

General Dental Council Patient and Public Survey 2013

Topline Results

- This document details results from an Ipsos MORI omnibus survey conducted with 1603 adults aged 15 and over in the United Kingdom between 27 September and 7 October 2013.
- Booster interviews were carried out to ensure at least 100 interviews each in Wales and Northern Ireland.
- All respondents were interviewed face-to-face, in their homes.
- A similar survey also took place between 31 August and 16 September 2012, and between 8 April and 17 April 2011. Data from questions that were also asked in those surveys are included in this document.
- Results are taken from the 2013 survey unless otherwise stated.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated (1603 in 2013, 1609 in 2012 and 1563 in 2011).
- The 2013 and 2012 data is weighted to the known population profile for the United Kingdom.
- Respondents were asked to choose one answer code for each question unless otherwise stated.
- Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to respondents being able to give multiple responses to a question or computer rounding.
- An asterisk (*) indicates a percentage of less than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Statistical Significance

It should be remembered that a sample and not the entire population of adults aged 15 and over living in the United Kingdom has been interviewed. Consequently, all results are subject to potential sampling tolerances (or margins of error), which means that not all differences between results are statistically significant. For example, for a question where 50% of the people in a weighted sample of 1603 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than plus or minus two percentage points from a census of the entire population (using the same procedures).

Indications of approximate sampling tolerances for this survey are provided in the following table. As shown, sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the size of the percentage results (the bigger the sample, the closer the result is likely to be to the result that would be obtained if the entire population was asked the same question).

This survey used a quota sampling approach. Strictly speaking the tolerances applied here apply only to random samples with an equivalent design effect. In practice, good quality quota sampling has been found to be as accurate.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels			
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
Size of sample on which survey result is based	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
300 interviews	3	5	6
400 interviews	3	5	5
500 interviews	3	4	4
600 interviews	2	4	4
700 interviews	2	3	4
800 interviews	2	3	4
900 interviews	2	3	3
1603 interviews	2	2	2
1609 interviews	2	2	2
1563 interviews	2	2	3

Different groups within a sample (e.g. men and women) may have different results for the same question. A difference has to be of a certain size in order to be statistically significant though. To test if a difference in results between two sub-groups within a sample is statistically significant one, at the 95% confidence interval, the differences between the two results must be greater than the values provided in the table below. Again, strictly speaking the sampling tolerances shown here apply only to random samples with an equivalent design effect. In practice, good quality quota sampling has been found to be as accurate.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentages			
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
Size of sample on which survey result is based	±	±	±
100 and 100	8	13	14
100 and 200	7	11	12
100 and 300	7	10	11
100 and 400	7	10	11
100 and 500	7	10	11
200 and 200	7	10	11
200 and 300	5	8	9
200 and 400	5	8	9
200 and 500	5	8	8
300 and 300	5	7	8
300 and 400	5	7	8
300 and 500	4	7	7
400 and 400	4	6	7
400 and 500	4	6	7
500 and 500	4	6	6
1603 and 1609 (2013 and 2012 surveys)	2	3	4
1603 and 1563 (2013 and 2011 surveys)	2	3	4
1609 and 1563 (2012 and 2011 surveys)	2	3	4

Use of Dentists and Dental Care Professionals

A1 When was the last time you went to the dentist?

	2013 %	2012 %	2011 %
In the last 6 months	51	50	53
In the last 7-12 months	15	16	12
In the last 1-2 years	10	10	10
More than 2 years' ago	11	10	15
I used to go to the dentist but I don't any more	9	8	7
I have never been to the dentist	4	7	3
Don't know	*	1	N/A

A2 On average, how often do you go to the dentist?

Base: People who go to the dentist: 2013 (1376); 2012 (1320)

	2013 %	2012 %
Once every six months	54	52
Once a year	24	27
Once every two years	9	8
Less than once every two years	13	12
Don't know	*	*

A3 And how long have you been with your current dentist or dental practice?

