experiences of others, can lead to

defensive practices such as excessive [record keeping](#) or limiting scope of practice, which can reduce the quality and quantity of patient care. Our work to address these concerns continues, and we have recently streamlined our [initial inquiries processes](#) in certain fitness to practise cases.

Your trust matters. We remain committed to working with you and others to improve understanding of our role and ensure fair and effective regulation.

You can find a [summary of the findings and the full report](#) on our website.

### **Permanent move to remote hearings**

The move to [holding all hearings remotely](#) will be made permanent from 1 April 2025.

The decision reflects the clear benefits observed and views submitted through our public consultation. While maintaining our commitment to fairness and public protection, remote hearings have demonstrated reduced stress, significant cost savings, and improved accessibility for participants.

The Dental Professionals Hearings Services' starting point will be that a hearing will be held online. Dental professionals and the GDC will retain the right to request an in-person hearing, and the GDC will normally agree with any requests made. Guidance is now being updated and will be available to all participants ahead of full implementation of the policy.

The [format of hearings consultation outcome report](#) is now available.