

IN THIS ISSUE

The Dental Council and Covid 19

Dental Council Elections 2020

Dr Gerry Cleary's account as a member on the Dental Council

CPD Update

Antibiotic Prophylaxis Guidelines

New Health Minister

Phones in Dentistry



COVID 19 CORONAVIRUS

The Dental Council recognises that this continues to be a worrying and stressful time for all members of the dental team. The council would like to thank all dental healthcare professionals for their commitment to providing safe clinical care during what was an unprecedented situation.

We welcomed the lifting of the restrictions on the 18th of May as it allowed the profession to resume providing a safe and caring environment for their patients. As a country, Ireland has been very successful in containing the virus but the risk of a resurgence of the COVID-19 virus remains. Many of the restrictions and controls that were introduced to delay and mitigate the spread of the disease are likely to remain in place for some time to come.

The Dental Council commended the HPSC's 'Guidance on Managing Infection Related Risks in Dental Services in the Context of the COVID-19 Emergency' to the profession, and it remains as the authoritative national advice on managing the risks in dental practice. As always, your professional judgement remains key and you should follow your professional judgement and assess risks when deciding on the best care for your patients.



President's End of Term Message



Dr Gerry McCarthy, President

Every five years the Dental Council changes. In November the present Council will meet for the last time. At that meeting we will only be signing off on minutes and closing our term of office, and then in the new year a new Council will take over. The Minister, the public who we protect and the dental professions owe a debt of gratitude to these nineteen volunteers, who give their time so generously. They strive to maintain standards not just with regards to fitness to practise but in education and training (the majority of the education and training programmes were visited during Council's term) and with guidance to the profession.

The decisions which we make at fitness to practise are difficult, legally technical, and at times weigh heavily, but it is an important bulwark in protecting the public. This Council has in this regard grown into a group of independent thinkers who work very well together and while the work is not always pleasant, it has been a pleasure to work with them all.

It is very disappointing that our Act still has not been revised. Many parts of it are out of date. When the Act came into force in 1985 email did not exist and companies did not own Dental Practices. Thirty five years ago, I was only three years out of college. It is regrettable that the Act still has not been brought into the 21st century.

These are challenging times for everyone. One of the consequences of this pandemic is that this Council may not meet again face to face. However the business goes on. In September the process of electing and nominating a new Council will commence. I would encourage people to consider volunteering, the role is interesting. But more than that I wish more people would exercise their franchise and vote.

Once again I am thankful to the members of the present Council for their patience and help and I wish the new Council the very best.

Being a member on the Dental Council



Dr Gerry Cleary, Vice President and RCSI nominee to the council, kindly wrote the below piece to give a council member's perspective of what it is like to be on the council.

I have enjoyed volunteering as a nominated member on the Dental Council for the last 5 years, participating on the Auxiliary committee, the Education and Training committee, the Specialist Training and Registration committee and the Finance and General Purposes committee. I have also had the honour of being elected to the position of vice president.

It has been a most interesting period of time and I have particularly enjoyed the wide perspective brought to discussions by the diversity of the membership on the council, including dental opinion from academia and practice but especially the added dimension from the nominated lay members on Council. Given a primary role of the Council is the protection and regulation of the profession for the general public the perspective and insight from the lay members of council has added significantly to the debate around all decisions.

A visit to New Zealand to represent our Council as an observer during an undergraduate school inspection and audit, attendance at a full New Zealand council meeting, along with chairing an inspection of a dental nursing program in Drogheda were some of my more enjoyable experiences. Challenges have included the recent covid pandemic, understanding corporate governance and helping to formulate the terms of reference for an audit and risk committee.

The biggest challenge for the Council is that we work under the Dentist's Act of 1985. With all the changes within the profession, Council wants to see the long awaited and overdue new dental act brought forward for consultation and enactment. That we cannot make continuous professional development compulsory is a clear example of one of the many limitations we encounter. Fortunately the vast majority of the profession adhere to our Code of Practice on professional behaviour and ethical conduct, which is currently under review.

Our council has been well supported by the Registrar and the very strong team he has assembled. Each area has a small team working very effectively serving each of the committees of the Council and allowing us to reach what we hope are informed and considered opinions.

Dental Council Elections 2020



The term of office of the present Dental Council ends on 12 November this year and elections will be held in autumn to elect registrants to serve. Under the Dentists Act, 1985 seven dentists are elected to sit on Council, and a registrant from each class of auxiliary dental worker is elected to the Auxiliary Dental Workers Committee. Any registrant resident in Ireland can stand for election and all registrants are entitled to vote. Nineteen people sit on the council, and twelve other members are nominated by various nominating bodies to serve with the seven elected members.

