

Recertification

To: Recertification
Subject: Recertification

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on Recertification.

The following are my thoughts on these matters. There has been a lot to consider here and I understand that in many areas of life, things are often in a state of change or review. Some of the changes the dental profession are likely to be subjected to here are straightforward but, in my opinion, some are not. I am somewhat confused, in places, about the reason for some of the suggested changes. Some seem gratuitous but the most contentious proposals from even the most cursory glance at them are to be found in Area 1 which I shall deal with last.

Area 2. Mentoring overseas trained dentists. This is a common sense idea but who is going to do the mentoring? Who is going to train the mentors? Do all newly arrived dentists need mentoring? At what level do they need assistance and how will the Dental Council assess this? Does the DC expect the principals of any practice to be involved in this and, if so, this may impact on the willingness of some practitioners to take on such dentists.

Area 3. Reasonable proposal here especially with eyesight checks which I would imagine most dentists would do every 2 to 3 years anyway. I know I do. As for general health, the proposal alludes to more general and age related health and competency checks which could be in the offing in the future. Maybe not a bad idea after all. Perhaps an annual medical check up (though not considered here) from a registered medical professional wouldn't be a bad idea. I undertake this myself with my doctor annually.

Area 4. I have no idea how the DC treat recalcitrant dentists currently, but I doubt it is very much different than the proposals, especially with mentoring. I am sure the DC already knows who most of these dentists are.

Area 1. As the blurb in Area 4 says, the "vast majority of dentists comply with or exceed the minimum standards and requirements set by responsible health authorities and regulators ". So why put the "vast majority" to considerable time and hassle with what is being proposed? The DC has accepted the current framework for acceptance of CPD requirements for many years and now for some basically unspecified reasons, believe these are not valid and not a way to maintain competence or compliance . Are we expected to have refresher courses with assessments and not just day seminars? Are we not to be trusted with self declaration?

Peer interaction is important but does it have to be as formalised as the proposal suggests.

A nominated peer. Why just one? If the DC thinks that the traditional model is not necessarily an accurate reflection of practitioner competence and compliance then what makes it think that the new one with a peer will be any better? Where is the evidence for the latter? What is to stop dentists and their peers just ticking the boxes and nothing more? And what if something awful happens with one dentist signed off by another? Will the "guarantor " be held to account? Will any training be given so as to be a good assessor? Why should we be forced to sit in judgement on our fellows?

A written PDP. What on earth for? If I had to formulate one I think mine would go along the lines of " to do the best work I can for my patients, using evidence-based techniques in as kind and gentle a way as possible, while avoiding treatment modalities which I am not confident or untrained to undertake ". I can't imagine this would change from year to year.

PDA's. How is having a minimum annual quota of PDA's helpful as a gauge to competency?

Reflective statements. What on earth is this and what on earth for? But to give a bit of balance here and on a more serious note, most dentists would already be reflective about treatment that they gave patients that may not have gone so well and would want to improve on things. I know I would but what good is it to formalise it in writing?

An uploaded attestation from a peer. No peer is unlikely to slag off a fellow dentist he or she has asked to be a professional peer for so what's the point?

Assessments. Every year? And what if you fail? At least it would be an open book so you can, at least, "cheat".

Finally, some of the proposals put forward are sensible and have merit but some of the proposals, especially in Area 1, are unworkable, unfathomable and downright ludicrous. Dentists are generally hardworking, conscientious and caring for their patients and act in a common sense manner but are forever being increasingly bogged down by bureaucrats for little perceivable benefit. Ask any school teacher.

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