Base: People who go to the dentist: 2013 (1376); 2012 (1320)

	2013 %	2012 %
One year or less	11	14
Over one year, up to two years	9	13
Over two years, up to five years	20	22
Over five years, up to 10 years	19	18
Over 10 years, up to 15 years	12	11
Over 15 years, up to 20 years	9	7
Over 20 years	18	14
Don't know	2	1

A4 **As you're probably aware, dental care is available both through the NHS and privately. Sometimes during one visit to the dentist, you may even have a combination of NHS and private treatment. Thinking about the last time you visited your dentist or dental practice, which of these options best describes the type of care you think you received?**

Base: People who go to the dentist at least once every two years: 2013 (1188); 2012 (1145)

	2013 %	2012 %
NHS dental care that I paid for	48	45
NHS dental care that was free	24	31
Private dental care only in the UK	20	18
NHS dental care and additional private dental care in the UK	6	5
I had treatment abroad	1	1
I'm not sure what type of care I received	1	*

A5 **The term 'dental care professional' covers a range of different professions within dental care. Dental care professionals are: dental nurses, dental technicians, clinical dental technicians, dental hygienists, dental therapists and orthodontic therapists. Have you ever had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist? By this we mean an appointment where the dentist was not present.**

Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2013 (1524); 2012 (1464)

	2013 %	2012 %
Yes	37	27
No	63	73
Don't know	*	*

A6 **You said you have had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist. Which dental care professional or professionals did you see? Please select all that apply.**

Multi-code question except for 'Don't know/can't remember' answer code.

Base: People who have had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist: 2013 (519); 2012 (340)

	2013 %	2012 %
Dental hygienist	77	72
Orthodontic therapist	14	15
Dental nurse	8	9
Dental technician	7	8
Clinical dental technician	2	3
Dental therapist	1	1
Other	1	1
Don't know/can't remember	*	1

A7 **You said you have had an appointment with <INSERT NAME OF DENTAL CARE PROFESSIONALS SELECTED AT A6>.**
When was the last time you had an appointment with <INSERT NAME OF DENTAL CARE PROFESSIONALS SELECTED AT A6>?
Base: People who have had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist:

			In the last 6 months	In the last 7-12 months	In the last 1-2 years	More than 2 years' ago	Don't know
			%	%	%	%	%
Dental nurse	2013	(44)	44	15	8	30	2
	2012	(30)	45	16	7	28	5
Dental technician	2013	(37)	27	23	11	39	0
	2012	(24)	19	30	7	44	0
Clinical dental technician	2013	(11)	21	11	7	61	0
	2012	(5)	0	46	17	37	0
Dental hygienist	2013	(386)	39	19	13	30	0
	2012	(239)	38	24	14	23	0
Dental therapist	2013	(6)	12	28	19	41	0
	2012	(3)	67	33	0	0	0
Orthodontic therapist	2013	(78)	20	9	4	67	0
	2012	(54)	11	6	11	72	0
Other	2013	(9)	41	13	0	47	0

A8 **On average, how often do you see <INSERT NAME OF DENTAL CARE PROFESSIONALS SELECTED AT A6>?**
Base: People who have had an appointment with a dental care professional other than a dentist:

			Once every six months	Once a year	Once every two years	Less than once every two years	Don't know
			%	%	%	%	%
Dental nurse	2013	(44)	20	46	6	27	2
	2012	(30)	36	29	1	28	5
Dental technician	2013	(37)	19	14	13	53	0
	2012	(24)	0	22	17	58	3
Clinical dental technician	2013	(11)	7	16	0	76	0
	2012	(5)	24	0	39	37	0
Dental hygienist	2013	(386)	38	18	11	32	*
	2012	(239)	30	30	9	31	*
Dental therapist	2013	(6)	12	0	0	88	0
	2012	(3)	67	33	0	0	0
Orthodontic therapist	2013	(78)	13	11	0	76	0
	2012	(54)	12	1	3	85	0
Other	2013	(9)	41	0	0	59	0

Satisfaction with Dental Care

Q1 Is there a particular dental professional you usually prefer to see or speak to?

