Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

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As dental professionals, we work to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics required by the General Dental Council[1]. This means that we

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 your professional knowledge and skills
8. Raise concerns if patients are at risk
9. Make sure your personal behaviour maintains patients' confidence in you and the dental Profession

1 Putting patients' interests first

Patients expect

- To be listened to and have their preferences and concerns taken into account.
- To be treated as individuals and have their cultures and values respected.
- That all members of the dental team will be honest and act with integrity.
- That all aspects of their health and well-being will be considered and they will receive dental care that is appropriate for them.
- To be treated in a clean and safe environment.
- That reasonable adjustments will be made for any disabilities.
- That their interests will be put before financial gain and business need.
- Redress if they suffer harm during dental treatment.
- That their dental pain and anxiety will be managed appropriately.

We will

- Listen to you.
- Treat you with dignity and respect at all times.
- Be honest and act with integrity.
- Take a holistic and preventative approach to your care which is appropriate to you.
- Treat you in a hygienic and safe environment.
- Treat you fairly, as individuals and without discrimination.
- Put your interests before our own or those of any colleague, business or organisation.
- Have appropriate arrangements in place for you to seek compensation if you suffer harm.
- Find out about laws and regulations that affect our work and follow them

2 Communicate effectively with patients

Patients expect

- To receive full, clear and accurate information that they can understand, before, during and after treatment, so that they can make informed decisions in partnership with the people providing their care.
- A clear explanation of the treatment, possible outcomes and what they can expect.
- To know how much their treatment will cost before it starts, and to be told about any changes.
- Communication that they can understand.

[1] General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London W1G 8DQ. Web: www.gdc-uk.org

- To know the names of those providing their care.

We will
- Communicate effectively with you – listen to you, give you time to consider information and take your views and communication needs into account.
- Recognise and promote your rights to and responsibilities for making decisions about your health priorities and care.
- Give you the information you need, in a way you can understand, so that you can make informed decisions.
- Give you clear information about costs.

3 Obtain valid consent

Patients expect to be asked for their consent to treatment before it starts.

We will
- Obtain valid consent before starting treatment, explaining all the relevant options and the possible costs.
- Make sure that you (or your representatives) understand the decisions you are being asked to make.
- Make sure that your consent remains valid at each stage of investigation or treatment.

4 Maintain and protect patients' information

Patients expect
- Their records to be up to date, complete, clear, accurate and legible.
- Their personal details to be kept confidential.
- To be able to access their dental records.
- Their records to be stored securely.

We will
- Make and keep contemporaneous, complete and accurate patient records.
- Protect the confidentiality of your information and only use it for the purpose for which it was given.
- Only release your information without your permission in exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that you can have access to their records.
- Keep your information secure at all times, whether your records are held on paper or electronically.

5 Have a clear and effective complaints procedure

Patients expect their concerns or complaints to be acknowledged, listened to and dealt with promptly.

We will
- Make sure that there is an effective complaints procedure readily available for you to use, and we will follow that procedure at all times.
- Respect your right to complain.
- Give you, if you complain, a prompt and constructive response.

6 Work with colleagues in a way that is in patients' best interests

Patients expect:

- To be fully informed of the different roles of the dental professionals involved in their care.
- That members of the dental team will work effectively together.

We will

- Work effectively with our colleagues and contribute to good teamwork.
- Be appropriately supported when treating you.
- Delegate and refer appropriately and effectively.
- Only accept a referral or delegation if we are trained and competent to carry out the treatment and believe that what we are being asked to do is appropriate for you.
- Communicate clearly and effectively with other team members and colleagues in your interests.
- Demonstrate effective management and leadership skills for the teams that we manage.

7 Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills

Patients expect:

- To receive good quality care.
- That all members of the dental team:
  - are appropriately trained and qualified;
  - keep their skills up to date;
  - know their limits and refer patients as appropriate; and
  - work within current laws and regulations.

We will

- Provide good quality care based on current evidence and authoritative guidance.
- Work within our knowledge, skills, professional competence and abilities.
- Update and develop our professional knowledge and skills throughout our working life.

8 Raise concerns if patients are at risk

Patients expect:

- That the dental team will act promptly to protect their safety if there are concerns about the health, performance or behaviour of a dental professional or the environment where treatment is provided.
- That a dental professional will raise any concerns about the welfare of vulnerable patients.

We will

- Always put your safety first.
- Act promptly if you or colleagues are at risk and take measures to protect you or them.
- Make sure that we encourage and support a culture where our staff can raise concerns openly and without fear of reprisal.
- Make sure that we have an effective procedure in place for raising concerns, that the procedure is readily available to all staff and that it is followed at all times.
- Take appropriate action if we have concerns about the possible abuse of children or vulnerable adults.

9 Make sure your personal behaviour maintains patients' confidence in you and the dental profession

Patients expect:

- That all members of the dental team will maintain appropriate personal and professional behaviour.
- That they can trust and have confidence in you as a dental professional.
- That they can trust and have confidence in the dental profession

We will

- Ensure that our conduct, both at work and in our personal lives, justifies your trust in us and in the dental profession.
- Protect you and colleagues from risks posed by our health, conduct or performance.
- Inform the GDC if we are subject to criminal proceedings or a regulatory finding is made against us anywhere in the world.
- Co-operate with any relevant formal or informal inquiry and give full and truthful information.