

# Foundation Dentists with Additional Needs

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NIMDTA

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## 'Safe Beginner'

The GDC document 'preparing for practice', GDC learning outcomes PRINT.qxd:Layout 1 (gdc-uk.org) describes the outcomes which must be attained before the registration of a new dentist.

The domains for attainment are:

- Clinical
- Communication
- Professionalism
- Management and leadership

Those entering foundation training have demonstrated that they have achieved the level of the **'safe beginner'**. The safe beginner is defined as **'a rounded professional who, in addition to being a competent clinician and/or technician, will have the range of professional skills required to begin working as part of a dental team and be well prepared for independent practice. The safe beginner will be able to assess their own capabilities and limitations, act within these boundaries and will know when to request support and advice.'**

The BDS qualification for registration is the first stage in the development of a dental professional and the Foundation Training scheme is designed to take a safe beginner and enhance their clinical and administrative competence promoting high standards through relevant postgraduate training over the course of the training year.

## Transitioning into General Practice: BDJ 2014; 217:145-149

“The transition from dental school to general practice presents challenges for new graduates. The new environment and systems, team, materials and equipment alongside the increased and varied pace of work can be daunting for new dentists. Throughout this time, it is normal for a Foundation Dentist to require a settling in period during which time they can be demanding of your time”.

An integral role of the Educational Supervisor is monitoring and managing the performance of a Foundation Dentist during this transition. This process includes assessing if the performance of a Foundation Dentist is satisfactory or if it needs to be improved and what actions need to be taken as a consequence of this.

In the early weeks, the ePortfolio is front loaded to assist you in reaching the conclusion about the performance status of your Foundation Dentist. It is essential that the ePortfolio is maintained as a contemporaneous document by both the Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor to allow for early recognition of any Foundation Dentist who may benefit from intervention. The Educational Transitional Document will also support both Foundation Dentists and Educational Supervisors during this period and it is essential that time is spent reflecting on its content and prioritising learning based on this.

A new graduate may have limited experience in a range of procedures and will require teaching input from you particularly in the early months. This is normal and through good documentation within the ePortfolio, both you and the Foundation Dentist will be able to track progress and the response to interventions.

A small number of Foundation Dentists will experience difficulties during their training which will require additional help at a local level within the practice setting or if more serious or more prolonged, intervention by NIMDTA. The way in which such difficulties are managed is dictated by the nature of the difficulties and the context in which they occur. Concerns about a Foundation Dentists' conduct, clinical performance or health may come from a variety of sources including significant events or critical incidents, complaints from patients or colleagues or workplace based assessments. The Educational Supervisor should consult with colleagues to explore the nature and extent of the concerns and seek clear evidence. The issues should be raised with the Foundation Dentist at the earliest possible opportunity in order to obtain his or her perspective. As soon as it is clear that there is a problem appropriate action should be taken. Early identification and intervention is in the best interests of the patient, the Foundation Dentist and the whole clinical team.

Typically performance concerns among Foundation Dentists has a multi-factorial basis. Deficits of knowledge and skills, conduct be it personal or professional, health issues and lastly outside factors including environmental issues within the training practice can all lead to a Foundation Dentist finding themselves in need of additional support.

## Raising concerns

Raising concerns about Foundation Dentist performance can seem daunting for the Educational Supervisor. Supporting a Foundation Dentist in difficulty can be extremely challenging yet immensely rewarding.

Concerns should be raised when they are manifested by:

- Under performance
- Changes in behaviour
- Failure to progress satisfactorily

Once the underlying cause of the Foundation Dentist's difficulties is identified, a realistic and proportionate remedial action plan should be put in place. If it is not possible to deliver this in the Foundation Dentist's current placement the Foundation Dentist may need to be moved to a placement which can deliver the remedial action. Advice should be sought from the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ Training Programme Director (TPD) early. The plan should be regularly reviewed throughout the course of its delivery to ensure that it continues to meet the Foundation Dentist's needs. Good communication between NIMDTA and the Educational Supervisor is crucial.

## Review of competence progression (RCP)

There are three formal stages of the review of competence progression during the 12 months of training:

- Early stage review - completed between weeks 4-6
- Interim review competence progression - completed at month 5-6
- Final review competence progression - completed at month 11

Whilst these reviews form formal staging points during the year, an Educational Supervisor can flag concerns about a Foundation Dentist at any point in the year. The earlier a concern is raised, the sooner intervention can be provided and hopefully negate any negative impact on the training provision and progression.