Base: People who go to the dentist at least once every two years: (1188)

	%
Yes	51
No	42
There is usually only one dentist or dental care professional in my surgery	7

Q2 Now thinking about your own experience, how satisfied or otherwise are you with your dental care or treatment?

Base: People who go to the dentist at least once a year: (1063)

	%
Very satisfied	61
Fairly satisfied	35
Fairly dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	1
Don't know	*

Q3 Which of the following, if any, best describe why you feel satisfied with your dental care or treatment? Please select as many or as few as apply.

Multi-code question

Base: People who are satisfied with their dental care or treatment: (1018)

	%
The dental professional behaved in a professional way	80
The dental professional provided good quality treatment	73
I received a clear explanation about my dental treatment	58
The dental professional had good communication skills	57
The dental professional knew my dental history	56
I received good follow up treatment	41
The cost of my dental treatment was reasonable	37
I received clear information about the cost of my treatment	37
Other	1
None of these	*
Don't Know	1

Q4 **Which of the following, if any, best describe why you feel dissatisfied with your dental care or treatment? Please select as many or as few as apply.**

Multi-code question

Base: People who are dissatisfied with their dental care or treatment: (43)

	%
The dental professional provided poor quality treatment	50
The cost of my dental treatment was unreasonable	27
The dental professional had poor communication skills	23
The dental professional did not know my dental history	12
I did not receive a clear explanation about my dental treatment	9
The dental professional behaved in an unprofessional way	8
I received poor follow up treatment	7
I did not receive clear information about the cost of my treatment	6
Other	15
None of these	0
Don't know	0

Regulation of Dental Professionals

The following questions will be asked about your views on the regulation of different types of services. By 'regulation' we mean where there is a set of rules that govern behaviour, actions and conduct, and where action may be taken if these rules aren't met.

Q5 **Now please think about services generally and not just dental care or healthcare services. How confident, if at all, are you that regulation of services in general works effectively?**

	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	14	13
Fairly confident	56	58
Not very confident	21	18
Not at all confident	3	5
Don't know	6	7

In 2012, the question was worded: 'How confident, if at all, are you that regulation in general works effectively'.

Q6 **Now thinking about healthcare, how confident, if at all, are you that regulation of this works effectively?**

	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	14	14
Fairly confident	57	58
Not very confident	20	17
Not at all confident	4	6
Don't know	5	6

In 2012, the question was worded: 'How confident, if at all, are you that healthcare in general works effectively'.

Q7 Which of the following professions, if any, do you think are regulated? Please select all that apply.

Multi-code question

	2013 %	2011 %
Doctors	90	76
Dentists	86	69
Nurses	78	63
Pharmacists	73	64
Health Professionals (e.g. Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Radiographers etc.)	72	49
Opticians	68	57
Osteopaths	43	N/A
Chiropractors	42	39
Beauty Therapists	14	N/A
None	1	1
Don't Know	5	15

Q8 How important or unimportant is it to you that dentists and dental care professionals are regulated? Please state on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 indicating not important and 10 very important.

	2013 %	2011 %
1 – not important	1	2
2	*	0
3	1	*
4	1	1
5	5	4
6	3	2
7	5	3
8	9	7
9	9	8
10 – very important	66	73

Q9 **Which of the following, if any, do you think are responsible for regulating dentistry?**
Multi-code question except for 'None of these' and 'Don't know' answer codes.

