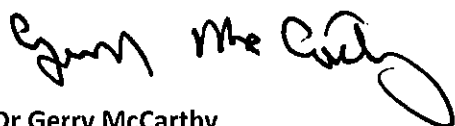


Dental Council Annual Report 2015

Personal Message from the incoming President of Dental Council

I am honoured to be to new President of the Dental Council. The Council faces many challenges over the next five years, over which time I hope to see the long-awaited Dental Bill introduced. Dental regulation, and especially the regulation of the auxiliary dental health professions, is facing uncertain times. Given the historically close links with the dental profession in Ireland and the United Kingdom, 'Brexit' is likely to have an Impact on the profession. During this term, I hope to work closely with Minister, his Department, the various professional organisations and other stakeholders to develop a robust regulation model for the future. While the environment is challenging, there is an opportunity to create a model of dental regulation that is fit-for-purpose and will serve to protect the public into the future.

I would like to congratulate the new members of council on their appointment and I welcome back the members who, like me, served on the previous Council. I look forward to working closely with you over the coming five years. I would like to extend a warm thanks to my colleagues on the previous Council for their contribution over the last five years. As you can see from this report, we achieved a significant amount and I hope that we can continue this momentum for the next five years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry McCarthy', written in a cursive style.

Dr Gerry McCarthy
President

Personal Message from the outgoing President of Dental Council

I appreciate the significant commitment given to the Council by its members. Since I came to office in 2010, the Council and Committees met almost 140 times, and there were numerous sub-groups and sub-committees that met over the term of this council. There were also many other informal meetings held requiring the attendance of members of the Council. Council members do not receive fees to serve and their commitment to Council business requires them to make significant professional and personal sacrifices. I would like to formally acknowledge this commitment and thank members for their resoluteness, inspiration and support throughout the past 5 years. Their dedication to seeing every task through to the best outcome, always promoting the role of Council and never relinquishing targets set was acknowledged by many outside Council. What is less obvious to those outside Council was that this was not only done with open respect, and often enthusiasm, for differing opinions but always with the capacity for good humour and acknowledgement of common ground, shared ground. These personal characteristics of the members of the 2010 – 2015 Dental Council were both the starting and resting attitudes that drove the work of this Council. It has been an honour to serve with them. So, in thanking each member of Council for their guidance and encouragement I would also want to take this opportunity to wish them good health and future success in their professional and personal lives.

On behalf of Council I would also like to thank the Registrar and staff for their work in supporting the business of the Dental Council in the past 5 years. The translation of the multiple new tasks undertaken by Council into reality could not have been achieved without their skill, dedication and, often, their forbearance. All of these tasks have to be countenanced in addition to the demands of running the daily business of Council in an office that faces all the challenges imposed by the employment moratorium and a demanding workload. In addition, they accepted the move to their temporary premises this year with good humour and a willingness, which clearly demonstrated their commitment to the work of Council. I wish them good health and fortune into the future.

The Registrar of Dental Council deserves individual mention for the manner in which he bridges the work of the Council and the office. Throughout its tenure he has served Council with great skill. He has provided common sense and good advice when it was needed, always supported by his deep understanding of regulatory matters. This is particularly obvious when he is observed on the international stage. On a personal level, it has been joy to work with David and I thank him for the wisdom and manner of his guidance, our robust discussions and his never erring ability to understand what was important. Thank you.



Dr Eamon Croke
Former President

Overview of activity (January – November 2015)

This is the final Annual Report of the 2010-2015 Dental Council, whose ultimate year has allowed for a focused approach to reassessment and completion of the business plans of the Council's Committees.

Summary of Dental Council Activity, 2015:

- The first Irish-based National Dental Examining Board (NDEB) examinations for entry into the Canadian dental system, arising from the Reciprocity Agreement between the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) and the Dental Council of Ireland, which was signed in December 2012, were held in Cork University Dental School and Hospital with 38 candidates.

