



Our mission and vision for dentistry

Council of the College of General Dentistry
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Summary

Mission

The College of General Dentistry aims to empower the public and patients to achieve and maintain good oral health through its professional community.

We bring together all members of the dental team across the UK and beyond to provide collegiate leadership, support, guidance and inspiration.

We enable our members individually and collectively to develop, maintain and enhance their clinical excellence

and skills in patient care, to realise their potential and fulfil their career aspirations. We do this for the benefit of patients and in the interests of their safety.

Our College uses the trust, independence, expertise and the unique ability our constitution gives us to bring people together, to promote the achievement of our vision for dentistry, in the UK and beyond.

Values

Our College is:

Patient-centred and empowering

Authoritative and **independent**

Respectful, inclusive and supportive

Consultative, **collaborative**, consensus building

Effective and accountable, **ethical**, innovative and agile

Our Vision for UK Dentistry

We envision a future where dental professionals and the public work together to prioritise preventative oral health care, empowering individuals with the support and guidance they need to take an active role in maintaining their oral health.

We want to see improved access to oral health care for everyone, including through better integration of oral health care in primary health care settings and expanded use of all the professionals in the dental team. We will support the evolution of the roles of all dental professionals to achieve this vision over the next decade.

Our Mission

Patients and the public

We aim to empower the public and patients to achieve and maintain good oral health.

We aim to provide clarity to the public and dental patients about high standards and professionalism in the delivery of oral health care services. We want to be recognised by them as the leading source of trusted and independent information about the oral health care they can expect and all those who share in delivering it, especially in primary settings.

We seek, through a trusted professional community, to enrich public and patient understanding of the wider benefits of good oral health, and how all the

different members of the dental team work together collectively to help them be healthy.

We do this through the provision of accessible resources which are based on sound scientific research and evidence, explained for diverse audiences. These are underpinned by the support we give to our membership to maintain the highest clinical and practice management standards.

We help our members continuously improve their professional performance in the interests of their patients.

Professions and membership

We enable our members individually and collectively to develop, maintain and enhance their clinical excellence and skills in patient care, to realise their potential and fulfil their career aspirations. We do this for the benefit of patients and in the interests of their safety.

The College defines structured career pathways, which maintain high standards for the achievement of purposeful progression as members of the College and the wider professional community.

We enable patients and the public to understand what membership of CGDent and the qualifications we

recognise mean for the choices they make about their dental care.

We set clinical and related professional standards and draw up best practice guidance for our members to follow, based on sound research and evidence.

We promote research in the primary dental care setting, to underpin continuous learning and improvement

in pursuit of our vision for dentistry in the UK.

We are a member-led and governed professional body that strives to ensure constant relevance and value for CGDent members from all four nations of the UK.

We are committed to inclusivity and equity as fundamental to the sustainability of the organisation and the professional community.

We welcome into membership dental professionals who meet our standards from across the world and we engage with our counterparts internationally.

We aim to petition for a Royal Charter as soon as practicably possible. This will consolidate and give expression and recognition to the professional trust which exists between our members and the public, and will enhance the impact and reach of our work.

Other stakeholders and partners

We use the trust, independence and expertise that we foster, and our unique ability to bring people together, to promote the achievement of our vision for dentistry, in the UK and beyond.

We work with governments across the four nations of the UK to promote best practice and high standards of oral health care and our vision for dentistry.

We lend our expertise and trusted, independent voice where it can strengthen the development and delivery of policy that addresses the significant issues affecting oral health care in the UK.

We engage with organisations which represent or stand as proxies for the views of dental patients, putting them at the heart of what we do. Wherever we can we facilitate patients having a voice in their care and safety.

We maintain mutually beneficial working relationships with the educational institutions where our prospective members train.

We have a role which is complementary to but wholly distinct from that of the

statutory regulatory and licensing body for all dental professionals (the GDC).

Similarly, we do not play the same role as the purely representative bodies for specific dental professionals or as a trade union. Each has a vital role to play in the best interests of patients and the public in healthcare delivery in the UK.

We work with mutual respect and transparency with other entities, in support of any common objectives but with the interests of patients and good oral health as our primary concerns.

We recognise that oral health care delivery in the UK also relies on a thriving commercial sector of product manufacturers or service suppliers. We foster relationships with them which are of mutual benefit, where consistent with our values, our charitable objects and the best interests of the public and patients.

Our Values Explained

The College is:

Patient-centred and empowering

In everything we do we aim to put the interests of our patients first.

We engage with patients, helping them to have a voice in our work and enabling

them to improve and maintain their oral and wider health.

We seek to recognise individual, group and national differences and tailor what we do accordingly.

Authoritative and independent

Our work is led and informed by high standards of scientific and clinical discipline and our policies, standards and guidance are well researched and evidence-based.

We aim for excellence in all we do.

We work with, but maintain our independence from, a range of stakeholders, partners, supporters and suppliers, in the wider public interest.

