



Dental nurse (GDC 2023)

Details of standard

Occupation summary

This occupation is found in a clinical environment that could be located in a NHS general dental practice, hospital, private dental practice, specialist dental practice, community dental service or military dental clinic. The clinical environment is called a dental surgery and consists of a dental chair, x-ray unit and various equipment and instruments required for dentistry. A dental nurse will predominately work with a dentist, dental hygienist, dental therapist, clinical dental technician or orthodontic therapist within a surgery environment with patients attending throughout the day.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to provide chair side support to all dental professionals and ensure high standards of cleanliness and infection control. Dental nurses prepare instruments, materials and medicaments for dental procedures, mix materials, sterilise instruments, keep records, note dictation, carry out stock control and ensure patient comfort and safety throughout their visit.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with patients of all ages, other members of the dental team, other health professionals and representatives of organisations providing support services to the setting. Depending on the dental setting the dental nurse could also interact with schools, the prison service, community dental service, individuals in their own homes and those in care home settings.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for providing care for people of all ages, different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs within a variety of clinical environments. Dental nurses must ensure that they only carry out a task, treatment or make decisions about a patient's care if they are appropriately trained, competent, indemnified and have the necessary skills. Dental nurses are registered professionals and work within the standards and scope of practice as defined by the General Dental Council (GDC) Scope of Practice document.

Typical job titles include:

Dental nurse

Occupation duties

DUTY**KSBS**

Duty 1 Undertake routine dental nursing clinical and technical procedures and tasks relevant to the assessment, and diagnosis of patients.

K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 K6 K7 K8 K9 K10 K11
K12 K13 K14 K15

S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S7 S8 S9 S10 S11 S12
S13 S14 S15 S16 S73

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 2 Undertake routine dental nursing clinical and technical procedures and tasks relevant to treatment planning and onward referral of patients.

K16 K17 K18 K19 K20 K21 K22 K23

S17 S18 S19 S20 S21 S22 S23 S24 S25
S26 S27

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 3 Communicate effectively, maintaining confidentiality and records appropriately.

K24 K25 K26 K27 K28

S28 S29 S30 S31 S32

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 4 Provide professional leadership within the team working in partnership with patients, dental teams, other health and social care professionals.

K29 K30 K31 K32 K33 K34 K35 K36 K37
K38 K39

S33 S34 S35 S36 S37 S38 S39

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 5 Practise as an autonomous professional exercising judgement and integrity, keeping within the scope of practice and the legal and ethical boundaries of the profession.

K40 K41 K42 K43 K44 K46 K47 K48

S40 S41 S42 S43 S44 S45 S46 S47 S48

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 6 Practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner recognising the impact of culture, equality and diversity.

K45 K49

S49 S50 S51 S52 S53 S54 S56

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 7 Promote oral health to individuals and the wider population and raise awareness of its role in preventing ill health amongst communities.

K50 K51 K52 K53 K54 K55 K56 K57 K58
K59 K60

S55 S57 S58 S59

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 8 Reflect on, review and develop the quality of own practice.

K61 K62 K63 K64 K65 K66 K67 K69

S60 S61 S62 S63 S64 S65 S66 S67 S68
S70

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

Duty 9 Manage own health and well-being and promote the well-being of others in the team.

K68 K70 K71 K72

S69 S71 S72

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8

KSBs

Knowledge

K1: The aetiology, pathogenesis and epidemiological trends of oral and dental disease and their application to patient management.

K2: Clinical presentations of oral and dental diseases relevant to the role of a dental nurse and the principles underpinning their diagnosis, prevention, and treatment.

K3: The variance in disease presentation across diverse cultural and social groups, and those with protected characteristics, and how this impacts diagnosis, prevention, and treatment.

K4: General and systemic diseases and psychological conditions, and their relevance to oral health and impact on clinical treatment, patient compliance, self-care, and outcomes.

K5: The relevance to patient management of dental, oral, craniofacial, and general anatomy, recognising the diversity of anatomy across the patient.

K6: Physiology and its application to patient management.

K7: Psychological and sociological concepts and theoretical frameworks of health, illness, behavioural change and disease, and how these can be applied in clinical practice.

K8: The potential routes of transmission of infectious agents in dental practice, mechanisms for the prevention of infection, the scientific principles of decontamination and disinfection.

K9: The need for effective recorded maintenance and testing of equipment and requirements for appropriate storage, handling, and use of materials.

K10: Evaluate the health risks of prescribed, non-prescribed and recreational drug use and misuse on oral and general health.

K11: The scientific principles underpinning the use of materials and biomaterials used in dentistry.