The Dental Council's statutory role is to protect the public and it cannot function without a strong input from the profession dedicated to working in the public interest. This input is the keystone of self-regulation. Members of Dental Council are elected or appointed to serve in the public interest and not to represent the views of the profession or the bodies that appointed them, and sometimes the public interest might conflict with these interests.

A large part of the workplan for the incoming Dental Council will concern the implementation of the National Oral Health Policy. The policy is recommending wide-ranging changes to dental education, practice and professional regulation. Revising the Dentists Act, 1985 is a key short-term priority under the plan. Ensuring the new Act is fit-for-purpose will be a key aim for Dental Council.

MEMBERSHIP OF DENTAL COUNCIL

Elected by registered dentists:	Seven
Nominated by the Minister for Health*:	Four
Nominated by Dublin University (TCD)	Two
Nominated by University College Cork:	Two
Nominated by the Medical Council:	Two
Nominated by the Royal College of Surgeons:	One
Nominated by the Minister for Education and Skills:	One

*At least two of the people nominated by the Minister for Health must not be dentists

Elections to the Dental Council

Nominations to stand in the elections will open on 4th of September and will close on 1st of October. Candidates interested in standing must be nominated by six other dentists. The election is held by a postal ballot and the electoral system is the proportional representation single transferable vote system. Ballot papers will be posted to registrants around the 9th of October and the ballot will close at 1pm on the 28th of October. The count will be held on the 29th of October.

Elections to the Auxiliary Dental Workers Committee

Each class of auxiliary dental worker may elect one registrant to sit on the Auxiliary Dental Workers Committee. This committee is tasked with overseeing the education and training standards and professional practice for the auxiliary professions. Nominations to stand will open on the 4th of September also and the election timetable is the same as for the election of dentists. The only difference is that candidates only need to be nominated by three other registrants. If only one candidate is nominated for a particular class, they will be deemed elected when nominations close.

DENTAL COUNCIL ELECTION TIMETABLE 2020

Notice of Elections	4th September 2020
Close of nominations	1st October 2020 (between 10am and 1pm)
Issue of ballot papers	by 9th October 2020
Poll Closes	28th October 2020 at 1pm
Count	29th October 2020 at 10am

Dental Council Offices during COVID 19

In line with the advice and direction from the Government, the staff of the Dental Council are now working predominately remotely. This is likely to continue for a number of months and for this reason we would like to advise you that we will not be able to accept callers to the office. We are still performing our full range of activities, in as far as this is possible in the present environment.

REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT: Our registration department is still busy, and we are continuing to register new dental healthcare professionals. The Government passed emergency legislation at the start of the pandemic establishing a new dental register to allow former dentists restore their name and resume in form of restricted practice. There was significant work involved in setting up the systems to manage this but the numbers availing of it were small. This year's final-year dental students are graduating in absentia, but we will continue to prioritise their registration after graduation.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMES: These are unprecedented times and we are actively engaging with the educators delivering dental programmes to assess the impact of the pandemic on their programmes. The Dental Council has confidence that the expertise to address the challenge resides within institutions.

DENTAL COUNCIL'S EXAM: This year's Dental Council's exam for non-EEA dentists and, our accreditation visits to the Clinical Dental Technology programme in Dublin and the Oral Surgery and Orthodontics programmes in Cork have been deferred.

Until we return to the office, email is the best way to communicate with the office. If you require our assistance or help, please email us at info@dentalcouncil.ie. It would be very helpful if you would provide a succinct description of the general nature of your query in the subject bar. Our main telephone number will continue to be answered but it will not be possible to transfer calls to staff members.

Continued Professional Development UPDATE

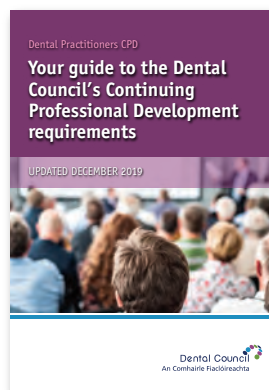
The landscape of CPD is changing rapidly and the impact of technology on course delivery has been significant. For these reasons, the Dental Council paused its own role in the direct approval of CPD activities effective January 2020. Council's updated CPD guidance reflects this decision and incorporates enhanced advice to dentists and to course organisers.

