GDC update to BADN National Dental Nursing Conference

2 November 2019

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What I’m going to talk about today

• The role of the GDC
• The evolution of Shifting the balance and our new Corporate Strategy
• Professionalism
• Removing some of the myths around FtP
• CPD and lifelong learning
• Questions
Some facts and figures

• NHS dental services were accessed by 22 million adults and 6.9 million children in England, in 2017/8
  • 51% adults
  • 59% children

• Dentistry is a £7.1 billion market

• There are around 112,000 dental professionals registered in the UK
  • Over 42,000 dentists
  • Over 69,000 dental care professionals
    • 57,000 dental nurses
Our purpose

Health and Social Care (Safety and Quality) Act 2015

• Protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public
• Promote and maintain public confidence in the professions regulated
• Promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct

The Dentist Act (1984) provides the legislative framework for our work.
Regulating dental professionals

Upstream / prevention

Education
Ensuring those qualified are taught the right skills

Registration
Checking people meet requirements to be on the register

Standards
Setting and promoting professional standards

Continuing Professional Development
Ensuring skills are kept up to date

Enforcement
Restricting Registrants’ ability to practise, where necessary

Fitness to Practise
Shifting the balance

A better, fairer, system of dental regulation, with patient protection paramount:

- Shift the balance of regulation, **upstream**, to focus on the positive aspects of professionalism.
- Work with the profession and others to improve **first-tier** handling of concerns, with expanded access to independent resolution.
- Improve **working with partners** to join with others to create a more agile and proportionate system.
- **Refocus fitness to practise** on genuinely serious incidents, routing other matters elsewhere.
Reflections on 2017-2019

Other progress during the period:

- Understanding needs and expectations of the public and patients
- Prioritised listening and engaging with the registrants, students and trainees across the professions
- Introduced improved Enhanced CPD scheme
- Case Examiners now able to offer undertakings
- Improved communications and engagement across UK nations
- Implemented estates strategy, forecasted to save around £50m over the life the next 15 years
- Reduced ARF and the introduction of application fees
Corporate Strategy evolution

2017
Shifting the Balance
Published

2019
Moving Upstream

2020-22
GDC Corporate Strategy
Corporate Strategy update

• GDC response to consultation published this week
• Final strategy for 2020-2022 will be published in late November, along with our Costed Corporate Plan (CCP)

• It's an evolution of *Shifting the balance*

• Our budget for the three-year strategy is £121.6 million
  • £40.4 million for 2020 (6% reduction on the 2019 budget)
Five key strategic aims

1. Operate a regulatory system which protects patients and is fair to registrants, while being cost-effective and proportionate; which begins with education, supports career-long learning, promotes high standards of care and professional conduct and is developed in the light of emerging evidence and experience.

2. Work with the professions and our partners to ensure that patients and the public are able to raise concerns with the agency best placed to resolve them effectively and without unnecessary delay.

3. Use evidence, research and evaluation to develop, deliver and embed a cost-effective and right-touch model for enforcement action.

4. Maintain and develop the regulatory framework.

5. Continue to develop an outcome-focused, high-performing and sustainable organisation.
What are 2020 priorities?

Upstream

- Principles of professionalism and review of standards
- Full rollout risk-based inspections of education and training
- Continue scoping future model for lifelong learning and looking for meaningful reforms to Enhanced CPD
- Understanding the influence of human factors and the relationship to risk
- Insights from fitness to practise
What are 2020 priorities?

**Downstream**

- Developing principles of regulatory decision-making
- Regulatory changes to improve fitness to practise processes (DHSC Promoting Professionalism S60)
- Focus capacity on serious issues
- Alternative dispute resolution
What are 2020 priorities?

Working with others

• Resolving and routing concerns between organisations
• Review the role of the DCS within the system
• Profession-wide complaint handling initiative:
  • Promoting the value of good complaint handling and inviting feedback
  • Improved patient-facing information
  • Roll-out referrals of low level concerns in Scotland (Nov 2019)
Challenges and opportunities

- Technology, including remote or online consultations. What will it mean to be a dental professional?
- Demographic change, our aging population
- Change in the market and rise of corporates
- How to make the most of the dental team
- Commissioning and the dental contract
Annual Retention Fee (ARF)

- Reduction in ARF’s for all dental professionals
  - £114 for dental care professionals
  - £680 for dentists

- These have been achievable because of:
  - Reduced operating costs and robust financial controls
  - Lower levels of enforcement activity delivered more efficiently
  - Removing cross subsidy between registrant groups
  - Introduction of application fees for first time applications

- Reflect the expected costs of regulating both groups over next three years
ARF (cont)

- The new lower ARF will be due by 31 July 2020
- It’s a single fee; not linked to earnings, or the number of hours worked
- No plans to have a separate register of dental nurses
- We are currently investigating the feasibility of payments by instalments, but this is at the early stages
- From January 2020 all restorations to the registers will be on a pro-rata basis
Introduction of application fees

- Approved by Council on 3 October, and will be effective from 1 January 2020
- Another example of our drive to remove, where practicable, cross subsidy
- Applicable for all first-time applications to our registers
- Fee varies depending on the route to application
  - UK educated dental professionals will pay £22.95
- Been introduced to cover the costs relating to applications, currently met by existing dental professionals
- First registration and restoration fees will now be pro-rata
Professionalism
What is professionalism?