K12: The scientific principles of medical ionizing radiation and statutory regulations, and how these are applied to clinical practice.

K13: The principles of obtaining valid patient consent.

K14: The importance of each component of the patient assessment process.

- K15:** How to raise safeguarding concerns for children and adults and act accordingly.
- K16:** Principles of preventive care.
- K17:** How diet and nutritional status can influence oral and general health and how to provide appropriate advice and support.
- K18:** Common signs and symptoms of oral cancer and the importance of raising a concern and early referral.
- K19:** The responsibilities of the dental team as an access point to and from wider healthcare.
- K20:** The roles and organisation of various referral networks, clinical guidelines and policies and local variation.
- K21:** Common conditions and complications that may arise following dental implant therapy.
- K22:** The importance and components of a comprehensive and contemporaneous patient history.
- K23:** The risks within and around the clinical environment.
- K24:** The use of a range of communication methods and technologies and their appropriate application in support of clinical practice.
- K25:** The importance of non-verbal communication, including listening skills, and the barriers to effective communication.
- K26:** The professional expectations, potential impact, and consequence of using social media as a communication tool.
- K27:** The importance of contemporaneous, complete and accurate patient records in accordance with legal requirements and best practice.
- K28:** The legal responsibilities of maintaining and protecting patients' information.
- K29:** The responsibilities and limitations of delegating to other members of the dental team.
- K30:** The role and professional responsibilities associated with appraisal; training and review of colleagues; provision of and receipt of effective feedback in the context of developing members of the dental team
- K31:** The roles of dental and other healthcare professionals in the context of learning and working in a dental and wider healthcare team.
- K32:** The contribution that team members and effective team working makes to the delivery of safe and effective high-quality care, including the benefits of working in culturally diverse teams.
- K33:** Team working guidance provided by the GDC and other relevant bodies.
- K34:** The impact of Direct Access on each registrant group and the impact on the application of each group's scope of practice.
- K35:** The scope of practice of each member of the dental team and how the roles interact for effective teamwork and patient care.

- K36:** The need to ensure that those who raise concerns are protected from discrimination or other detrimental effects.
- K37:** The differences between management and leadership.
- K38:** Own management and leadership role and the range of skills and knowledge required to do this effectively.
- K39:** How to take responsibility for the quality of services and devices provided to the patient as relevant to own scope of practice.
- K40:** The GDC's expectations and requirements as set out in regulations and guidance and other relevant laws, ethical guidance and systems, in addition to the above legal frameworks.
- K41:** The importance of having appropriate indemnity arrangements in place for both the professional and patient.
- K42:** The importance of candour and effective communication with patients when things go wrong or when dealing with a complaint.
- K43:** How and where to report any patient safety issues which arise.
- K44:** The responsibilities of, and mechanisms for raising concerns about your own or others' health, behaviour or professional performance as described in GDC guidance.
- K45:** Diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination and the underpinning legislation, and explain how to apply these principles to manage patients with protected characteristics and work within the dental team, noting that this legislation may differ in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- K46:** Explain the attributes of professional attitudes and behaviour in all environments and media, including interaction with social media.
- K47:** The principles and procedures for good complaints handling.
- K48:** The responsibility that dental practices and individual practitioners have in compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks.
- K49:** Cultural competence and its relevance in assessing the needs and planning care for patients from diverse backgrounds.
- K50:** The dental and wider healthcare systems dental professionals work within including local and national health policy and organisations, delivery of healthcare and equity.
- K51:** The basic principles of a population health approach including demographic and social trends, UK and international oral health trends, determinants of health and inequalities in health, and the ways in which these are measured and current patterns.
- K52:** The role of health promotion in terms of the changing environment, community and individual behaviours to deliver health gain.
- K53:** Methods of evidence-based prevention at a community and or population level.
- K54:** The principles of planning oral health care for communities to meet needs and demands.

K55: The ethical challenges associated with providing patient care within the current dental healthcare systems.

K56: The principles and limitations of the currently available options for funding of dental healthcare provision for individual patients.

K57: The management of resources in provision of care decisions including appropriate use of primary and secondary care networks.

K58: The importance of collaboration across the health and social care sector for the benefit of communities and individual patients.

K59: The barriers and challenges which prevent sections of the population accessing oral healthcare, including patients from marginalised populations and patients with protected characteristics.

K60: The main principles relating to sustainable oral health care, both environmentally and in terms of patient compliance, and the factors that might affect implementing a sustainable approach.

K61: The term insight in the context of professional practice.

K62: Why insight is important in ensuring safe and effective patient care, and to personal development.

K63: The principles of an evidence-based approach.