CPD providers and course organisers are required to make the same level of information and assurances available to potential attendees as would previously have been provided to the Dental Council to confirm whether an activity can be considered as being structured (previously 'verified') or self-directed (previously 'unverified'). The characteristics of both types of CPD activities are reaffirmed in the updated guidance.

One of the original aims of the 2015 CPD guide was to prepare the profession for dental CPD

becoming mandatory. In April 2019, the National Oral Health Policy was published which includes a commitment to update the Dentists Act as a matter of priority. This commitment is welcomed by the Dental Council and acknowledged as being an important step towards CPD becoming mandatory for dentists.

It is important to note that that the ethical obligation for dentists to undertake CPD remains unchanged.



NEWS IN BRIEF WITHDRAWN Antibiotic Prophylaxis Guidelines

The Dental Council previously issued guidelines on antibiotic prophylaxis. These guidelines are no longer valid and have been withdrawn by Council.

While the previous guidelines are not available on the Dental Council website, it is possible that they are still being referred to in practice. Dentists should refer instead to the HSE's 2019 guidance available at the following link - <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/gp/antibiotic-prescribing/conditions-and-treatments/dental/endocarditis-prophylaxis/>

New Minister for Health

The Dental Council would like to welcome and congratulate Mr Stephen Donnelly, TD on his recent appointment as Minister for Health. The Dental Council has always enjoyed a positive working relationship with the Minister and the Department for Health and we look forward to working with Mr Donnelly and his team in the future on both existing and new projects. The Dental Council will be pressing the Minister to revise the Dentists Act. The Act is over 35 years old and needs to be revised to ensure that dental regulation is fit for purpose into the future. We also look forward to engaging with the Minister on implementing the National Oral Health Policy.

2020 AUXILIARY RENEWAL FEE DEADLINE

AUG 31st

Phones in Dentistry

Bernadette John

The ubiquity of smart technology has created new challenges for clinical practice. It is important for healthcare professionals to be alert to the risks new technology – from smartphones and smart speakers to smart watches and smart TVs in waiting rooms – so that informed data protection compliant decisions can be made when this technology is used in a clinical setting.



Many healthcare professionals are not aware that downloading Apps to a smartphone, can enable the developers to access and download the clinicians' address book, access the microphone, access the camera and photo gallery, send and read email and texts, access and amend the diary, and to monitor the device owners' movements. The standard terms and conditions of most Apps allow wide access to information and pose concerns regarding information governance, patient confidentiality and, ultimately, trust in healthcare professionals.

The following basic principles below will help healthcare professionals who use mobile technology in practice:

If using a smartphone camera to take clinical images, be aware that digital images can be retained for 30 days in the 'deleted images' album after they are deleted. These can be streamed between other connected devices (such as your child's iPad) and to the cloud. Clinical images are considered part of the medical record and therefore, it is essential to be sure to create and store them securely.

If you use your smartphone to take clinical images, you should ensure that the cloud based back up and default settings such as Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) location information linked to photographs is disabled.

Don't simply delete, make sure you empty the trash. Consider cropping photos first (to protect patient identity) and then take and use the screen shots instead, thus stripping out metadata

Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Skype are not secure channels for clinicians to facilitate remote clinical consultations. Near Me or Microsoft Teams offer more secure, GDPR compliant, video consultation solutions.

Passcode protect all of your devices

Devices should be returned to factory settings and SIM cards wiped before trading in or discarding

Bluetooth should not be used to transfer images between devices

Data Encryption should be enabled when storing clinical images and documents on your PC or laptop

Ensure that the operating systems are fully updated, and anti-virus software installed on any device used to process work related data.

Now is the perfect time to take stock of the technology in your pocket and ensure that you are using it appropriately to enhance and not threaten your clinical practice.

Bernadette John is an experienced clinical tutor, public health nurse and midwife. Bernadette initiated Digital Professionalism teaching at King's College London Medical School in 2012 and authored their eLearning module there on the subject. Bernadette has written for a range of news media on the subject of Digital Professionalism, from the Huffington Post to the British Medical Journal and the Faculty Dental Journal.

Bernadette is a consultant working with a broad range of UK and European organisations and universities, involved in research, training, regulation and employment. From higher education to the NHS, unions, professional bodies (BDA, BAOS and UK Royal Colleges) to humanitarian organisations. She is currently studying for a PhD at the School of Dentistry at University College Cork, supervised by Dr Christine McCreary and Prof Anthony Roberts.