	%
British Dental Association/BDA	44
The NHS	29
General Dental Council/GDC	25
General Medical Council (GMC)	13
Dentist/Dental Surgery	8
Government/devolved government	8
Care Quality Commission (CQC)/Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)/Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)/Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) (Northern Ireland)	8
Ombudsman	3
Local Council	2
HealthWatch/other patient and consumer watchdog/champion	2
None of these, but I don't think any organisation is	2
None of these, but I think there is an organisation which is	6
Don't know	12

Q10 **Which of the following best describes how aware you were of the General Dental Council before this survey?**

	2013 %	2012 %	2011 %
I had definitely heard of the General Dental Council before	15	20	10
I think I had heard of the General Dental Council before	27	21	15
I had not heard of the General Dental Council before	58	57	70
Not sure	1	2	5

In 2012 and 2011, the answer codes were worded: 'I have definitely heard of the General Dental Council before', 'I think I have heard of the General Dental Council before', and 'I have not heard of the General Dental Council before'.

Q11 **How confident, if at all, are you that the General Dental Council is regulating dentists and dental care professionals effectively?**

Base: People who have heard of the General Dental Council before: 2013 (644); 2012 (602)

	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	15	12
Fairly confident	62	66
Not very confident	16	13
Not at all confident	1	3
Don't know	5	6

Q12 And overall how confident, if at all, are you that dentists and dental care professionals follow the General Dental Council rules?

Base: People who have heard of the General Dental Council before: 2013 (644); 2012 (602)

	2013 %	2012 %
Very confident	17	15
Fairly confident	63	65
Not very confident	13	11
Not at all confident	2	2
Don't know	5	6

Q13 The General Dental Council protects patients by regulating dental professionals in the UK. So, all dentists, dental nurses, dental technicians, clinical dental technicians, dental hygienists, dental therapists and orthodontic therapists must be registered with the General Dental Council to work here. For each of the statements below please state whether you think it is true or false:

		True %	False %	Don't know %
Only qualified dentists registered by the General Dental Council are allowed to work as dentists in the UK.	2013	80	12	9
	2011	67	13	19
There is a publicly available General Dental Council register that allows me to check whether a dentist or dental care professional is allowed to provide dental care.	2013	69	14	17
	2011	62	11	27
There are publicly available General Dental Council lists of dentists who are specialists in particular types of dentistry.		68	15	17
Dentists and dental care professionals are tested to ensure that they are fluent in written and spoken English before they can practise.		53	35	13
Dentists and dental care professionals who have qualified overseas and practise in the UK receive training about how the UK dental system works.		62	24	14
Dentists and dental care professionals who have qualified overseas and practise in the UK receive training about how dental patients expect to be treated in the UK.		52	35	14

In 2011 the introduction to this question was worded: 'The General Dental Council (the GDC) is the regulator for dental professionals. By regulation we mean protecting the patient by setting standards for dentists or dental professionals and taking action where the standards are not met.'

In 2011, the first statement was worded: 'Only qualified dentists registered by the General Dental Council can work as dentists in the UK.'

In 2011, the first statement was worded: 'There is a publicly available General Dental Council register that allows me to check whether a dentist or dental care professional is legally qualified to provide dental care.'

Q14 I am going to describe some situations where poor care or serious wrongdoing might occur. For each situation, please could you tell me how confident, if at all, you would be that appropriate action would be taken by a regulator?

	Very confident %	Fairly confident %	Not very confident %	Not at all confident %	Don't know %
Patients being repeatedly overcharged for dental treatment at their dental practice.	12	40	33	6	8
Residents in a care home receiving poor dental care.	10	38	34	6	12
Disabled patients receiving poor dental care.	11	40	31	7	11

Q15 During the last year, have you been aware or not of the General Dental Council taking disciplinary action against a dental professional because they do not meet the standards required or are not fit to practise?

Base: People who have heard of the General Dental Council before: (644)

	%
Yes, definitely	13
Yes, maybe	16
No	70
Don't know	1

Q16 Have you ever checked whether or not the dental professionals you have used have had any disciplinary action taken against them?

	%
Yes	1
No	99

Q17 How did you check this?