- The publication of the *Code of Practice Relating to: Infection Prevention and Control, April 2015*: This document was the result of 3 years work initiated by an appointed Infection Prevention and Control Sub-Group chaired by Dr Nick Armstrong. The Council is indebted to Dr Armstrong and the Sub-Group (Drs Christine McCreary, Mary O'Donnell, Martin Holohan and Wil Coulter). The new Code is an update on the 2005 Code, recognising the changes that have occurred in scientific knowledge and international and national regulations and laws. The Code is the template for the protection of all who interact with dental practices, the public and members of the dental team alike. Whilst it is Council's intention that members of the public and not just the profession should be encouraged to read it, the Code retains a strong scientific presentation in order that its message to dental healthcare professionals is not diluted. Dental Council is greatly encouraged by the response of the profession to the new Code.

- The publication of *Your guide to the Council's Continuing Professional Development requirements, April 2015*: This guide to the profession was developed and published by Council in the continued absence of mandatory continuing professional development (CPD), which can only be brought about by a new Dental Act. The guide is an aid to dental healthcare professionals in preparing for the advent of mandatory CPD by expanding on the Council's previous guidance (2010). It sets out the Dental Council's revised minimum requirements for CPD, and it explains what activities are 'core', 'verifiable' and 'general'. The priority of patient safety and well-being remains central to CPD activity. The guide is approved by NALA and carries the 'Plain English' mark.

The Journal of the Irish Dental Association carried an article by the President on the Code of Practice and an interview with Dr Marielle Blake, Chair of the Education and training Committee, on the CPD Guide (JIDA, 61(3) – June/July 2015).

- A Sub- Group appointed by the Dental Council, chaired by Prof Leo Stassen, continues to examine the evidence for new Codes of Practice relating to Sedation and General Anaesthetic in Dental Practice. It is hoped that the Sub-Group will present its findings for the consideration of the new Dental Council in 2016.

- The Fitness to Practice Committee has examined dental advertising as part of its remit to protect the public. It has developed 3 new benchmarks for the profession and the public regarding public relations and advertising and for consideration by the incoming Dental Council.

- Clarification of the role of the Irish Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry (ICSTD) and its relationship with Dental Council. Particular attention was given to the continued importance and protection of the functions of the Committee in the evolving governance

structures, which the new relationship necessitates. The Dental Council will support the functions of the ICSTD during the transition and is seeking approval from the Department of Health for an Accreditation Officer, who would work with the ICSTD and the Education and Training Committee of Council. The Dental Council and the ICSTD also made a joint submission to the Minister for Health, Dr Varadkar, on further recognition of dental specialties.

- Dental Council approved the Visitation Report of the ICSTD to the Oral Surgery Programme in the Dublin Dental University Hospital in September 2015.
- Dental Council continues to evaluate the best ways to maximise its productivity in line with its duty and its personnel resources, particularly in light of the expanded role that will be given to Council in the forthcoming new legislation. A decision to refurbish the areas of No. 57 Merrion Square occupied by the Dental Council was taken and the staff was moved to temporary premises in Pembroke Place, Dublin 2. The works were completed in November 2015. It is intended that the renovation of this Georgian building should be ongoing as appropriate projects arise. In doing so the Dental Council has recognised and is fulfilling its responsibility to the history of the city.
- Dental Council held its mid-year meeting in UCC and is very grateful to UCC for the hospitality shown to it. It was the first time in over 30 years that a full Council meeting was held in Cork.
- Dental Council welcomed the launch of the Practitioners Health Matters Programme (PHMP), recognising the role the PHMP will undertake in providing help and care for those healthcare professionals with mental health difficulties and addiction problems. Council has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with PHMP.
- The absence of a new Dental Act, 30 years after the Dentists Act, 1985, continues to pose challenges to the work of Dental Council. Council met with the Minister for Health, at the Minister's invitation, in June. The Minister engaged with the Council as it outlined its views on a new Dental Act.

