

President's Message

This Council has just passed the halfway point of its 5 year term and we continue to be very busy.

A considerable upswing in fitness to practice activity and complaints has consumed a considerable amount of our time. One interesting feature of a recent investigation concerned the use of a forged certificate of registration. The diligence of members of the profession brought this to our attention and allowed it to be dealt with appropriately. It is a reminder to all of us when considering somebody for a position that the documentation presented is in fact authentic and the applicant being considered is actually on the appropriate register. Our updated website features a new 'check the register' section to allow a simple search for any registrant. www.dentalcouncil.ie

Registration matters continue to be reviewed and monitored carefully. The onus on the Dental Council is to maintain the integrity of the register and to ensure that any applicant to the register is suitable for inclusion. Only complete application forms can be considered and unfortunately about 75% of applicants do not follow the guidance carefully, generating follow up queries and therefore delaying the process. It is worth noting that in 2022 almost 50 Polish applications were an exemplar of thoroughness and processed within 4 weeks as all the documentation required for registration was provided at the point of initial application. I would particularly like to compliment the Registration department for the very thorough and professional manner in which it handled the refugee registration process and the considerable increase in volume of work this generated. The Council also thank the many members of the profession who have volunteered as mentors where required for periods of adaptation for some of our refugee registrants.

The Dental Council continues to advocate strongly for the updating of the 1985 Dentists Act, particularly mandatory professional development and practice inspections. Our comprehensive submission prepared in 2021 has not received the exposure we had hoped for, but as you read this, we are in the process of completing a wider circulation of the document. This Council, as with previous Councils, has taken a strong position that the absence of CPD for dentistry is not appropriate. We are the only profession in Ireland and indeed we are not aware of any other EU or first world country where CPD is not compulsory for dentistry. This is an untenable situation in 2023 and puts patients at unnecessary risk. We will continue to push strongly on this very important matter.

Council believe our updated and recently published codes are a positive contribution to dentistry and will help any practitioner plan for what they need to do in a practical and understandable way. While we do not provide direct clinical guidelines, the codes provide a framework to the profession on appropriate standards where omissions could pose a risk to the public. By including the most significant references, the registrant has the available resources to best inform their decisions. Patients also access and use these codes and for the first time they are written in language appropriate for patient understanding.

I would like to thank my fellow volunteer members of Council for their commitment, interest and willingness to 'protect the public'. Contributions and input from all members of Council continues to be strong and insightful. We are also very well supported by an experienced, thorough and stable secretariat and I particularly wish to acknowledge the support and help they provide to Council in its work.

To contact me please email to president@dentalcouncil.ie



Dr Gerry Cleary, President

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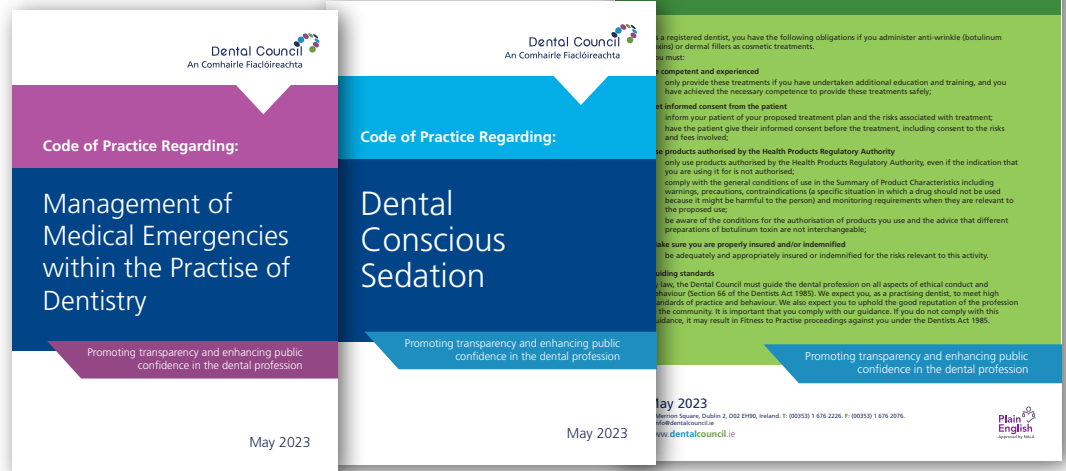
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New Codes of Practice

The Dental Council published two new and one revised codes of practice in May. The Council felt new codes were required to try and ensure clarity and enhance patient safety.

Of the three new codes, the Code of Practice regarding Medical Emergencies in the Practice of Dentistry is probably the most wide-ranging as this sets the standards that should apply in all dental surgeries in Ireland. The codes of practice regarding sedation and non-surgical cosmetic procedures are more niche as many dentists do not provide either in their practice. Each code is structured to provide clear guidance and also appropriate referenced resources from expert bodies and competent authorities.



Medical Emergencies within the Practice of Dentistry

For the first time, the Dental Council is guiding the profession on the range of medications and equipment that should be available in all dental practices. Most importantly, it clearly sets out the obligations on all members of the dental team to be competent to ensure that

medical emergencies are dealt with professionally. The guide sets out a requirement for the team to be undertake formal training, and, crucially, for the practice to ensure that its in-practice training and procedures are regularly tested and revised.

Sedation in General Practice Dentistry

The sedation code sets out the requirements for dentists who provide treatment under conscious sedation, especially intravenous sedation. This document provides an informative and overarching guide to the dental team for dental conscious sedation in Ireland. The content is informed by recent reports on sedation from the Intercollegiate Advisory Committee for Sedation in Dentistry (IACSD), the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC), and the Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programmes (SDCEP).

