

# What Influences Dental Professionals' Choices of CPD Activities?

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## Background

Continuing professional development (CPD) is essential to ensure dental professionals stay up-to-date with professional standards and maintain high levels of patient safety and care.

In the UK, CPD requirements are set by the General Dental Council (GDC) and specify a set number of verifiable hours (dependent on professional role) to be completed over a set time period.

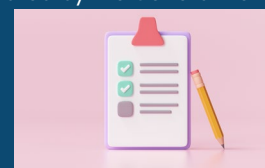
However, dental professionals are responsible for organising their CPD and there is a myriad of CPD activities to engage with, varying in topic, format, duration, and delivery medium.

## Aims & Objectives

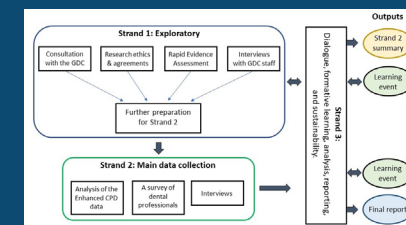
### What are they key influences on UK dental professionals' choice of CPD activities?

Findings are based on a larger study of CPD activity among UK dental professionals that was funded and facilitated by the General Dental Council (GDC)

The views and opinions expressed in the presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the GDC.



## Methods



This presentation draws on data from an online survey (n=2817) and one-to-one interviews (n=33).

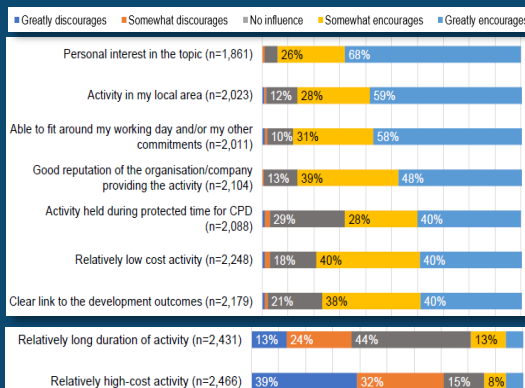
## Results

According to survey results, over 90% of dental professionals were encouraged to pursue CPD activities in topics that held **personal interest**.

Activities within the **local area** and the ability to fit the CPD around the **working day and/or other commitments** were also key encouraging factors.

Over 60% were discouraged by high-cost activities and ~35% were deterred by activities of long duration.

Personal interest, local activities, compatibility with working day and/or other commitments and reputation of activity provider were the top four most encouraging factors for both dentists and DCPs (though in different orders).



For each of the following, please indicate whether it influences your decision to take up an activity.

## Results

Differences according to role. DCPs were more encouraged than dentists by...

- Activities held during protected time (encouraging influence for 75% of DCPs, 57% of dentists).
- Activities held online (encouraging influence for 68% of DCPs, 53% of dentists).

In interviews, DCPs cited the convenience of online learning, the lack of travel time and cost, and option to view recordings after the event.

*"I do not attend in person things. It's just it's too awkward. Why do I want to drive 45 miles each way? You know, wasting my time doing that, to sit and listen to somebody."* (Dental Technician, Interview)

The NHS, Community Dental Service (CDS) and larger companies often reported as being **facilitative** of CPD.

**Smaller practices** sometimes **struggle to release** dental professionals during the workday.

Some dental professionals reported having to complete CPD **outside of work hours**.

Different dental roles have **different levels of professional autonomy**: DCPs often dependent on practice manager/employer's discretion.

**Mandated CPD** may offer some **protection** to dental professionals' learning time.

## Conclusions

The results offer insight for practice leads, educators, CPD providers and regulators on what influences dental professionals' choices of CPD.

Dental professionals largely seek CPD activities that appeal to their personal interests and are within their local area.

Long duration and high-cost CPD activities discourage participation and should be considered by CPD providers.

The struggle faced by some practices to release staff for CPD during working day, and some dental professionals having to complete CPD in personal time may indicate that mandated CPD would aid in ensuring protected time was available to dental professionals.

## References

Bullock, A., Barnes, E., Jones, R., Bartlett, S. and Russ, E. 2023. [Evaluating enhanced Continuing Professional Development: Final Report](#). Project Report. [Online]. General Dental Council.