Dental Council also met with the Professional Regulation Unit (PRU), Department of Health, when the PRU outlined its proposals for the new Dental Act, following assessment of the consultation phase (*Report of the Consultation Process on new legislation to replace the Dentists Act, 1985 (June, 2013)*). Dental Council welcomed the proposal to empower it to oversee the regulation and inspection of dental practices/premises and the appointment of Principal Dentists and Registered Owner Representatives in dental practices. However, Dental Council vehemently disagrees with the proposal to register only those members of the dental team who can practice independently. Dental Council also expressed serious concerns at the impact of the proposals in relation to the 'Board size' and the staggering of the term of office for Council members. The Council stressed the need to avoid the unwieldy nature of Fitness to Practise processes contained in the Medical Practitioners Act, 2007. Council has consistently sought transparent, evidence-informed legislation and it made a further submission to the PRU on matters that arise from the *Summary of Policy Issues for inclusion in the new Dental Bill (August, 2015)*. The Council has expressed concern at the delay in progressing this important new legislation and reiterated its concerns as to the inadequacies of the current legislation.

- Dental Council met with the Joint Committee on Health and Children in October 2015 to discuss dental regulation. The transcript of that meeting with Council has been forwarded to

the Department of Health with the expressed view that all members of the dental team should be registered and regulated and that the new Dental Act should be enacted without delay. Mr. Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, T.D., subsequently questioned the Minister of State for Primary Care, Mental Health and Disability, Ms. Kathleen Lynch, on the matter in the Dáil. Dental Council has made itself available to work with the Joint Committee to ensure that the new legislation is fit for purpose and protects the public in Ireland.

- The issue of malicious internet attacks on members of the Dental Council has, unfortunately, occupied the Council throughout 2015. The Council has informed the relevant organs of the state about these libelous attacks and discussed the matter in person with the Minister for Health who offered to help. However, the institutions of the State have, to date, been of little practical assistance and it has been left to Dental Council to counteract these attacks by legal representation to the Data Protection Commissioner and to Google.
- Dental Council places great importance in active participation in other regulatory forums both nationally and internationally and continued to contribute to the Health, Social Care and Regulatory Forum (HSCRF) and to the Federation of European Dental Competent Authorities and Regulators (FEDCAR). The Dental Council, as a founding member of the International Society of Dental Regulators, participated in this year's meeting with the Registrar, Mr. David O'Flynn, as Chair of the Society and co-chair of the meeting.
- Council continues to sponsor prizes for students of the entire dental healthcare team. The Council provides this support in order to promote excellence and acknowledge achievement.

Statutory Committees

Education and Training Committee Work Plan 2010-2015

1. Visitations

The Committee will keep the visitations regarding the programmes and the final examinations separate. The Committee will visit both programmes in 2012.

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| 1.1 Draw up list of suitable external examiners | Done |
| 1.2 Visitations regarding programmes in both schools | Done |
| 1.3 Revised accreditation SEQ's | Done |

2. Statutory Exams

Establish a syllabus for the annual examination for candidates for registration with qualifications from outside the EU.

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| 2.1 Agree syllabus for Dental Council examinations | Done |
| 2.2 Revised marking schemes for Non EEA examinations | Done |
| 2.3 Consider broadening the Non EEA examination (eg ethics, IPC) | New Council |
| 2.4 Standardise format of Part 1 Non EEA examination | Done |
| 2.5 Establish briefing sessions for examiners | Done |

3. Continued Professional Development (CPD)

The Dental Council focus should be on the quality of the courses and programmes being approved for verifiable CPD and that the responsibility for recording CPD rests with the dentists. The Committee will review the current scheme

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| 3.1 Review the Dental Council CPD scheme and recommend amendments | Done |
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4. Testing language / communications skills (under 2005/36/EC)

The Committee will investigate the possibility of introducing a language / communications test for applicants for registration under the EU Directive 2005/36/EC whose qualifications are recognised. This includes the possibility of interviewing applicants concerning their knowledge of the Dental Councils Ethical Guidelines, and expanding this in time by also introducing a 4 stage OSCE.

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| 4.1 Agree and implement language test based on Dental Ethics | On hold |
| 4.2 Review scheme and consider introduction 4 station OSCE | On hold |

5. Specialist Register

The Committee will consider whether a submission should be made to include other specialties in the register of Dental Specialists maintained by the Council.