K64: Models for self-reflection and how this process can be used to inform personal development, viewpoint, preconceptions, bias and behaviour.

K65: The importance of assessment, feedback, critical reflection, identification of learning needs and appraisal in personal development planning.

K66: The importance of and requirement for commitment to lifelong learning.

K67: The principles of personal development planning, recording of evidence, and reflective practice.

K68: Strategies to identify and manage the personal and emotional challenges of work, teamwork and workload.

K69: Opportunities for improvement of a clinical service or to manage and or mitigate risks.

K70: Ways to self-monitor, self-care and routes of seeking appropriate advice in terms of personal wellbeing.

K71: Strategies to identify and manage the personal and emotional challenges of uncertainty and change.

K72: The role of coping strategies for practice, such as reflection, self-acceptance, debriefing, handing over to another colleague, peer support and asking for help in responding to challenges and setbacks.

Skills

S1: Identify relevant and appropriate dental, oral, craniofacial, and general anatomy, recognising the diversity of anatomy across the patient population.

S2: Evaluate the health risks of prescribed, non-prescribed and recreational drug use and misuse on oral and general health.

- S3:** Evaluate the scientific principles underpinning the use of materials and Biomaterials, their limitations and selection, with emphasis on those used in dentistry.
- S4:** Identify the signs of abuse, neglect or emotional trauma, explain local and national systems that safeguard the welfare of children and adults.
- S5:** Identify the signs of normal and abnormal facial growth, physical, mental and dental development milestones and explain their significance.
- S6:** Assess patients' levels of anxiety, experience, and expectations in respect of dental care and oral health.
- S7:** Contribute to relevant special investigations and diagnostic procedures.
- S8:** Undertake orthodontic assessment.
- S9:** Obtain valid consent from patients explaining all the relevant factors and taking into account the legal requirements where appropriate within scope of practice.
- S10:** Record an accurate and contemporaneous patient history.
- S11:** Accurately record dental charting as carried out by other appropriate registrants.
- S12:** Accurately record an oral health assessment.
- S13:** Prepare records, images, equipment and materials for clinical assessment.
- S14:** Process and manage dental radiographs and images.
- S15:** Manage patient anxiety appropriately, effectively, and safely.
- S16:** Monitor, support and reassure patients through effective communication and behavioural techniques.
- S17:** Identify changes in the patient's reported oral health status and take appropriate action.
- S18:** Make arrangements for follow-up care as prescribed by the operator.
- S19:** Provide chairside support to the operator during treatment.
- S20:** Prepare, mix and handle dental materials.
- S21:** Identify and explain the risks within and around the clinical environment and manage these in a safe and effective manner.
- S22:** Implement, perform, and manage effective decontamination and infection control procedures according to current guidelines.
- S23:** Prepare and maintain the clinical environment including the instruments and equipment.
- S24:** Identify, assess, and manage medical emergencies.
- S25:** Provide patients/carers with comprehensive, personalised preventive advice, instruction, and intervention in a manner which is accessible, promotes self-care and motivates patients/carers to comply with advice and take responsibility to maintain and improve oral health.

- S26:** Support the management of patients with acute oral conditions ensuring involvement of appropriate dental team members.
- S27:** Adopt an evidence-based approach to clinical practice.
- S28:** Communicate effectively and sensitively, tailoring to context, by spoken, written and or electronic means with all patients, including patients whose first language is not English, using representatives or interpreters where necessary, in relation to patients with anxious or challenging behaviour or special considerations such as emotional trauma and difficult circumstances, such as breaking bad news, or discussing issues such as alcohol consumption, smoking, or diet.
- S29:** Communicate effectively and sensitively by spoken, written and electronic means with the public.
- S30:** Communicate effectively by spoken, written and electronic means with colleagues from dental and other healthcare professions in relation to the direct care of individual patients, oral health promotion and raising concerns when problems arise, including where patients cause distress to staff.
- S31:** Maintain contemporaneous, complete and accurate patient records in accordance with legal requirements and best practice.
- S32:** Communicate with care, compassion, empathy and respect in all professional interactions with patients, their representatives, the public and colleagues.
- S33:** Communicate appropriately and effectively in professional discussions and transactions.
- S34:** Give feedback effectively to other members of the team.
- S35:** Respect the roles of dental and other healthcare professionals in the context of learning and working in a dental and wider healthcare team.
- S36:** Demonstrate effective team working.
- S37:** Contribute to your team in providing dental care for patients.
- S38:** Where appropriate manage, refer or delegate work according to the scope of practice of members of the dental team, in line with competence and professional practice.
- S39:** Take a patient-centred approach to working with the dental and wider healthcare team.
- S40:** Raise concerns where appropriate about your own or others' health, behaviour or professional performance.
- S41:** Comply with systems and processes to support safe patient care.
- S42:** Act in accordance with current best practice guidelines.
- S43:** Act in accordance with national and local clinical governance and health and safety requirements.
- S44:** Act within the legal frameworks which inform personal behaviour, the delivery of healthcare and the protection and promotion of the health of individual patients.
- S45:** Act with integrity and ensure your actions maintain the trust of colleagues, patients, and the public in you, your team, and the profession across all environments and media.
- S46:** Demonstrate personal accountability to patients, the regulator, the team and wider community.

