

Memorandum of Understanding

Between the

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

and the

General Dental Council

23 December 2016

Memorandum of Understanding

Between the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and the General Dental Council

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to set out the functions of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) and the General Dental Council (GDC) and to describe the arrangements for co-operation and communication between the two bodies in relation to their respective functions and handling complaints.

Each organisation will take steps to ensure that their staff are aware of what is in the MoU. They will keep staff updated about it, and about the responsibilities it places on each individual member of staff.

This MoU aims to help achieve the statutory functions, objectives and responsibilities of both organisations by:

- securing co-operation and the exchange of information between the PSOW and the GDC subject to any legal constraints, including the need to respect personal or commercial confidentiality;
- fostering mutual understanding and effective relations generally between the two bodies;
- securing consistent treatment of matters which affect them both;
- ensuring an open and transparent relationship between the organisations.

This MOU is not intended to be a contract in law and does not give rise to any contractual rights or liabilities. It does not override the signatories' statutory responsibilities or functions, nor does it infringe their autonomy or accountability.

2. Functions of the parties to this memorandum

2.1 PSOW

The PSOW has a statutory role to look into complaints about public services and independent health and social care providers in Wales. He also investigates complaints that members of local government bodies have broken their authority's code of conduct. He is independent of all government bodies. PSOW's role is:

- To consider complaints about public bodies, including family Health Service providers and privately arranged or funded social or palliative care services.
- To consider complaints that members of local authorities have broken the code of conduct.

- To put things right and put people back in the position they would have been in if they had not suffered an injustice and work to secure the best possible outcome where injustice has occurred.
- To work with bodies so that lessons from investigations are learnt.

To promote continued improvement in the standards of public services in Wales by helping bodies to get it right first time – to work to reduce complaints by helping service providers to improve their decision making.

2.2 GDC

The GDC is the independent statutory body with responsibility for regulating dental professionals in the United Kingdom.

The GDC's purpose is to protect the public by regulating dental professionals. It does this by:

- Registering qualified dental professionals;
- Setting and enforcing standards of dental practice and conduct;
- Protecting the public from illegal practice;
- Assuring the quality of dental pre-registration education and training;
- Ensuring that dental professionals keep their knowledge and skills up to date;
- Investigating and acting upon complaints received about the fitness to practise of registered dental professionals; and
- Helping patients and the profession to resolve complaints about private dentistry.

Effective regulation of dental professionals enhances public safety, improves the quality of dental care, and helps ensure public confidence in the dental professions and dental regulation.

The GDC aims to regulate in a way that is proportionate, accountable, transparent, consistent, targeted, and responsive to changing demands, risks and priorities.

3. Consultation and co-operation

PSOW and GDC agree that where the functions and actions of one body affect the functions and actions of the other, they will consult and co-operate together in order to fulfil their respective functions as fully, effectively and efficiently as possible. This co-operation will include the sharing of appropriate information and maintaining effective communication where this will inform and improve the work of each party.

Within available resources, the PSOW and the GDC will invite representation from the other party to project teams, work groups etc where both parties believe there would be advantage in joint working. The two parties will encourage formal and informal contacts between their staff to raise awareness of the roles, responsibilities and methods of working of each.

4. Sharing information

The PSOW and the GDC recognise that certain issues may be submitted (or may be capable of being submitted) to both organisations. In these circumstances, the bodies undertake to liaise as far as possible having due regard to the requirements on each to comply fully with relevant data protection and confidentiality obligations. The focus of such liaison will be to ensure that the wishes of the person raising the concerns is respected and that they are given the best possible advice about the options open to them. Particular care will be taken to avoid situations where concerns are not properly considered because of confusion about where to signpost an individual or whether an individual has been signposted.

This MoU is supplemented by Schedule 1: Description of the Information to be shared under this agreement and Personal Data should be transferred under this agreement in the format set out in the attachments to Schedule 1.

5. Public information and information to other organisations

Before issuing any guidance, publicity and information to the public or other organisations about any aspect of their current or proposed functions relating to complaints, each party will consider the extent to which it would assist the other in the effective and efficient discharge of its functions if mention were made of that organisation and its functions. Where relevant and possible, each party will invite the other to participate in any conferences, seminars or workshops it organises.

6. Liaison meetings

PSOW and GDC representatives will remain in regular contact and meet as appropriate to consider matters of mutual interest arising from their respective functions.