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| 5.1 Review Specialist register | Done |
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6. Vocational Training

The Committee will review vocational training from a regulatory viewpoint.

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| 6.1 Review of Vocational Training | Done |
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The Committee continued to review and refine the Statutory Examinations, especially Part 1.

The Dental Council assumed responsibility for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) from the HSE on 1st July 2009. The profession responded enthusiastically to the Dental Council's role in what was a voluntary exercise for dentists and, in turn, the Dental Council has worked to promote and support that enthusiasm. CPD changed from a voluntary exercise to an obligatory requirement with the publication of the Code of Practice regarding Professional Behaviour and Ethical Conduct, 2012 (Section 3.7). The Council published an updated guide to CPD in April upon completion of the development of the guide by the committee. The CPD model continues to evolve and a future mandatory standard, following the long awaited Dental Act, continues to be reviewed and developed.

The Committee continues to work with course organisers to ensure the quality and breadth of courses provided and verified by the Dental Council for all registrants.

The Committee welcomed the ICSTD appointments of Prof. Finbarr Allen and Mr. Gerard Kearns as the ICSTD representatives on the Education and Training Committee.

The testing of language/communication skills with its possible inclusion in a broadening of the statutory examinations was suspended until this matter is transcribed into Irish law.

The Committee, and indeed the Dental Council, continues to support the re-introduction of Vocational (Foundation) Training. A further submission was made to the Department of Health as the matter was omitted from the Department's *Summary of Policy Issues for inclusion in the new Dental Bill (August, 2015)*.

Auxiliary Dental Workers Committee Work Plan 2010-2015

1. Dental Nursing

The Committee will visit the Dental Nurse programme in Athlone IT and to undertake the visitations required as a result of applications to the Dental Council to approve additional qualifications for the purposes of registration.

1.1 Visit Athlone IT	Done
1.2 New Programme approvals (including visitations)	
Letterkenny	Done
NEBDN	Done
1.3 Consideration regarding establishing a national exam	Defer
1.4 Consideration of expanded Scope of Practice for inclusion in a revised Scheme	Done
1.5 Visit DDUH and CUDSH Dental Nursing programmes	2016
1.6 Consider whether to include tooth whitening in revised scheme	2015

2. Dental Hygienist

The Committee will oversee the implementation of the changes arising from the amended schemes and the decision of the previous Council to recommend Independent practice for Dental Hygienists. The Committee will consider running regular Dental Hygiene examinations into the future.

2.1 Implement changes in Scope of Practice from amended Scheme	Done
2.2 Expansion of domiciliary care components of programmes	Done
2.3 Agree syllabus for Dental Hygiene examinations	2015
2.4 Independent Practice for Dental Hygienists	Defer – new Act
2.5 Visit DDUH and CUDSH Dental Hygienist programmes	2016
2.6 Consider whether to include tooth whitening in revised scheme	2015

3. Clinical Dental Technicians

3.1 Consideration of proposals regarding additional CDT programme	Done
3.2 Visit DDUH Clinical Dental Technology programme	2016

4. Dental Technicians

The Committee will consider the establishing a register of Dental Technicians

4.1 Consideration of a voluntary register of Dental Technicians	Ongoing
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The committee noted the successful completion of the first Orthodontic Therapist course in Ireland in the Dublin Dental University Hospital. It noted the increased demand for this course and is to seek means of fulfilling that demand within Ireland rather than the U.K.

In 2012 the Dental Council brought all dental nursing training in Ireland under its remit when it approved the National Examining Board for Dental Nurses (NEBDN) examination for Irish based students. As part of this process the Dental Council has continued to test and develop its visitation process specific to auxiliary dental workers' educational programmes. A review of the NEBDN examination, and its place/recognition for Irish trained dental nurses, is under discussion.

However, the Dental Council has expressed concern about the variations in the dental nursing courses which it sees as unwelcome anomalies. The Committee has made progress on the development of a national curriculum for dental nursing education.

Dental Council continues to liaise with the Dental Technicians Association of Ireland in relation to the establishment of a voluntary register of dental technicians.