- S47:** Work in partnership with colleagues to develop and maintain an effective and supportive environment which promotes the safety and wellbeing of the patient and dental team.
- S48:** Where appropriate lead, manage and take professional responsibility for the actions of colleagues and other members of the team involved in patient care.
- S49:** Where appropriate support patients to negotiate the barriers and challenges which prevent sections of the population accessing oral healthcare, including patients from marginalised populations and patients with protected characteristics.
- S50:** Treat your patients, members of the public and your colleagues with dignity and respect and without discrimination.
- S51:** Support patients to make informed decisions about their care, making their interests your first concern.
- S52:** Demonstrate cultural competence, accepting and respecting the diversity of patients and colleagues.
- S53:** Provide the best possible outcome for your patients by using your knowledge and skills, acting as an advocate for their needs where appropriate.
- S54:** Speak up to protect others from harm.
- S55:** Evaluate the effectiveness of evidence-based prevention at a community and or population level.
- S56:** Proactively address discriminatory language, behaviour and microaggressions from colleagues, patients and other professionals.
- S57:** Evaluate the role of health promotion in terms of the changing environment, community and individual behaviours to deliver health gain.
- S58:** Evaluate and apply the evidence base in relation to the environmental impacts of common treatment methods and approaches to the delivery of oral healthcare.
- S59:** Contribute positively to the healthcare communities of which you are a part.
- S60:** Evaluate an evidence base.
- S61:** Utilise the receipt of effective feedback in the professional development of self.
- S62:** Demonstrate personal development planning, recording of evidence, and reflective practice.
- S63:** Evaluate the impact of new techniques and technologies as they relate to dental nurse practice.
- S64:** Accurately assess your own capabilities and limitations in the interest of high-quality patient care and seek advice from supervisors or colleagues where appropriate.
- S65:** Recognise personal assumptions, biases and prejudices and manage the impact of these on patient care and professional behaviour with colleagues, patients and wider society.
- S66:** Recognise the impact of contextual factors on the health care environment and patient safety and manage this professionally.
- S67:** Demonstrate own professional responsibility in the development of self.

S68: Develop and maintain professional knowledge and competence.

S69: Demonstrate engagement with systems and personal strategies which promote and maintain physical and mental wellbeing.

S70: Demonstrate appropriate continuous improvement activities.

S71: Recognise when and how to take action if wellbeing is compromised to a point of affecting an individual's role or professional relationships.

S72: Effectively manage your own time and resources.

S73: Underpin all patient care with a preventive approach, that takes account of patient compliance and self-care, to contribute to the patient's long-term oral and general health.

Behaviours

B1: Compassionate professional behaviour and professional responsibilities making sure the fundamental needs of patients and carers are addressed.

B2: Act with integrity, be polite, considerate, trustworthy, conscientious and honest.

B3: Take personal and professional responsibility for their actions.

B4: Manage time and prioritise effectively.

B5: Be open and honest in their interactions with patients, carers, colleagues and employers when things go wrong, known as the professional duty of candour.

B6: Respect patients' wishes about whether they wish to participate in the education of learners.

B7: Uphold the General Dental Council Standards for The Dental Team (2013).

B8: Willingness to learn, and be proactive in progressing in your own development.

Qualifications

English and Maths

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

Other mandatory qualifications

A qualification approved by the GDC to enable professional registration with the GDC as a Dental Nurse

Level: 3

Additional details

Regulated standard

This is a regulated occupation.

Regulator body:

General Dental Council

Training Provider does not require approval by regulator body

EPAO must be approved by regulator body

Occupational Level:

3

Duration (months):

18

Review

this apprenticeship will be reviewed in accordance with our change request policy.

Example progression routes

Oral health practitioner

Orthodontic therapist (integrated)

Version log

VERSION	CHANGE DETAIL	EARLIEST START DATE	LATEST START DATE	LATEST END DATE
1.0	Approved for delivery	27/08/2024	Not set	Not set

Crown copyright © 2024. You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. Visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence