

# Dental Patients

Information about receiving care and treatment from students



# This leaflet is produced for you by the **General Dental Council**. We set and maintain standards in UK dentistry, including for student dental professionals.

Gaining experience of providing care directly to patients is a crucial and invaluable part of training to become an independent dental professional. If you choose to have treatment and care from a student dental professional, training providers will ensure there is:

- ▶ good supervision
- ▶ a good standard of care and
- ▶ patient care and safety as a priority.

Whether you receive a one-off treatment or longer-term care by a student, the experience can be very rewarding. You will have contributed to improving dental care in the UK and helped them on their road to becoming a fully qualified dental professional.

**If you are being treated by a student dental professional this leaflet contains some helpful information to explain what you can expect.**





## How will the appointment be different?

The appointment should be no different in terms of the quality of care and treatment you receive. Before a student is allowed to have contact with or provide care for patients, they are assessed to ensure they are ready and have the skills necessary. Where the appointment may differ is that:

- ▶ the appointment may take longer
- ▶ there may be more people in the room as the student will be supervised
- ▶ you may be asked for feedback on how the student provided the care as part of their assessment process.

You can ask the student or the supervisor to stop at any time during the appointment. The person supervising the student will be appropriately qualified and can step in at any point.



## The information you should be provided with

There are several routes to receiving dental care or treatment by a student and beforehand you should be informed:

- ▶ that you are being treated by a student
- ▶ what aspect of the care and treatment the student will be providing
- ▶ of the supervision the student will receive
- ▶ of the level of experience of the student
- ▶ how to provide feedback as part of the student's assessment and whether you are happy to do this
- ▶ what to do if you are unhappy with anything or need to make a complaint.

You should be asked:

- ▶ whether you have any questions
- ▶ for your informed consent regarding treatment.

**During the appointment, you should be provided with information about the treatment options, risks and benefits.**





## What to expect from students

Student dental professionals are required to meet the same standards of professional behaviour as those who have qualified. You should expect:

- ▶ students to put your safety, health and choices first
- ▶ to be treated fairly and with respect, kindness, dignity and compassion
- ▶ to be listened to and have your preferences and concerns taken into account
- ▶ students to behave professionally.

So, as a patient, you can be reassured the student should understand and demonstrate or be working towards the following principles:

1. Put patients' interests first
2. Communicate effectively with patients
3. Obtain valid consent
4. Maintain and protect patients' information
5. Have a clear and effective complaints procedure
6. Work with colleagues in a way that is in patients' best interests
7. Maintain, develop and work within their professional knowledge and skills
8. Raise concerns if patients are at risk
9. Make sure their personal behaviour maintains patients' confidence in them and the dental profession.

If you have any concerns about a student's behaviour outside of the course you can let their training provider know. For more information on these standards please see our patient information on standards of care and related patient leaflets.

**[Information for patients and the public \(gdc-uk.org\)](http://gdc-uk.org)**





## Feedback

It is important that students receive feedback from patients on how they have provided care and treatment. This is an important part of the learning process to help them to develop their skills and improve. You may be asked for feedback on:

- ▶ the treatment itself and the clinical or technical skills
- ▶ the quality of the work or appliances
- ▶ the student's communication skills
- ▶ the student's professional behaviour.

The supervisor should enable you to provide honest feedback in a way that you feel comfortable.

The feedback you provide will form part of a much bigger assessment process. You can therefore be reassured that your feedback will be taken in the context of all their work. You can also provide feedback later if you prefer.

If you have a complaint about your experience, the training provider will have a policy and a process in place to enable you to do so and should provide a solution.

### **This information is produced by the General Dental Council.**

The General Dental Council regulates dental professionals in the UK. Our job is to protect you. We are set up by Parliament, but we are independent from the Government and the NHS. By law, private and NHS dental professionals must be registered with us to work in the UK. We regulate the dental professionals who might provide your care.

#### **These are:**

- ▶ dentists
- ▶ dental hygienists
- ▶ dental therapists
- ▶ clinical dental technicians
- ▶ dental nurses
- ▶ orthodontic therapists
- ▶ dental technicians.

The dental professionals on our register must meet our standards and we take action when they don't, putting patients at risk. We also set the requirements for qualifications leading to registration and approve and check these programmes.

If you have a concern about a training programme please visit the following page on our website:

#### **Making complaints and raising concerns about an education or training provider:**

**[How do I raise a concern about a dental professional? \(gdc-uk.org\)](https://www.gdc-uk.org)**



If you have accessibility needs and require the document in a different format, please let us know what adjustments you require. The GDC is committed to ensuring our publications are as accessible as possible. We can be contacted at:

**General Dental Council**

37 Wimpole Street  
London  
W1G 8DQ

[Contact us \(gdc-uk.org\)](http://www.gdc-uk.org)  
[www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)

January 2024