Respectful, inclusive and supportive

We strive to respect each other equally regardless of our professional or other background.

We are mindful of the language we use to express ourselves and we work

inclusively in the spirit and letter of equality legislation and best practice.

We aim to be supportive in our relationships with each other as we build our collective professional future.

Consultative, collaborative, consensus building

We work hard at trying to achieve realistic solutions to problems we share with others, always mindful of the best interests of patients as we do so.

We are resilient in the face of challenge and will lead and stimulate debate towards consensus.

Effective and accountable, ethical, innovative and agile

We are committed to good governance and effective delivery of our mission.

We are clear about roles, responsibilities and remits and are transparent in accounting for our work as a membership-led body.

We set high standards of compliance with relevant external requirements, and we manage conflicts appropriately and transparently.

We want to be forward-looking and creative in pursuing our aims and

objectives and we value innovation and agility, exercised with propriety and ethical conviction.

Our Vision for UK Dentistry

We aim to promote our vision for UK dentistry over the coming decade. We describe below our ambitions in relation to patients and public health, to the delivery of oral health care and to the professional development of the whole dental team.

Patients and Public Health

We will foster in our work a significant shift across the UK to preventative oral health care, empowering individuals with the support and guidance they need to take an active role in maintaining their oral health.

We know that good oral health is correlated with wider good health, and that poor oral health is associated with greater incidence of both long term and acute medical conditions. So we will support more holistic approaches to oral health care including the (re-)positioning of oral health care as integral to wider health care.

Dental decay is a preventable condition. We want to improve public understanding of the importance of oral health care with clear and well evidenced policy statements, practical recommendations and information campaigns, tailored to the four nations' differentiated needs.

We will aim to use simple and clear targeted messages and will anchor our initiatives in deep and wide understanding of national demographics as relevant, with a view to reducing current inequalities in oral health care outcomes.

We will support and help design interventions targeted at specifically vulnerable cohorts and excluded communities e.g. early years 0-5; patients with special needs; elderly and nursing home communities - recognising that the latter will become an increasing concern as the population ages.

To underpin improvements in dental and wider public health, we will foster an increase in the extent and effectiveness of, and funding for, primary dental care research.

Delivery of care

To deliver health services' recovery from austerity and pandemic, there are important needs for the integration of primary oral health care with other primary care systems and settings. This should improve patient access as well

as enhance overall health outcomes for individuals and make systems and services more efficient. Removing barriers by eliminating multiple visits, reducing the time length per visit, and integrating electronic health records have been highlighted as ways in which

medical-dental integration (MDI) can affect the health care system experience positively for both patients and providers.

There is significant inequality of access to oral health care in the UK, driven geographically, economically, and by protected characteristics. We want to help develop funding arrangements and business and delivery models which incentivise preventative and minimally invasive care and which promote reduction of inequalities of access and outcomes. We would hope to promote the involvement of all the dental team in the education of nursing and other healthcare colleagues to help widen access to dental care. See also paragraph 30 below on how roles in the dental team can be better drawn on in the provision of more integrated primary health care.

The dental team

We are committed to the maintenance and promotion of high standards of clinical and non-clinical work and conduct. We work to gain trust and recognition from the public that membership of the College signals to them high standards of care.

We want to see strong and effective independent regulation of our professions in the public interest. We will continue to complement that with robust, relevant and up to date practice guidance - we want to take clear ownership of “professionalism” in primary care dentistry.

We will encourage the optimisation of use of the skills and resources of the full dental team, including improving patients’ understanding of the different roles in the team, and ensuring patients see the right team member at the right time.

We want to see a range of risks in relation to delivery of care better managed by all those who have a role in doing so. Dental teams need to practise in safe and supportive environments, and we will work constructively with the professions’ regulator, the General Dental Council, in the expectation they foster greater “upstream” regulation. Patients need appropriate remedies when things aren’t right and we will support initiatives to reduce litigation risk for patients, dental professionals and the organisations with which they are associated.

We will support the development and delivery of a realistic long-term workforce plan for sustainable dental professions across the UK, to meet population need. This must be aligned with our vision for public health and the delivery of care.

We will engage with - and where appropriate lead - the clinical and cultural evolution of dental professional education and training at all levels, to support our vision. We will, for example, emphasise the oral physician and not just the surgeon. Everyone in the team is well placed to assume an expanded role in providing limited preventative primary care.

We will put in place career development structures and recognition which reflect high standards and deliver continuous professional learning and improvement.

We will develop standards for quality assured or accredited post-qualification training, including the certification of enhanced skills and in the “specialism” of general dental care, drawing a parallel to the way in which GPs are trained.

We will increase our and our members’ involvement in research in the primary

care setting, to inform standards and practice guidance and to influence public health policy.

We will continue to develop the College as the professional “home” for dentistry and the respected, independent, expert authority for policy makers to turn to for advice and, as appropriate, support. We aim to create a Royal College of General Dentistry that in time will take its place in the estimation and trust of the public alongside other Royal medical colleges.