Multi-code question

Base: People who have checked whether the dental professionals they have used have had any disciplinary action taken against them: (22)

	N
Asked friends and/or family	10
Asked another dental professional not at the same dental practice	2
Consulted the General Dental Council	2
Reviewed media coverage	2
Consulted the Care Quality Commission	1
Asked staff at the dental practice	1
Consulted the Health Service Ombudsman	0
Other	5
Don't know/can't remember	0

Q18 **If you were to check whether or not the dental professionals you have used have had any disciplinary action taken against them, how would you do this?**

Multi-code question

Base: People who have not checked whether the dental professionals they have used have had any disciplinary action taken against them: (1574)

	%
Consult the General Dental Council	34
Ask friends and/or family	18
Ask staff at the dental practice	11
Ask another dental professional not at the same dental practice	5
Review media coverage	4
Consult the Health Service Ombudsman	4
Consult the Care Quality Commission	2
Other	17
None of these	2
Don't know/can't remember	16

Complaints

Q19 **Have you ever complained about a dental professional?**

Base: People who have been to a dentist at some point: 2013 (1524); 2012 (1464)

	2013 %	2012 %
Yes	4	3
No	96	95
Don't know	*	1
Prefer not to say	0	1

Q20 **Have you ever considered complaining about a dental professional?**

Base: People who have not, don't know or prefer not to say if they have complained about a dental professional: 2013 (1467); 2012 (1422)

	2013 %	2012 %
Yes	8	5
No	92	93
Don't know	*	1
Prefer not to say	0	1

Q21 Thinking about the most recent time you complained or considered complaining, who did you complain or consider complaining to?

Multi-code question except for 'Don't know' answer code.

Base: People who have complained or considered complaining about a dental professional: 2013 (165); 2012 (116)

	2013 %	2012 %
The practice where the treatment was carried out	41	37
The General Dental Council	9	10
The NHS	7	3
The Dental Complaints Service	4	7
A Health Ombudsman	2	4
Trading Standards	2	1
The Care Quality Commission	1	1
Other	9	1
I wasn't sure who to complain to	27	32
Don't know	2	8

In 2012, the answer code 'The NHS' was worded 'A primary care trust/Health Board'.

Issues Arising from the Francis Report

Q22 How likely or unlikely do you think a dental professional would be to provide an explanation to a patient when something has gone wrong in their care or treatment?

	%
Very likely	19
Fairly likely	50
Not very likely	21
Not at all likely	5
Don't know	5

Q23 What do you think should happen to dental professionals if they do not provide an explanation to the patient when something has gone wrong in their care or treatment?

	%
Nothing	6
They should be disciplined by the professional regulator	82
Something else	8
Don't know	4
No answer	*

Q24 Health and dental regulators, and the NHS should share information between each other so that they can investigate poor treatment. To what extent do you think this happens?

	%
To a great extent	14
To some extent	50
Hardly at all	25
Not at all	6
Don't know	6

Q25 Thinking about the last time you visited your dentist or dental care professional, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the following occurred during your visit?

Base: People who go to the dentist: (1376)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The dental professional discussed the options for treatment thoroughly with me.	48	30	12	5	3	1	*
The dental professional gave me enough information about the treatment options.	47	31	13	4	3	1	*
The dental professional allowed me enough time to make a decision.	46	31	14	4	3	1	*
There was a simple price list on display.	24	17	21	14	21	2	*
I felt clear about what treatment the dental professional could provide through the NHS and what treatment I would have to receive privately.	38	28	19	6	7	1	*
Information was displayed stating that the dental professionals were regulated by the General Dental Council.	15	19	36	12	13	4	*

Choosing a Dental Practice

Q26 What were the most important factors in selecting your current dental practice?

Probe: **What else?**

Multi-code question, up to three answer codes.

