

DENTAL MYTHBUSTER 32:

Wellbeing of dentists and the dental team

Wellbeing and support for dental practitioners



Dental practitioners often have to balance:

- Their clinical and professional duties
- Being an employer
- Maintaining a business, either their own or as part of a corporate group

The General Dental Council (GDC) is clear that the interests of patients must come first. This can make dentists anxious about whether their professional behaviour might come under scrutiny. At the same time, opportunities to seek support and guidance may not be obvious.

Society is becoming more litigious. This too can create anxiety for dental professionals.

Wellbeing and support for the whole practice team

Dentists and practice teams may need support in many areas. For example, concerns are often raised, and regulatory breaches occur around:

- Clinical and ethical decision making
- Practice management
- Health and wellbeing

Where can you get support?

Dentists may feel professionally isolated even in a large dental practice. It is important to form positive, helpful relationships with colleagues for mutual support.

This list is not exhaustive but gives sources of help and support.

- Local Dental Committees (LDC)
- British Dental Association (BDA) branches and sections
- BDA 'Health Assured' confidential counselling and emotional support service
- Peer assisted support schemes (PASS): usually run through LDCs
- Indemnity providers
- Postgraduate dental deans
- Confidential Helpline – volunteer dentists providing emotional first aid for dentists in distress
- Support for Dental teams.org (c/o British Dental Association Benevolent Fund)
- Support for Dental teams guidance
- Services for dentists with mental illness and addiction problems:
 - Dental Health Support Trust
 - NHS health practitioner service

When the CQC inspect

The CQC use these regulations when they review if the practice is safe, effective, responsive, caring and well-led. When the CQC inspect, they look at the culture of the organisation. This relates to:

- Regulation 18 (Staffing)
- Regulation 19 (Fit and proper persons employed)

It is part of the key lines of enquiry (KLOEs). In particular:

- WL3 Culture of the organisation
- WL5 Management of risk and performance
- WL8 Learning, improvement and innovation

You can use the Staff COVID-19 Document Checklist to evidence your management of risk and record keeping.

Staff COVID-19 Document Checklist

To be kept and regularly updated in confidential personnel file

Employee Name:

Employee Job Title:

Date:

	Yes	No	Comments
Relevant medical history on file			
Staff risk assessment on file			
Shielding/high/increased risk category			
FFP3 fit test pass certificate			
COVID test(s) carried out? - positive or negative result? (add dates)			
Advised to self-isolate? - (add dates)			
COVID related return to work form complete and present?			
Has the employee had the COVID vaccine (x2)? What were the dates? 1 2			
Has the employee declined the COVID vaccine?			
Have regular wellbeing and mental health chats been conducted and documented? (You can use the employee welfare checklist)			