

Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy 2021–2023

Our strategic EDI objectives aim to help the GDC to be a champion of diversity, equality and inclusion inside our organisation, with the sector we regulate and with the public

What is EDI?

At the GDC, we recognise the definitions of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to mean the following:

- **Equality:** Everybody is entitled to equal opportunity to fulfil their potential
- **Diversity:** Recognising that everybody is different and that we are stronger for it
- **Inclusion:** Removing barriers to ensure differences are valued, and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

EDI Strategy 2021-2023

Our vision for EDI over the next three years (2021–2023) is:

The General Dental Council will be a champion of diversity, equality and inclusion inside our organisation, with the sector we regulate, and with the public.

We will achieve this vision through the effective delivery of the following strategic objectives:

- Ensuring that our regulatory activity is fair, transparent and accessible to all.
- Ensuring the public are able to engage effectively with our services.
- Embedding an inclusive workplace culture at all levels in the GDC where all staff feel valued, welcome, integrated and included.

Where did our EDI objectives come from?

Our objectives have drawn from data and evidence and discussions with staff. We have used anonymised equality data from the dental team, in addition to our Fitness to Practise Process data and associated research. Any EDI-based interactions with our staff, the public and the professions have all provided us with a wealth of perspectives that have been vital in shaping this framework.

Additionally, our priorities have been influenced by legal duties and ethical responsibilities, including but not limited to the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Professional Standards Authority's EDI Standard and the broader Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998.

Development of this strategy has also linked closely with organisational priorities, alongside external research and guidance.

Objective 1

Ensure that our regulatory activity is fair, transparent, and accessible to all

As a provider of a public service, we are required to adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty. This means that we must continuously demonstrate our consideration to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

One of the ways we consider these aims is by using the anonymised data we hold on our stakeholders' protected characteristics of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Meeting the objective

Below are some of the activities that we have committed to undertaking to achieve this objective.

- Continue our work to understand the diversity of dental professionals.
- Understand how Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) is discussed in dental education and training.
- Understand where our processes may impose inappropriate barriers and take action to remove them.
- Ensure our corporate complaints process enables us to capture EDI themes systematically.
- Analyse EDI themes arising from corporate complaints and take action to address these.
- Ensure our fitness to practise functions are confident in supporting vulnerable stakeholders, such as those with hidden disabilities.
- Analyse over-representation in Fitness to Practise cases and what this means.

Monitoring progress

We will monitor progress against the objective using the following standards or indicators:

- Continuing to maintain Professional Standards Authority (PSA) EDI Standard (Standard 3)
- Ongoing diversity reporting
- Feedback on the experiences of different groups of dental professionals
- Monitoring areas highlighted through corporate complaints.

Developments against this objective

We have been reviewing our equality data and working to update our equality monitoring form for dental professionals, which can be found on [eGDC](#).

Supporting this work, we have produced FAQs on equality data and explained the importance of recording this data to the GDC, the public and the whole dental team in [a recent blog post on the topic](#).

Objective 2

Ensure the public are able to engage effectively with our services

The GDC exists to protect the public and uphold public confidence in dentistry. To achieve this, we need to consider diversity in everything that we do. We recognise that we need to use a variety of methods to interact with the public in a person-centred way, to meet different communication needs and prevent barriers to effective regulation.

We interact with the public daily in our work, such as through our Customer Advice and Information Team, the Dental Complaints Service, via our website, or through our Fitness to Practise casework. As a regulatory body responsible for public protection, it is imperative the public and patients and professionals are able to effectively engage with us.

Meeting the objective

Below are some of the activities that we have committed to undertaking to achieve this objective.

- Encouraging, capturing, and understanding the demographics of those groups that engage with us by gathering EDI data at relevant points.
- Continuing to review our communications to ensure these are accessible and use plain English.

- Continuing our work to understand the diversity of patients and dental service users to the best of our ability.
- Ensuring our website is accessible to all members of the public.

Monitoring progress

We will monitor progress against the objective using the following standards and indicators:

- The amount and quality of EDI monitoring data we hold about those who engage with us improves year on year.
- Research involving the public and/or patients.
- Our website is considered a model example amongst health and care regulators.
- We have a suite of material available to the public around our EDI commitments and actions.
- Quantity of corporate complaints and the quality of our responses.

Developments against this objective

In achieving this objective, we have undertaken the following activities:

- Easy read documents have been produced for raising a complaint about the GDC, raising a serious concern about a dental professional, and reporting illegal practice. These are now published [on our website](#).
- We have successfully completed an accessibility audit of our website. Our compliance check was done by the Shaw Trust.

Objective 3

Embed an inclusive workplace culture at all levels in the GDC where all staff feel valued, welcome, integrated and included

The GDC is based across two sites, in London and in Birmingham. These locations are home to some of the most diverse populations in the UK and we view this as an enormous strength. Our staff represent a wide range of ages, ethnicities, abilities, faiths, sexual orientations, gender identities, parental and caring duties. By embedding an inclusive workplace culture, we are creating a supportive, fulfilling environment, where everybody feels able to bring their whole selves to work and for this to be celebrated.

We will initially be focused on improving our data monitoring and intelligence gathering at the GDC, so we are able to amplify the voices of our staff through our equality subject matter expertise, awareness campaigns and staff networks.

Meeting the objective

Below are some of the activities that we have committed to undertaking to achieve this objective.

- Reviewing Equality Monitoring forms to ensure we capture data in a way that is respectful and inclusive and encouraging staff to complete.
- Monitoring and comparing our staff demographics to the local population where they work and the dental team.
- Ongoing monitoring of the EDI data of applicants throughout each stage of the recruitment process, alongside innovating our attraction strategy, to encourage the diversity of applicants to the GDC.
- Continuing to create and support new staff EDI Networks.
- Setting targets and monitoring the diversity of our senior leadership team at an organisational and individual level and continuing to produce the Gender pay gap report.
- Enhancing the training of our staff so that they are aware of their legal responsibilities around EDI.
- Capturing demographic data of our Associates and ensuring they undertake annual EDI development activities.

Monitoring progress

We will monitor progress against the objective using the following indicators.

- Feedback from GDC staff members through regular surveys.
- Staff completing EDI training.
- Our performance on external benchmarks such as Employer's Network for Equality & Inclusion 'TIDE' report.
- Progress from 'Disability Committed' to 'Disability Confident'.
- Improved employment and career progression for applicants that have protected characteristics.
- Increased Gender representation in senior roles.
- Increased Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation in senior roles.
- Effective delivery and outputs from Employee Resource Groups.
- Employee focus groups are facilitated, with results compiled.
- Feedback from exit interviews.

Developments against this objective

In achieving this objective, we have undertaken the following activities:

- Published the Gender pay gap as part of our annual report and accounts.
- Set up staff networks for disability and women.
- Updated the equality monitoring form for GDC staff members.

Working with the dental sector to achieve our EDI objectives

It is very important to us that the conversations around EDI are kept alive. To this end, alongside EDI considerations being drawn into our governance processes, we also work with partners for further exploration and access to best practice, training, networking, guidance and research.