

Dental Faculty of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
Comments on consultation document
GDC corporate strategy 2019 – 2020

The College welcomes this consultation and in particular the recognition by the General Dental Council (GDC) that it still has more to do to regain the respect of its registrants.

We particularly welcome the fiscal changes proposed in this document, and the proposals to move to a base outside London, which will also help to reduce overheads.

We believe that in order to achieve Strategic Aim One the organisation will require to undertake a major shift in attitude and action to address what has been described by our membership as “a culture of fear” amongst our profession. Although we recognise that the organisation has taken steps in the right direction, particularly with wider stakeholder engagement, what constitutes protection of the patient should be more clear cut than the patient not ‘being completely happy’ with the treatment they received. We are aware that the decision making of many practitioners, and in particular newer graduates, are ruled by their fear of FtP or litigation.

Whilst we recognise that improvements have been made, further streamlining of the complaints procedures throughout the UK would be welcome. Given that all registrants must now have a clear and visible complaints policy, we would hope that this will lessen the need to go canvassing for complaints in future.

It is unlikely that any dental registrants will argue against a drop in the ARF. DCPs may, however, be disappointed in the increase in their ARF. The proposed transparency in its calculation may help ease this change. It would be helpful if the GDC would consider introducing monthly direct debits as most other subscriptions are managed in this way (spreading the impact of the not inconsiderable annual bill at an already expensive time of the year, especially for part time staff).

The guidance document currently produced by the GDC is couched in general terms and although we have Standards for the Dental team, it is not always clear on the details. This uncertainty lends itself to variation in interpretation and may be one of the reasons why there was a rise in FtP case numbers.

In summary, there are some laudable principles at the heart of these strategic aims which our College supports. However, in order to achieve its core role of protecting the public, the GDC also needs to recapture the support of the dental profession. The regulator is not alone in wanting a profession that cares for patients in the right way, this is a goal shared by the whole profession.

We believe that increased face to face engagement with registrants is helping the Council to achieve its aims. We look forward to building on these positive

steps in order to achieve greater confidence by the profession in the role and actions of their regulator. We look forward to continuing to work together to weed out unsafe practice.