As soon as an Educational Supervisor has a concern about a Foundation Dentist, they should:

- Discuss these concerns openly and honestly with the Foundation Dentist
- Evidence and document the concerns accurately
- Share the validated evidence with the Foundation Dentist
- Seek advice from the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD

Dependent on the nature and risk of the concerns raised, advice and support may be sought from a variety of sources external to the Dental Foundation Training team:

- Professional Support Unit
- Trainee Review Group
- Occupational Health
- General Dental Council

The Dental Foundation Training team may make referrals to these bodies having discussed the relevant issues fully with both the Foundation Dentist and yourself.

## **Early warning signs:**

### **1. Lack of insight:**

- Failure to accept constructive criticism
- Inflexibility
- Resistance to change
- Defensiveness
- Inappropriate requests for assistance

### **2. Reduced rates of professionalism:**

- Poor behaviour and attitude
- Over-confidence
- Disrespect towards patients and other staff
- Misuse of social media and internet

### **3. Inability to take personal responsibility:**

- Significant number of minor incidents apparently outside the Foundation Dentist's control - punctuality, failure to complete e-Portfolio, need to finish early, missing deadlines
- Failure to confront issues

### **4. Poor personal organisation and time management:**

- Failure to utilise clinical time and opportunities effectively
- Difficulty with ePortfolio maintenance, audits

### **5. Disengagement from or disruption of educational process**

### **6. Erratic or inappropriate behaviour:**

- Outbursts
- Inappropriate behaviour with patients and colleagues
- Imagined slights

### **7. Low work rate:**

- Difficulty in completing tasks within time frame - clinical and administrative
- Unusually long appointments/ inappropriate number of appointments for course of treatment
- Arriving early and leaving late but nothing to show
- Avoidance of certain procedures

### **8. Patient complaints**

### **9. Negative feedback from peers and other staff**

### **10. Poor quality clinical work and failure to progress**

### **11. Frequent short term sickness absence**

Hard and soft information may come from a variety of sources both within and outside the practice.

Other practice staff can provide invaluable information about the performance of the Foundation Dentist:

- Reception staff, nurses, other dentists in the practice
- Laboratory staff may also be able to provide feedback about the performance or conduct of a Foundation Dentist
- Patients may fail to return for appointments or seek treatment with other dentists in the practice
- Complaints may come in from patients verbally or in writing

Having identified a Foundation Dentist who is experiencing difficulties, the Foundation Dentist should expect to be treated fairly, supportively and confidentially throughout the process. It is essential that the Educational Supervisor discusses their concerns with the Foundation Dentist at the earliest opportunity and also seeks advice from the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/TPD. It is essential that information is shared only with the appropriate and relevant people.

## Identifying issues; <http://standards.gdc-uk.org/>

As a dental professional, the Foundation Dentist has a duty to consider how their performance as a registrant can be impacted upon by their health, personal and professional conduct. Not all Foundation Dentists have the insight to assess the implications of their performance and as such the role of the Educational Supervisor in identifying such issues is essential.

All concerns must be promptly and fully investigated to establish the facts as lasting damage may be caused to a Foundation Dentist's reputation, confidence and career prospects if allegations are unfounded or malicious.

### Questions to consider:

1. What are the primary issues?
2. What are the contributing factors?
3. What are the mitigating factors?
4. Is there a patient safety issue?
5. Is the training environment fit for purpose?
6. Is the Foundation Dentist physically and mentally fit and well?
7. Can the Foundation Dentist demonstrate clinical competence?
  - Does the Foundation Dentist know what to do?
  - Does the Foundation Dentist know why they are doing it?
  - Does the Foundation Dentist know when to do it?
  - Does the Foundation Dentist know how to do it?
  - Does the Foundation Dentist know when to ask for help?
8. Is the conduct and behaviour of the Foundation Dentist satisfactory?
9. Does the Foundation Dentist have insight into their performance issues?
10. Is the Foundation Dentist likely to engage with a support process?
11. What evidence do you have to substantiate your concerns?

