

Personal Development Plans: a practical guide

In the second of a two part series, Louis Mackenzie, Head of Clinical Training at Simplyhealth Professionals, describes how next year's CPD changes will require all members of the dental team to have their own Personal Development Plan.

When the **Enhanced Continuing Professional Development (ECPD)** scheme starts next year (1st January for dentists and 1st August for DCPs) changes from the existing scheme will include requirements for all registrants to:

- ▲ Write an individual Personal Development Plan (PDP) to identify relevant educational needs for the maintenance and development of professional knowledge and skills
- ▲ Review, update and adapt PDPs throughout the five year cycle
- ▲ Make an annual statement which declares they are meeting the requirements of the scheme.

Having a PDP aims to give registrants the opportunity to think carefully about the types of CPD that will give the maximum benefit and assure the GDC that the scheme is being taken seriously.

Individual professionals will be free to design their own PDPs; while the GDC are not expected to evaluate PDPs directly, minimum requirements are likely to include:

- ▲ Identification of areas of knowledge or skill that require maintenance or development and how they relate to a registrant's current or future field of practice



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- ▲ The CPD activities planned to address identified learning needs and the GDC's development outcomes that will map to each activity (Table 1)
- ▲ The expected timeframes for activity completion over CPD cycles.

GDC guidance on CPD¹ was updated in May 2017 and includes the **Plan, Do, Reflect, Record** learning model (Table 2) to encourage registrants to think proactively about professional needs, field of practice and the standards for the dental team, before embarking on CPD activity.

PDP design

A PDP may be defined as a structured method of addressing professional development and improvement. It is a systematic protocol designed to help registrants:

- ▲ Choose CPD that is relevant to field of practice, or intended practice
- ▲ Identify in advance the CPD that will most effectively enhance professional development

- ▲ Choose CPD that is mapped to one or more of the GDCs four development outcomes (Table 1)
- ▲ Choose CPD activities that suit learning style(s) eg lectures, hands-on, reading, online
- ▲ Make good decisions regarding CPD providers
- ▲ Set out actions to meet during CPD cycles
- ▲ Engage with CPD through planned, focused study with an emphasis on reflection
- ▲ Prioritise CPD activity
- ▲ Review learning needs regularly (ideally with appropriate colleagues)

Before writing a PDP, it is recommended that dentists and DCPs consider a list of reflective questions, which may include:

- ▲ What am I good at? What do I enjoy?
- ▲ Have I identified any areas that I want to improve or I need to be updated on?

A	Effective communication with patients, the dental team and others across dentistry, including when obtaining consent, dealing with complaints and raising concerns when patients are at risk
B	Effective management of self and effective management of others or effective work with others in the dental team, in the interests of patients at all times; providing constructive leadership where appropriate
C	Maintenance and development of knowledge and skill within your field of practice
D	Maintenance of skills, behaviours and attitudes which maintain patient confidence in you and the dental profession and put patients' interests first

Table 1: GDC development outcomes for ECPD

Plan	Identify your CPD needs and how they relate to the GDC's development outcomes
Do	Carry out planned activities that best meet the needs set out in your PDP
Reflect	Critically evaluate the impact of your CPD activity on maintenance and development needs
Record	Document CPD by completion of an 'activity log' (see below) with development outcomes mapped to each activity

Table 2: GDC recommended model for CPD

▲ Do I have any weaknesses or limitations that I want to strengthen?

▲ What actions are required to maintain or enhance my knowledge, understanding, clinical skills, patient care and practice quality?

▲ What actions are required to acquire and develop new skills?

▲ How do I plan to allocate time for CPD?

▲ Where do I want to be at the end of my five year cycle?

To help design Personal Development Plans it is also recommended that members of the dental team use staff meetings, appraisals and other peer review opportunities to analyse the outcomes of practice inspections or evaluations, patient feedback or complaints, policy reviews and audits or risk assessments.

ECPD records

In order for CPD to be considered verifiable, the evidence (eg certificates) given by CPD providers must include the following:

- ▲ The name of the registrant who has participated in the CPD activity
- ▲ The participant's registration number
- ▲ The subject, learning content, aims and objectives

▲ The anticipated GDC development outcomes of the CPD

▲ Confirmation that the CPD is subject to quality assurance, with the name of the person or body providing the quality assurance

▲ Confirmation from the provider that the quality assurance information is full and accurate

▲ The date that the CPD was undertaken

▲ The total number of CPD hours

In addition to mapping CPD to the development outcomes described above, 'activity logs' should include a reflective element to encourage critical appraisal of CPD activities. One of the GDC aims of ECPD is for registrants to have evidence that reflection has been embedded.

Reflection has long been recognised as a critical component of medical and dental practice and may be described as a structured process of critical analysis and evaluation allowing professionals to:

- ▲ Learn from experience
- ▲ Identify strengths and areas for improvement
- ▲ Learn from mistakes so that errors are not repeated



▲ In addition to GDC requirements it may also be expected that Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections will include confirmation that all employees' regular appraisals include PDPs.

▲ During 2017, members of the Simplyhealth Professionals team have been part of a GDC advisory group working on next year's CPD updates. Accordingly, by the time Enhanced CPD starts, the Simplyhealth Professionals quality manuals, which are freely available on the member's Dashboard² will have been updated to include ECPD guidance and specialised PDP templates. As always, details of the comprehensive Simplyhealth Professionals training programme can be found on the Events page of the website³ and in Eventful magazine.

ECPD resource references

¹<https://www.gdc-uk.org/professionals/cpd/enhanced-cpd>

²<https://www.denplan.co.uk/dashboard>

³<http://www.denplan.co.uk/dentists/events-and-training>

See Eventful magazine and the Events page of our website for details of the comprehensive Simplyhealth Professionals training programme.