How you demonstrate **appropriate attitudes and behaviours** with patients and those around you.

The way you **meet the standards** required of you, including the GDC’s Standards for the Dental Team

How you respond when something goes wrong – how you **reflect and learn from feedback and mistakes**
Why is promoting professionalism important?

• To improve patient protection and public confidence in dental services.
• Seeking a consensus with the profession - informed and influenced by patients and the public - on what it means to be a professional in the dental team.
• Patient expectations are clearly reflected in our standards and understood by dentists and DCPs.
• Professionals feel able to ‘own’ the standards expected of them.
Understanding public expectations

Proessions

Discussions – facilitated by the GDC

Public (including dental patients)

Outcome: What professionalism is and why it is important

GDC will reflect the views of the public and the profession to develop: ‘Principles of Professionalism’
Patient views on professionalism
Factors that can influence practice and behaviour

- Career structures (lack of); changing expectations; profession maturity
- Transition from training to practice
- Peer pressure and competition – e.g. from social media
- Education – recruitment; standards
- ‘Climate of fear’ - e.g. regulation; indemnity
- Practice setting – isolation; mentorship; organisation support
- Funding or other financial pressures e.g. NHS contract
- Team dynamics, influence and relationships
- Patient trust and expectations
Removing some of the myths around fitness to practise
Concerns raised with GDC 2010-18
FtP Overview

Using 2018 data the diagram below shows the number of disposals at each stage of the FtP process:

- Of 100% cases
- 31% received as cases at initial assessment stage
- 29% are closed at assessment stage
- 25% are closed at the case examiner stage or by the Investigating Committee (IC)
- ...and 15% are referred to a Practice Committee stage
Why do dental nurses end up at FtP hearings?

1. Personal behaviour
   - Behaviour complaints
   - Conviction, caution or charge

2. Putting patients interests first
   - No indemnity
   - Not following laws and regulation, acting dishonestly

3. Professional knowledge and skills
   - Training and competence
   - Failure to provide good quality care
FtP- myth busting

John Makin Head of DDU recently addressed some of the myths that new dentists have around FtP in a recent article he wrote in dentistry (Young dentists):

- GDC investigates trivial complaints
- Every FtP case ends up in a hearing
- A single mistake could cost me my career
- There is little I can do to affect the outcome of a case
- I’m on my own during a GDC investigation
FtP- myth busting

A GDC complaint – perception versus reality

Many young dentists dread their career being cut short by a GDC complaint, but the reality is that very few complaints end in action on a dental professionals’ registration. John Makin dispels some common myths about fitness to practise investigations.

Rumour: the GDC investigates trivial complaints
When the GDC receives a complaint about a dental professional it is triaged by the Initial Assessment Decision Group (IADG). This step is designed to identify complaints that raise fitness to practise concerns and exclude matters which fall outside the GDC’s scope of practice.

Complaints are considered fitness to practise matters if they relate to a dental professional’s alleged misconduct, professional performance, health or when they have been subject of a criminal charge, conviction or caution. GDC statistics show that of 336 complaints considered by an IADG in the final quarter of 2018, 95 were closed without further action and 10 were referred to the NHS. Of the 231 cases...
CPD and Lifelong learning
Lifelong learning (LLL) consultation

- Consultation ran from July-Oct 2019
  - We want to continue the discussion around how dental professional can take ownership in meeting and maintaining high professional standards and patient care
- We want to encourage a cultural change around CPD/LLL
- Peer learning, reflective practice, outcome based
- From quantity (hours) to quality (activity/relevance)
  - A portfolio approach that retains a PDP at its core
- Don’t anticipate CPD requirement changes in near future
Lifelong learning consultation update

- 117 responses
  - Including BADN and 12 from individual dental nurses
- Dental nurse feedback included:
  - Need for more recognition of career and skills development by employers
  - That cost can be a barrier to accessing CPD
  - Need to encourage employers to support staff with their LLL
    - Developing guidance for managers which will include reference to CPD and life long learning
Lifelong learning or CPD

CPD scheme
2008 to 2017

- Hours requirement
- Recognition of quality CPD ‘verifiable’ vs ‘non-verifiable’
- Recognition of variety of CPD activities

Enhanced CPD
Commenced 2018

- Personal Development Plan (PDP)
- Continuous hours
- More scrutiny over quality i.e. what constitutes ‘verifiable’
- Various activities encouraged and recognised but not enforced

Shifting the balance
CPD proposals

- Proposed move to quantitative system
- ‘Peer-to-peer’ activities, including mentoring, appraisal
- Less ‘checking’ by the regulator
- Professional ownership of CPD planning, development
Linking professionalism to learning

- Professionalism
- Commitment to learning
- Ethical obligations of healthcare
- Continual improvement in one’s own practice
- Upholding standards of care
- Moving with changing standards of care

Reflection
Thank you

Questions?

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