7. Monitoring and reviewing this memorandum

PSOW and GDC will ensure that the other has been provided with appropriate named contacts to liaise as required to carry out day to day business. Either party may suggest amendments to the MoU.

Where either party identifies problems in operating this MoU, it will seek to resolve them quickly and informally. If this is not possible then the Ombudsman and the Chief Executive of GDC will take responsibility for achieving a mutually acceptable resolution. Their decision will be final.

8. Key contacts and dispute resolution

Details of key contacts are set out in Appendix 1.

In the event of any dispute, representatives of the signatories agree to discuss how best to resolve the issues at an appropriate level. This discussion should take place as soon as reasonably practicable. If this does not resolve the dispute, the issue will be referred to the Chief Executive of the GDC and the Ombudsman, who shall endeavour to agree an appropriate resolution.

9. Duration and review

This MOU will be effective from 23 December 2016. It is not time limited and will continue until varied or otherwise as agreed by the signatories. This MOU will however be reviewed regularly to ensure that it takes account of any prevailing regulatory or legislative developments.

Signatures to the Memorandum

Signed:



Name: Nick Bennett

Public Services Ombudsman
For Wales

Date: 09.01.17

Signed:



Name: Jonathan Green

Director of FTP
General Dental Council

Date: 09.01.17

Appendix 1: Key Contacts

1. Contact details

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales	General Dental Council
<p>Chris Vinestock Chief Operating Officer and Director of Investigations Office of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae Pencoed CF35 5LJ</p> <p>Direct Email:</p> <p>Telephone: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk</p>	<p>Ian Brack Chief Executive and Registrar General Dental Council 37 Wimpole Street London W1G 8DQ</p> <p>Direct Email:</p> <p>Direct Telephone:</p> <p>GDC Main Telephone: 020 7167 6000 www.gdc-uk.org</p>

2. Named contacts between PSOW and GDC are as follows:

MOU Management	
<p>Geraint Jones Assistant Investigation Manager Email:</p> <p>Telephone:</p>	<p>Jonathan Green Fitness to Practise Department Fitnessstopractise@gdc-uk.org</p> <p>FTP Telephone: 020 7167 6270 Direct Telephone: Direct Email:</p>

SCHEDULE 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE INFORMATION TO BE SHARED

This schedule should be read in conjunction with the Memorandum of Understanding in place between the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) and the General Dental Council (GDC) agreed on 23 December 2016.

The schedule has been formulated to facilitate the exchange of information between the parties. Any information being shared must be proportionate and no more than necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared. When sharing information we acknowledge each other's statutory responsibilities.

The attached information sharing forms should be used when sharing or requesting information.

1. Information which the General Dental Council (GDC) may share with Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) is:

1.1 Personal data and sensitive personal data including:

- a) name;
- b) date of birth;
- c) registered address;
- d) GDC registration number;
- e) registration status;
- f) contact details and/or email address;
- g) ethnicity/nationality;
- h) details of complaints/concerns raised;
- i) details of on-going investigations;
- j) details of offences alleged to have been committed;
- k) details of convictions;
- l) fitness to Practise (FTP) history;
- m) employment details;
- n) details of any health or self-declaration obtained/received;
- o) details of any declaration provided by a character or identity referee received;
- p) indemnity/indemnity declaration status; and
- q) photographic identity/evidence documentation received.

1.2. Any other information that the GDC is able to furnish or produce which PSOW considers is relevant to an investigation by PSOW.

2. Information, including personal data and sensitive personal data, which PSOW has obtained for the purposes of an investigation by PSOW, that PSOW may share with the GDC is:

2.1 Any information which PSOW considers necessary, for the Health or Safety of patients and the public, to share with the GDC for the purposes of an investigation by the GDC.

2.2 Complaints that were made to PSOW but which may be better dealt with by the GDC and information related to such complaints, where the person making the

complaint has consented to the complaint and related information being shared with the GDC.

2.3 Any information which indicates a person is likely to be a threat to the health or safety of patients which is disclosed to the GDC in the interests of the health and safety of patients.

2.4 Reports of investigations by PSOW and statements of reasons not to investigate complaints made to PSOW which PSOW considers it appropriate to send to the GDC when the requirements set out in paragraph 2.3 are met.

3. Information, including personal data and sensitive personal data, which PSOW has not obtained for the purposes of an investigation by PSOW, that PSOW may share with the GDC is:

3.1 Any information the GDC considers relevant to the discharge of its statutory functions.