

Information for oral health practitioners

What happens after a competence review?

This information sheet explains what happens after your competence review. We know this part of the process may feel uncertain, and our aim is to clearly explain the next steps and the possible outcomes.

Our focus throughout the process is to support safe practice, while being fair and transparent with you.

After the review

Once the competence review visit, and any follow up meetings or record requests, are complete, the Competence Review Committee (CRC) considers all the information gathered. This includes what the committee observed, documents reviewed, and what you shared during or after the visit.

The process then moves into a reporting and decision-making phase.

The review report

After the visit:

- The CRC, prepares a written report for the Dental Council (Council).
- The report outlines the committee's findings and whether, in its view, you are practising at the required standard of competence.
- If the committee has identified any concerns, it may include recommendations for Council to consider.

Your opportunity to comment

Before the report is finalised:

- We send you a draft copy of the CRC report.
- You can review it and let us know if there are any factual errors or misunderstandings.
- Your comments are considered carefully by the CRC before the report is finalised.

This step helps ensure the report is accurate and fair.

Council consideration and next steps

Once the report is final, it is provided to Council for consideration, along with:

- the original notification or referral
- the professional advisor's report (if applicable)
- any other relevant information.

Council carefully reviews all the information before deciding whether any further regulatory action is needed.

Possible outcomes

No further action

If Council is satisfied that you meet the required standard of competence, it may decide that no further action is needed. The competence review process then ends.

Further steps may be required

If Council has reason to believe that you do not meet the required standard of competence, it must take action under section 38 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

This may include one or more of the following:

- requiring you to complete a competence programme
- placing conditions on your scope of practice
- requiring you to undertake an examination or assessment
- requiring you to be counselled or assisted by one or more nominated persons.

If this happens, we will clearly explain what has been decided and what this means for you.

Competence programmes

A competence programme is an individualised learning and support programme, designed to help you address specific areas of your practice and ensure ongoing safe practice.

A programme may involve one or more of the following:

- passing an examination or assessment (or both)
- completing a period of practical training or experience
- undertaking further education or instruction
- allowing another practitioner appointed by the Council to review your clinical records
- working under supervision for a period of time.

How programmes are managed

We will explain exactly what is required and the timeframes involved.

Programmes are tailored to your individual situation.

Where appropriate, we appoint supervisors or mentors to support you.

The aim is to help you strengthen your practice, not to be punitive.

Why Council may require a competence programme or take action

Any competence programme or other action taken under section 38 is intended to:

- support you to practise competently and safely
- address identified concerns in a constructive way
- protect patients and the wider public.

Our goal is to reach the best possible outcome for patient safety, and for you.

Costs

Council covers the costs of the competence review itself.

However, you are responsible for any costs that arise after the review, such as those related to:

- competence programmes
- supervision or other conditions on your practice
- training or assessments.

We will explain any costs that apply.

Your right of appeal

You have the right to appeal to the District Court if Council:

- places conditions on your scope of practice, or
- suspends your registration or practising certificate.

If an appealable decision is made, we will explain your appeal rights and the relevant timeframes.

Confidentiality and information protection

Confidentiality during the review

Members of the CRC sign confidentiality agreements. They must keep information about you, your practice, and your patients confidential, unless disclosure is required by law.

How your information is protected

The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 provides protections for information shared during a competence review or competence programme.

Information you provide:

- can only be used for that particular review or programme
- cannot be used as evidence against you (or anyone else) in court or other judicial proceedings.

These protections encourage openness and honesty throughout the process.

If you have questions

We understand that a competence review can feel stressful or uncertain. If you have questions about what happens after your review, or what a decision means for you, please contact us.

We are committed to being transparent, supportive, and clear throughout the process.

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