Non-Surgical Cosmetic Procedures



The previous code on non-surgical cosmetic procedures, which set out a framework for decision making, has been largely retained. This code, however, contained an element of contradiction where the council said, on one hand that these procedures are not the practice of dentistry, but on the other hand, here is what you must do if you provide these treatments, and we will hold you accountable for failures.

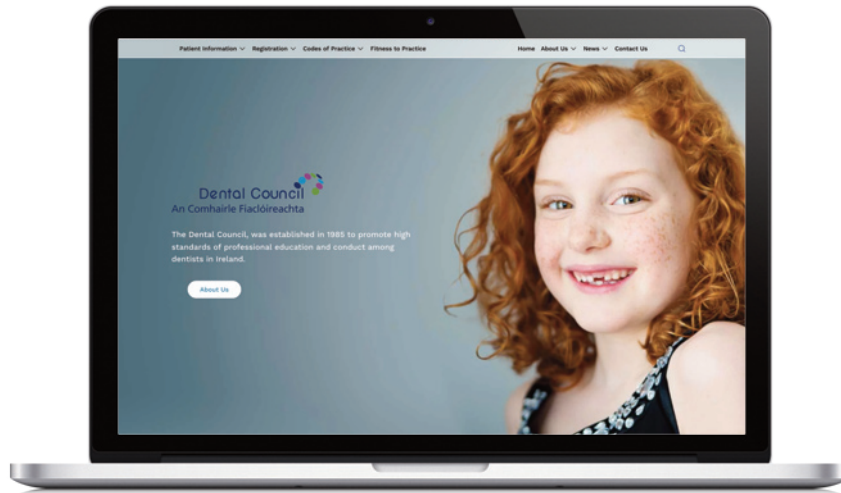
The council was of the view that stating that non-surgical cosmetic procedures was not the practice of dentistry, did not adequately protect the public as it undermined council's ability to hold any dentists to account. The Dental Council's view is that each registrant is expected to be competent and able to demonstrate competency, in any area which they choose to practice, but particularly those not covered during the undergraduate curriculum. Removing the phraseology that the council does not consider these to be the practice of dentistry removes the ambiguity.

Dental Council Website

The Dental Council now has a new website. Our previous website was dated and, in recent times, was becoming more and more problematic to maintain. The Dental Council is very pleased with the look and feel of the website and especially welcomes the new 'search the register' functionality.

RTE's Prime Time broadcast a package in August about an unregistered dentist who they allege had been practicing while not registered. There were also false registration certificates in circulation. Employing dentists have an obligation to ensure that new dentists are registered before they start treating patients and it is hoped that this new feature will greatly assist practices confirm a new associate's registration status.

The website also has a news and events section as well as the guidance documentation and information that was on the previous website. We hope you find the website useful and easy to navigate and you are welcome to send any comments or suggestions that you might have on improving its usefulness.



Registration Statistics

There has been a significant amount of coverage in 2023 about the shortage of dentists in Ireland, and the Dental Council acknowledges that many employing dentists are finding it difficult to find staff. The Dental Council recently carried out an analysis of the historic numbers on the register and of those seeking registration over recent years. Some of the interesting findings from this review are:

Dentist per Irish population doubled since 1985



1985: 1 Dentist per 3,100 people

2023: 1 Dentist per 1,459 people

More European Dentists registered in **2022** than in any other year

TOP 5

Countries of qualification (outside of Ireland) seeking registration

UK
HUNGARY
POLAND
ROMANIA
SPAIN

Ireland is reliant on UK trained orthodontists Registrations since 2015



16



35

TOP 5

Countries for those registering by passing the Dental Council examinations

INDIA
PAKISTAN
SUDAN
EGYPT
NIGERIA

Dr Anne Hahessy Patients

The Dental Council is aware that the sudden closure of Dr Anne Hahessy's orthodontic practice in Oranmore left hundreds of patients who were mid-treatment without a treating dentist. What happened was unprecedented and understandably, there was a significant public disquiet about this case. Many patients reported to the Dental Council that they felt abandoned and left in an information vacuum, much of which was due to the fact the Dental Council's proceedings in the High Court were held in-camera.

The Dental Council would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the orthodontists and dentists who have seen and are treating her former patients. The council recognises that this was a stressful time for many registrants in the great Galway area and we acknowledge that in many cases, great efforts were made to fit patients in to an already busy caseload.

Source: Dental Council of Ireland

The Government is seeking to increase the capacity of students in third level in a number of professions including dentistry. While this is welcome, this will not address the current shortage of dentists as it will take at least ten years and probably fifteen years for this increase to have a noticeable impact on the numbers on the register.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Graduations

Members of the registration department have been attending graduation ceremonies over the past couple of months in order to allow for the streamlining of new graduate registration applications. This is an initiative that was started a number of years ago and has proven popular with graduates.



Examination for non-EEA Dentists

The annual Dental Council examination has recently finished for this year. Part 1 ran from April 3rd – 6th 2023. In total 22 candidates successfully completed both (written papers and bench test) components and were given permission to apply to sit Part 2. Part 2 was held on July 10th – 14th 2023 in Cork University and Dental Hospital. 20 candidates presented for the Part 2 examination.

13 candidates successfully completed all components of the examinations and are eligible to apply for full Dental Council registration.



Accreditation Visits



The Dental Council conducted their accreditation visits to both the UCC and DDUH BDS Undergraduate Programme in November 2022. In addition, three specialist postgrad programmes were visited in DDUH in February 2023 and the new Dental Nurse Traineeship in Marino College of Further Education was also visited in March 2023. Dental Council have committed to publishing all accreditation reports going forward and they will be available to read on our website once the reports have gone through all of the required internal processes.