## **Evidencing concerns - maintaining the ePortfolio:**

There must be evidence to support any concerns that an Educational Supervisor raises about a Foundation Dentist. The ePortfolio is designed to serve as a robust evidence base of a Foundation Dentist's progress or lack of over the course of the training year. Failure to maintain the ePortfolio as a complete and contemporaneous document limits the value of the available evidence about a Foundation Dentist's progress and can lead to difficulties when managing performance concerns. Clear, well evidenced ePortfolio records will support the Educational Supervisors' decision making process and also provide the Foundation Dentist with some protection against an irresponsible decision.

Entries to the ePortfolio should verify any concerns and illustrate how the concerns were identified and what actions were taken to try and address them.

- Clinical concerns - evidence will be available in: DOPS, ADEPTs, CbDs, clinical activity logs, record keeping audit and significant event log
- Confidence, resilience and insight - reflective logs, clinical activity logs, MSF, non-working day logs, significant event log
- Engagement with educational process - tutorials, study days, non-working day logs
- Communication, teamwork and conduct - MSFs and PSQs, reflective logs, significant event log

### **Additional Evidence**

Patient complaints should be recorded in the significant event log within the ePortfolio. Any written complaints should be copied and held on record appropriately. It is important that any patient or team member raising a concern is fully supported. Verbal complaints must be listened to carefully and discussions documented, signed and dated by all parties to be valid. It is important that a Foundation Dentist is made aware of any complaint involving them. It is appropriate that whilst the management of the complaint will be practice led, the Foundation Dentist should be encouraged to contact their indemnity organisation and be kept fully informed of the progress and direction of travel of the complaint.

Details of self-certified periods of absence should be maintained in the practice but the non-working day log should also detail these periods of absence. Sick notes from medical practitioners should be stored appropriately. Hospital appointment letters should also be stored in the practice but the period of absence recorded in the portfolio under non-working days.

## Risk Assessment

The level of concern and risk posed needs to be established from objective and thorough analysis of robust evidence. This assessment will determine the level and type of support offered to both the Educational Supervisor and Foundation Dentist.

This risk assessment process should be done in conjunction with the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD to avoid challenge from a Foundation Dentist.

Levels 1-3 can be used when there are no patient safety concerns.

- Level 1 (low) starting as isolated incidents and/ or lack of self-efficacy
- Level 2 (medium) increased levels of incidents and patterns of behaviour developing
- Level 3 (high) inability to resolve concerns despite support

Fig 3. Risk assessment: scale of concern

Level 1 Low Level Concerns	Level 2 Medium Level Concerns	Level 3 High Level Concerns
Failure to maintain E-pdp	Disengagement from or disruption of the educational process	
Lack of confidence	Serious untoward incidents	
Borderline assessments	Lack of insight, performance notably below peer group	
Punctuality issues	Behaviour or issues around bullying and harassment	
Lack of availability	Poor performance clinically, managerially or interpersonally	
	Low levels of motivation and individual agency	
	Complaints from patients, relatives or healthcare professionals	
	Absence from the workplace	

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- Level 4 : Incidents or behaviour which pose a risk to patient safety are recorded as level 4

Issues relating to conduct should always be treated as a high risk because these concerns frequently prove to be the most difficult to manage.

## Managing Risk

Managing potential risk to patients is the first priority. This should be accomplished by the Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor agreeing what the Foundation Dentist can safely do and by ensuring support and supervision from the whole clinical team to allow the Foundation Dentist to practise safely in the areas where he or she is experiencing difficulty.

If there is a serious or immediate risk to patients, the Foundation Dentist should be referred immediately to the Postgraduate Dental Dean through the Dental Foundation Training

[1] Managing Performance Concerns in Dental Foundation Training, A Practical Guide for Trainers and Educational Supervisors, E Japp, 2016

Scheme Adviser/ TPD. All possible steps should be taken to identify and act on early signs and symptoms of problems. Colleagues who identify a problem need to be aware of their own professional responsibilities in reporting a concern.

Risk management of level 1-3 requires:

1. Full Educational Supervisor and Foundation Dentist engagement with the process
2. Agreement as to the nature and level of concern
3. Collaborative working towards the shared goal of satisfactory completion of training within the normal timeframe if possible
4. Information gathering to be open, supportive, documented carefully and fully shared with the Foundation Dentist. If formal disciplinary procedures are being considered then the Educational Supervisor should seek HR advice and NIMDTA should be consulted prior to any action being taken.

