

Our standards and how they affect your care

Whether you're visiting for a routine check-up, a quick clean or for more complicated treatment, the dental professional treating you must meet our standards.

The General Dental Council, regulates dental professionals in the UK. Our job is to protect you.

We were 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; and
- dental technicians.

The dental professionals on our register must meet our standards, and we take action when they don't and put patients at risk. Our 'Standards for the Dental Team' is a code of conduct which the dental professionals on our register agree to follow at all times.

The following pages briefly explain our standards.

You can read or listen to Standards for the Dental Team in full on our website.

Standards for the Dental Team

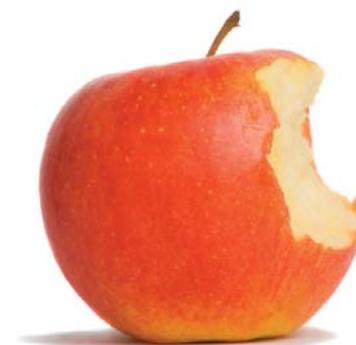
Our standards are based on key principles of practice. Dental professionals must:

- 1 put patients' interests first;
- 2 communicate effectively with patients;
- 3 get valid permission from patients to carry out treatment;
- 4 maintain and protect patients' information;
- 5 have a clear and effective complaints procedure;
- 6 work with colleagues in a way that serves the interests of patients;
- 7 maintain, develop and work within their professional knowledge and skills;
- 8 raise concerns if patients are at risk; and
- 9 make sure their personal behaviour maintains

patients' confidence in them and the dental profession.

We expect dental professionals to apply these principles to their work, using their professional judgement. We also expect them to be able to explain their actions.

We do not provide clinical guidance, but we ask dental professionals to be familiar with relevant guidance produced by other organisations.



Putting your interests first

Your dental professional should put your interests first. This means putting your interests before their own, or their colleagues' interests, or in the interests of their business.

They must listen to you and treat you with dignity and kindness. They must treat you as an individual and respect your culture and values.

They must treat you in a hygienic and safe environment and they must do their best to manage any dental pain or anxiety you may have.

They must have arrangements in place so that you can claim compensation if you suffer harm.

Communicating with you

Your dental professional must explain the options for your treatment in a way that you can understand. They must listen to you, answer your questions and give you time to think about your treatment and make decisions. You should be given a written treatment plan before your treatment starts which sets out what treatments they have recommended, how much it will cost and whether the treatment is NHS or private. They must also give you clear information about costs and display a price list in the reception or waiting area.

Getting your permission

Your dental professional should not do anything for you without getting your permission first. They must explain your options and the possible costs for any treatment. They can tell you which option they think is best but the final decision is yours. If there is any change to your treatment or to the cost, they must get your agreement to the change before going ahead.

Keeping your information confidential

Your dental professional must make and keep full and accurate records about your treatment. They must keep information about you and your treatment confidential. If they do need to share your information with someone else, they must tell you why and get your permission first.

They may occasionally be able to share your information without your permission but only if this is in your best interests or the public interest.



Complaints

Your dental professional must have a complaints procedure displayed in the practice. It must be easy to understand and make clear how long it would take for them to respond to a complaint. If you make a complaint, they must give you a full and fair answer.



Working with colleagues

Your dental professionals should work together to provide you with good care. They must make sure that you know who is involved in your care and what they will be doing. Information about all the members of the team should be clearly displayed in the practice. If your dental professional is not able to provide the treatment you need, they should refer you to someone else who can.

Keeping up to date

Your dental professional should only provide treatment that they are trained to give.

They have to know about, and follow laws, regulations and good practice affecting their work. This makes sure that they provide good care based on up-to-date evidence.

Training, qualifying and registering with us are only the first steps in a dental professional's career. They have to update their skills throughout their working life by taking part in activities and courses.

Raising concerns

Your dental professional must always put your safety first. If they think that you or other patients might be at risk because of someone's health, behaviour or work or because of something in their clinic, they must take action. Dental professionals who are in charge of teams have to make sure that their staff can raise concerns openly and they have to take those concerns seriously.



Personal behaviour

Dental professionals have to behave professionally both at work and in their personal lives so that you can have confidence in them and in the profession. They must treat everyone fairly and with dignity. If they commit a criminal offence or if another organisation takes action against them which could stop them working, they have to tell us. This is so that we can decide if it is safe for them to carry on working in dentistry.



We want to make sure that everyone can use our services.

If you would like a copy of this information in another language or format for example, in large print or on audio CD or podcast, please contact us.

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