Base: *People who go to the dentist: (1376)*

	%
<u>RECOMMENDATION/EXPERIENCE</u>	52
Previous/personal experience	18
Reputation	17
Professional recommendation/advice	6
Advice/recommendation from friends/family	19
<u>LOCATION/QUALITY</u>	65
Location/close to where I live	44
Ease/speed of access/convenience	4
Quality of the service	13
Speciality/expertise/facilities	2
Attitude of staff	4
Availability	7
Cost/value for money	6
The practice looked attractive/smart	2
<u>NOT MUCH CHOICE</u>	5
I didn't like any others	*
It was the only choice I had/I had no other choice	3
I didn't really think about it	2
Other	1
<u>OTHER</u>	22
The practice accepted new patients	6
The practice accepted NHS patients	14
I have always used this dentist	6
Don't know	1

Q27 The government is discussing plans to introduce a star rating system for hospitals and doctors (for example, rating hospitals from one to five stars where five stars is excellent and one star is very poor). How useful, if at all, would you find a system like this when choosing where to go for your dental care?

	%
Very useful	33
Fairly useful	40
Not very useful	15
Not at all useful	11
Don't know	2

Cosmetic Dentistry

I am now going to ask you some questions about cosmetic dentistry. Cosmetic dentistry treatment includes teeth whitening, making teeth straight, veneers, implants, teeth jewellery etc.

Q28 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Cosmetic dentistry should only be carried out by dental professionals who are regulated.	62	25	9	1	*	2
There should be clear and accessible information available to the public about who is qualified to carry out cosmetic dentistry treatment.	63	26	8	1	*	2

Specialists

Q29 Please read the following pair of statements and decide, on a scale of 1 to 5, which comes closest to your own opinion. A score of 1 means you agree much more with statement A while a score of 5 means you agree much more with statement B.

- A) If I needed to see a dental specialist, such as an orthodontist, I would prefer my dentist to refer me to one.
 B) If I needed to see a dental specialist, such as an orthodontist, I would prefer to find one myself.

	%
1 – Agree much more with statement A	71
2	9
3 – Agree equally with statements A and B	11
4	2
5 – Agree much more with statement B	4
Don't know	2

Dentistry as a Business

Q30 To what extent do you agree or disagree that dental professionals put their own profit before the needs of their patients?

	%
Strongly agree	10
Tend to agree	29
Neither agree nor disagree	37
Tend to disagree	17
Strongly disagree	4
Don't know	3

Re-contacting Respondents for Future Research

Q31 Both Ipsos MORI and the General Dental Council may wish to carry out some follow up research about this subject within the next 12 months. Would you be willing for us, Ipsos MORI, and the General Dental Council to securely keep hold of your contact details for this period so that either organisation can invite you to take part in the research? Please be assured that your responses to today's survey will remain confidential to Ipsos MORI, and that both organisations would securely delete any re-contact details you agree to provide here after 12 months, unless you agree otherwise during the follow up research.

	Yes	%
		30
	No	70

Demographics

Gender

	Male	%
		49
	Female	51

Age

	15-24	%
		16
	25-34	17
	35-44	17
	45-54	17
	55-64	15
	65+	19

Social grade

	A	%
		3
	B	23
	C1	28
	C2	22
	D	16
	E	8

Marital status

	Married/living as	%
		56
	Single	27
	Widowed/divorced/separated	16

Working

	%
Working	55
Not working	45

Occupation

	%
Full-time	39
Part-time	11
Self-employed	5
Not working – housewife	6
Still in education	7
Unemployed	5
Retired	22
Other	5

Children in household

	%
Yes	31
No	69

Children's ages Multi-code question

	%
Aged 0-3	11
Aged 4-5	7
Aged 6-9	11
Aged 10-15	15
None aged under 16	69

Location

	%
<u>England</u>	82
London	12
North	23
Midlands	20
South	27
<u>Northern Ireland</u>	3
<u>Scotland</u>	8
<u>Wales</u>	6

Ethnicity

	%
White	89
Non-white	11

Access to internet
Multi-code question

	Home	%
	Home	82
	Work	32
	Total	83
	None	17