Fig 4. Level 1 : Low Level Concerns

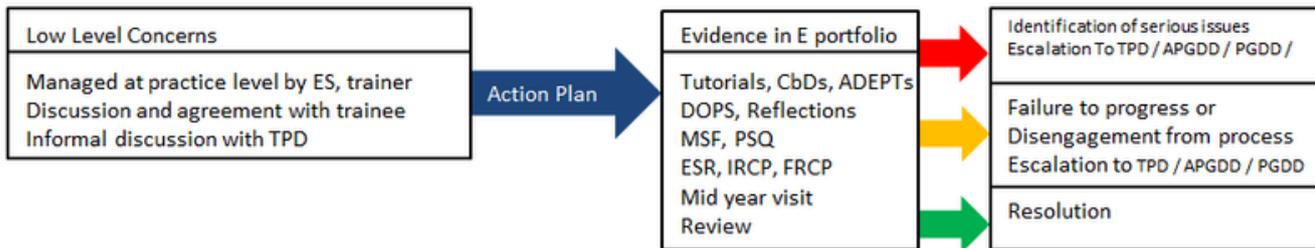
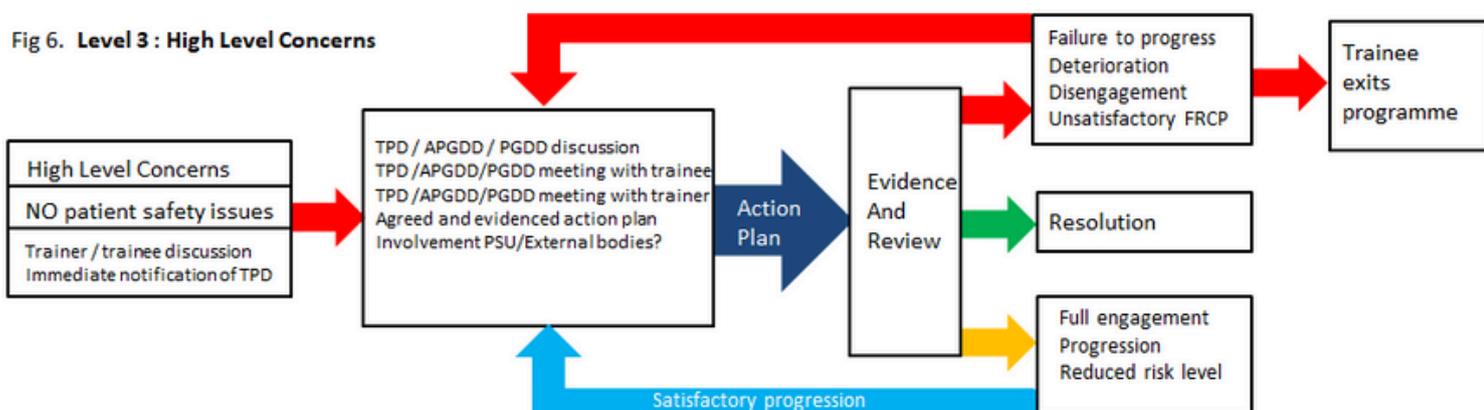


Fig 5. Level 2 : Medium Level Concerns



Fig 6. Level 3 : High Level Concerns



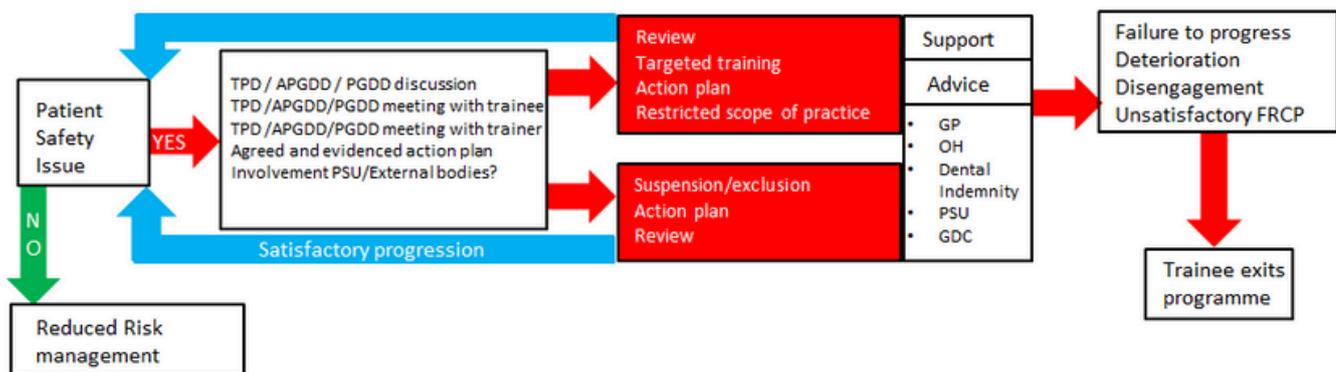
## Risk management of level 4 concerns:

- 1.Alert the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD immediately
- 2.Provide the Scheme Adviser/ TPD with all documented evidence of concerns and details of any discussions concerning these issues
- 3.You must treat the Foundation Dentist strictly in accordance with employment law, practice governance, local and national guidelines at all times.

## What will happen?

- 1.The Scheme Adviser/ TPD will escalate the concerns and evidence to NIMDTA for evaluation
- 2.It may be appropriate to limit scope of practice or suspend the Foundation Dentist This decision will be taken jointly by the ES and the PGDD with appropriate advice
- 3.Referral to the Professional Support Unit and liaison with external bodies is likely to be required

Fig 7. Level 4 : Patient Safety Issues



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## Writing an Action Plan to Address Concerns

The action plan should be based on the tools within the ePortfolio. It is important that the Foundation Dentist assists in the development of the action plan as they are more likely to engage with it when they have contributed to the solution.

- 1.Explore the Foundation Dentist's understanding of the issues raised by asking open ended questions
- 2.Emphasise common ground
- 3.Keep discussions on track and focused on the common goal of achieving satisfactory completion within the normal time frame
- 4.Focus on the positive possibilities
- 5.Set realistic performance improvement milestones but ensure the Foundation Dentist fully understands final expectations over specified time frame
- 6.Offer strategies for improvement
- 7.Reinforce the value of the Foundation Dentist
- 8.Maintain a hard copy record of the action plan and ensure it is signed by both Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor as well as being documented within the ePortfolio

The Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD will provide assistance in developing and monitoring a suitable action plan.

If the Foundation Dentist makes suitable progress and the issues are deemed no longer to be of concern, it is still important to have a review meeting to 'sign-off' on this phase of training and acknowledge the progress made. Normal monitoring of the Foundation Dentist will continue for the remainder of the training year.

## How to Conduct a Review Meeting

All evidence should be prepared and shared with the Foundation Dentist prior to the meeting. Normally the Educational Supervisor, Foundation Dentist, Dental Adviser/ TPD and Dental Training Manager will attend this meeting. The PGDD or deputy may attend this meeting if it is considered that their input would be beneficial. In any case, they would be fully briefed about the progress that the FD is making.

Factors for consideration during the meeting include:

1. Background information
2. Relevant issues identified during selection and allocation of placement - Foundation Dentist rank score at assessment centre and their ranking of practice allocation - SJT score is good indicator of future performance
3. Evidence of any pre-existing concerns e.g. dental school references and
  - Evidence that concerns have been recorded
  - Evidence that the Foundation Dentist has been made aware of concerns
  - Evidence of attempts to address concerns
  - Evidence of Foundation Dentist's response to these attempts
4. Evidence of previous satisfactory performance
5. Mitigating circumstances
6. Remedial training time since commencement of Dental Foundation Training
7. Details of issues that have resulted in the meeting:
  - Supporting evidence and results of further investigations
  - Learners' awareness of concerns and transparency of the process
  - Attempts to address concerns
  - Progress to date
  - Evidence of underlying cause e.g. health
  - Unresolved educational issues
  - Proposed attempts to address these - including an estimation of any extra time or resources that might be required
  - Proposed methods to assess progress

## Support

The main source of support for the Educational Supervisor will be the Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD and you should expect to work closely with them throughout the assessment and management phases. The nature of the support offered will be determined by the issues raised.

- Environment issues: organisational, practice team, Educational Supervisor, practice owner
- Clinical issues: education, training and pastoral
- Capacity and additional issues: OH, GMP, PSU, pastoral
- Conduct issues: education and training, pastoral, PSU

The phantom head provided at the outset of the year should be utilised by the Educational Supervisor in a structured way to address any skills deficiencies. Contemporaneous logs should be maintained of tasks set by the Educational Supervisor and the Foundation Dentist's performance in these tasks.

In the event of a level 3 or 4 concern being raised, the Scheme Adviser/ TPD and a second Adviser/ TPD will visit the practice to carry out at least two additional ADEPTs to triangulate the assessments. The outcome of these external assessments will be discussed with the Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor and may lead to modification of the action plan in place. With level 3 and 4 concerns, it is likely that external bodies will be involved and this will be managed with full engagement of the Educational Supervisor and Foundation Dentist, PGDD and Scheme Adviser/ TPD.

### Top Tips when dealing with performance concerns

1. Follow the guidance and frameworks
2. Do not deal with performance concerns on your own
3. Gather robust objective evidence
4. Document all conversations making sure verbal information is dated and signed
5. Talk to your Dental Foundation Training Scheme Adviser/ TPD
6. Maintain confidentiality-do not discuss within the Educational Supervisor group
7. Be open and honest with the Foundation Dentist
8. Reassure the Foundation Dentist that the common goal is to get them to satisfactory completion within the normal timeframe
9. Discuss the support process with the Foundation Dentist so that they know what to expect
10. Work with the Foundation Dentist to come up with solutions rather than listing problems
11. Use the ePortfolio to evidence your concerns and to identify and address Foundation Dentist's learning needs
12. Use the tools within the ePortfolio as an integral part of your action plan and evidence base

# Roles and responsibilities in monitoring concerns relating to a Foundation Dentist

## Educational Supervisor:

- Manage educational progress
- Collate evidence
- Manage single problems locally
- Identify and refer complex issues to Dental Adviser/ TPD

## What should be documented?

- Everything; factual, detailed, dated and shared with Foundation Dentist
- Background contributing factors, personal improvement plan, timescale and review
- Discussions, meetings, phone calls and emails
- Accurate statement on effect of difficulties on completing training

## Dental Adviser/ TPD:

- Deal with patient safety issues, launch formal investigation
- Ensure practice has applied their policies and procedures
- Escalation to APGDD

## Remediation and Review

### Locally

- Educational Supervisor, Dental Adviser/ TPD, Occupational Health and GP

### NIMDTA

- PSU
- Trainee Review Group - Career and personal development for advice and counselling

# Procedure to be followed in the event of Educational Supervisor identification of issues

## One off problems

- Document in ePortfolio
- Discuss with Foundation Dentist
- Initiate further investigation if necessary within the practice

## Educational Supervisor

- Local management of issues raised
- Consider when to refer to NIMDTA

## If the Foundation Dentist is identified as having competency issues:

- The Foundation Dentist should work to a specific treatment plan of cavity preps and restorations to include e.g. class I, II, III, IV, V cavities, crown preparations, root canal access and instrumentation (dependent on area of concern) in the dental practice on phantom head. Concerns about performance in removable prostheses or oral surgery can be addressed through observation and 1:1 assistance in managing clinical cases. Concerns in diagnosis and treatment planning can be managed through targeted simulated teaching. Logs of all remedial training provided by the Educational Supervisor should be maintained and available for the deanery to review.
- Educational Supervisor will provide feedback and associated teaching to address the issues identified
- At the end of the targeted teaching programme, the Foundation Dentist should undertake a structured assessment of performance
- The Educational Supervisor will determine the level of progress and communicate with NIMDTA if additional support is warranted. Records of all discussions between ES, FD and NIMDTA should be maintained
- If additional support is warranted a decision can be made regarding additional simulation support outside of the practice
- The practice should apply their policies and procedures regarding the management of performance concerns
- NIMDTA will determine if GDC referral is required following suitable interventions

## If the Foundation Dentist is identified as having attitude and behavioural issues:

- MSF should be reviewed or collected
- Practice policies and procedures applied
- Educational Supervisor to inform NIMDTA of actions
- NIMDTA will determine what, if any, further intervention is required

## If the Foundation Dentist is identified as having health issues:

- Referral should be made to Occupational Health and the FD encouraged to contact their GMP
- Referral should be offered to the PSU at NIMDTA

## Procedure to be followed in the event of identification of low/ medium/ high level concerns

Should an Educational Supervisor become concerned regarding the performance of their Foundation Dentist, the following steps should be taken:

### LOW LEVEL CONCERN

- Educational Supervisor flags the issue with the Foundation Dentist and manages locally through a structured action plan. Dental Adviser/ TPD informed but no visit required at this stage.
- Educational Supervisor maintains an evidence base on ePortfolio.
- Should the Foundation Dentist not make satisfactory progress following the practice local measures, the Dental Adviser/ TPD will become involved.