Fitness to Practise Committee

- Council has significantly improved the way complaints from the public are handled. Council's experience was that the public did not fully understand the purpose and extent of the Council's powers in investigating complaints under the Fitness to Practise provisions of the Dentists Act, 1985. Patients made complaints to the Council under the mistaken impression that it could, for example, obtain refunds for treatment or compel a dentist to pay for further work.
- Council welcomed the advent of the Dental Complaints Resolution Service. This service has provided patients who have minor complaints another route to resolve grievances, and is consistent with the Dental Council's Fitness to Practise process.
- The reorganisation of Council's Fitness to Practise procedures has aimed to provide those involved in a fitness to practices complaint with an outcome to the complaint without undue delay. Council has provided the Committee with a legal resource to progress the outstanding case load.

Membership of the Council 2015-2020

Dr Gerry McCarthy	Elected – President
Prof Leo Stassen	Elected – Vice President
Dr Bernard Murphy	Elected – Chair of Fitness to Practise
Dr Rory Fleming	Elected– Chair of Auxiliary Workers Committee
Dr Ray McCarthy	Elected
Dr Danielle Colbert	Elected
Dr Liam Lynch	Elected
Dr Francis Burke	Appointed UCC– Chair of Education Committee
Prof Martin Kinirons	Appointed UCC
Prof Brian O’Connell	Appointed TCD
Dr Claire Healy	Appointed TCD
Dr Gerry Cleary	Appointed RCSI
Dr John Barragry	Appointed Medical Council
Mr Declan Carey	Appointed Medical Council
Mr Bryan Maguire	Appointed Minister for Education
Ms Muireann O’Neill	Appointed Minister for Health
Ms Eleanor O’Higgins	Appointed Minister for Health
Mr John Doorley	Appointed Minister for Health
Ms Marie Henson	Appointed Minister for Health
Mr Colum Sower	Clin Dent Tech - Elected to Auxiliary Workers Cmtte
Mr Colm Sower	Ortho Therapist – Appointed to Auxiliary Workers Cmtte*
Ms Yvonne Howell	Dent Hygienist - Elected to Auxiliary Workers Committee
Ms Michelle Spearman-Geraghty	Dent Nurse - Elected to Auxiliary Workers Committee

Membership of the Council 2010-2015

Dr Eamon Croke	Elected – President
Dr Barney Murphy	Elected – Vice President
Dr Terry Farrelly	Elected – Chair of Fitness to Practise
Dr Gerard McCarthy	Elected
Dr Paul O'Reilly	Elected
Dr Roger Ryan	Elected
Prof Leo Stassen	Elected
Dr Francis Burke	Appointed UCC
Dr Patricia McDermott	Appointed UCC
Prof June Nunn	Appointed TCD – Chair of Auxiliary Workers Committee
Dr Jacinta McLoughlin	Appointed TCD
Dr Marielle Blake	Appointed RCSI – Chair of Education Committee
Ms Katharine Bulbulia	Appointed Medical Council
Mr Michael Gilbride	Appointed Medical Council
Mr Gerry Horkan	Appointed Minister for Education
Dr Dympna Kavanagh	Appointed Minister for Health‡
Ms Pauline Bryan	Appointed Minister for Health*
Ms Margaret Sweeney	Appointed Minister for Health
Ms Caitriona Craddock	Appointed Minister for Health
Ms Marie Henson	Appointed Minister for Health *
Mr Maurice Petherick	Clin Dent Tech - Elected to Auxiliary Workers Cmtte‡
Mr Colm Sower	Clin Dent Tech – Appointed to Auxiliary Workers Cmtte*
Ms Rhona Butterfield	Dent Hygienist - Elected to Auxiliary Workers Committee
Ms Tina Gorman	Dent Nurse - Elected to Auxiliary Workers Committee

* Ms Marie Henson appointed in February 2012

* Ms Pauline Bryan appointed in February 2014

* Mr Colm Sower appointed in December 2014

‡ Dr Dympna Kavanagh resigned in July 2013

‡Mr Maurice Petherick resigned in September 2014