### MEDIUM LEVEL CONCERN

- Two Dental Advisers/ TPDs (one Scheme Adviser and one from another Scheme) will visit the practice and each carry out a targeted ADEPT.
- The Dental Adviser/ TPD will review the evidence and meet the Educational Supervisor and Foundation Dentist to develop an action plan.
- A referral will be made to the Professional Support Unit and the Foundation Dentist will be encouraged to meet with the unit.
- Action plan to be signed off by the Educational Supervisor, Foundation Dentist and Dental Adviser/ TPD.
- Four week action plan is put into place and monitored by the Dental Adviser/ TPD.
- The two Dental Advisers/ TPDs will each complete a further focused ADEPT with the Foundation Dentist at the end of the 4 week period.
- A review meeting will be scheduled between the Educational Supervisor, Foundation Dentist and Dental Adviser/ TPD to ascertain the progress that has been made
  - **If resolved** the Foundation Dentist will continue under typical supervision arrangements

### HIGH LEVEL CONCERN

- If progress has been made but some issues are ongoing, the action plan may be extended with agreement of all parties dependent on the issues raised. Dependent on the causative factors, NIMDTA may source additional training for the Foundation Dentist on or off-site.
- The length of any extension to the action plan should be decided in advance with a review date agreed by all parties. As part of this review, an additional 2 Adviser/ TPD focused ADEPTs must be completed.
- If insufficient progress has been made and it is unlikely that further progress will be made, the Foundation Dentist's contract may be terminated with four weeks' notice.
- NIMDTA may remove the Foundation Dentist if the training environment is deemed unsuitable to meet the Foundation Dentist's needs.

# **NIMDTA Removal of Foundation Dentist Protocol**

## **Background**

This document supports and provides guidance on the processes involved with movement of a Foundation Dentist during their training year. Movement of trainees is an unusual event and is only undertaken in unavoidable circumstances, such as those detailed below. It also provides information and advice on how this process can be managed when a need arises to consider the movement of a Foundation Dentist from the original dental practice allocated by National Recruitment.

Dental Foundation Training requires a minimum of 12-months full time (or equivalent period part time) employment within training that leads to award of a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion. Most of the clinical training is provided within the workplace of an approved Educational Supervisor. The training is supervised by either a single, or joint, approved Education Supervisor(s). NIMDTA have a 12-month educational agreement with the Educational Supervisor (s) and a further 12-month educational agreement that relates to an identified Foundation Dentist. The ES employs the Foundation Dentist, and is committed to working to the guidance of the Blue Guide.

## **Purpose**

NIMDTA is committed to high quality service delivery as a core principle of our vision and purpose. We will ensure that any Foundation Dentist can seek advice and support, provide feedback, or make a complaint about the services commissioned by NIMDTA via the relevant complaints policy.

## **Scope**

This guidance applies to the process of moving a Foundation Dentist between practices in Primary Care, after careful consideration and once all other appropriate avenues, including if appropriate mediation and resolution, have been explored but are unsuccessful. The process where possible will not compromise patient care and support the health and wellbeing of the trainee.

## **The Decision to Move a Foundation Dentist**

The ES and NIMDTA can both signal termination of the agreed educational agreements. NIMDTA recognise that this can de-stabilise the service of the ES with patient lists and staff supporting Foundation training. As a result, The PGDD may, where reasonable, support the ES in the short term (e.g., continue education support costs for an agreed period). A decision to remove a Foundation Dentist from the allocated workplace during training will be quite rare. The final decision to move a Foundation Dentist, prior to completion of training, will be at the discretion of the PGDD.

Removal is normally an act of last resort after due opportunity has been given to resolve the issues/ concerns unless there is an urgent patient or trainee safety matter and as such discussion with the PGDD would be vital prior to this step.

The decision will always be made on best intelligence and knowledge (which will usually include interview with the Foundation Dentist and Educational Supervisor) to ensure that it is carefully balancing all views. The PGDD has an overriding duty to protect patient safety and the health and well-being of Foundation Dentists.

The decision will take into consideration several elements and usually follow a documented chain of performance management of Foundation Dentist development / progress and ES performance. This will usually involve quality-management processes from NIMDTA to include the relevant Adviser/ TPD, Associate Postgraduate Dental Dean (APDD) and the PDD. With Foundation training only being over 12-month period decisions cannot be delayed. Where either Foundation Dentist health and / or patient safety are at risk these processes should not be delayed and may need to be accelerated. Where investigation or assessment is not appropriate, removal may be a neutral act to protect the professional reputation of those involved.

## Whistleblowing

If the consideration of removal is triggered by an individual, or individuals raising concerns, it is vital that appropriate steps are taken to support them and where necessary and possible, protect their identity.

For more information on this topic please refer to NIMDTA's Whistleblowing Policy.

## Confidentiality

All Foundation Dentist communications will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Care will be taken that information should only be disclosed to those in the relevant organisations who have a demonstrable need to have access to it.

## Possible reasons for moving a Foundation Dentist

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Persistent or immediate patient safety concerns.
- A reasonable adjustment for a trainee's disability under the Equality Act
- Ill health or pregnancy
- Educational concerns for example lack of supervision, unsatisfactory educational engagement by ES(s) or unsupportive workplace environment.
- Expected or unforeseen ES absence
- Emerging high impact concerns and risks (e.g. media or political interest)
- Emerging themes from quality feedback mechanisms, which highlight serious concerns. This may include triangulation of more than one individual or foundation dentist describing the same concern, or consecutive feedback from individual foundation dentists.
- Irreparable breakdown of relationships that involve trainee
- Urgent concern on health and well-being of the Foundation Dentists.
- Conditions or recommended actions following regulator(s) visits, which have a significant detrimental impact on quality of education and training of the Foundation Dentist.
- Information from the HSCB which could have a significant detrimental impact on quality of education and training of the foundation dentist.

## Financial and logistic implications of Foundation Dentist leaving practice

The unexpected removal of a Foundation Dentist from a training practice will have unique financial impact on the primary care provider and NIMDTA understands the significant impact that removal of a trainee (and associated funding) has on a practice. It may also impact on the continuity of care of patients, who are mid-way through a course of treatment and the training practice will need to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to mitigate any impact on patient care.

## Breakdown of relationship between the ES and Foundation Dentist

This rarely can happen during training and there may be several reasons why. Things can escalate quickly and make working relationships impossible within a small workplace. There is often only one ES involved with a Foundation Dentist. Where possible, NIMDTA will work to prevent a final break down by local resolution with the ES and where necessary, NIMDTA will provide mediation between parties.

## Bullying and Harassment

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be considered seriously by NIMDTA. The following definitions may help to clarify such behaviour:

**Bullying:** offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the person to whom it is directed. Firm supervision in the workplace, which may include constructive, developmental feedback, is not considered bullying. Constructive criticism and feedback on performance, failure in an assessment, or referral to the ARCP panel or the Training Support Service are not considered bullying or harassment. These should be carried out in a constructive and supportive way, preserving a good relationship between the ES and the FD.

**Harassment:** unwanted conduct related to sex, gender reassignment, race or ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, or any other personal characteristic. Any Foundation Dentist who thinks they are being bullied and/ or harassed should:

- Speak to someone within the training practice and if the first contact is not helpful, speak to your Training Programme Director
- Keep a record so that all incidents are diarised and documented as specifically as possible.

ESs as the employer of the FD, carry the legal responsibility for addressing complaints of harassment under their grievance or Dignity at Work policy. For more guidance and information, the ES's policies should be referred to. Foundation Dentists must adhere to the Bullying and Harassment/ Dignity at Work policy of their employer. The ES must apply their Bullying and Harassment/ Dignity at Work policy in a fair and equitable manner to all employees.

## The Role of NIMDTA

Initial reporting and progress updates will be monitored, and guidance and signposting will be offered, as necessary. Intervention by from NIMDTA will only occur where the educational supervisor and training practice is able to demonstrate that all internal practice mechanisms have been appropriately utilised without success.



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