

Working patterns data

Summary of key highlights and insights*
March 2026

17 March 2026

*Dentist data published in March 2026

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Introduction

As part of the annual renewal, we ask dental professionals 10 questions about how they are currently delivering dental care. These questions cover subjects like the dental setting they are working in, the hours spent delivering dental care each week, whether they are delivering NHS or private care and their working location in the UK.

The data presented in this document is a summary of all dentist data collected since the survey opened in November 2023. The document will be updated in Q4 2026 once the latest round of dental care professional data is released to provide a full summary of dental professional working pattern data released in 2026.

The insight and information from the data helps improve the sector's understanding of dental professionals' working patterns and informs discussions about future workforce resource planning.

Since the survey went live, we have collected data from 35,474 dentists. This means that we have collected working patterns data for three-quarters (75%) of the dentists on the GDC register. This percentage is for all dentists who have answered the working patterns questions at least once. The data is published on the [GDC website](#) and can be viewed on a United Kingdom and individual nation level.

Percentages in this document are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where the numbers are less than five, they have been removed to avoid identification of any individuals. These are identified by '...' in the data summary tables.

The key highlights and insights should not be considered as a comprehensive review of the findings from the data, rather they are a summary of some of the highlights based on a UK wide analysis.

We would encourage users to review the data tables as there may be other highlights or information that would support workforce discussions that have not been highlighted below.

Key highlights and insights

Dentists (initially published in March 2026)

Q#	Question	High level insight (percentages rounded to nearest whole number)
1	Are you currently working in the dental sector?	Nearly all (99%) were working in the dental sector. Of the remainder, 0.9% were seeking work in the sector.
2	As a dental professional, where do you work?	Most (81%) were working in England, just over 1 in 10 (11%) in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 4% in Northern Ireland. (Note: percentages for country of work add up to 101% because of rounding).
3	What is your current primary field of practice?	Most (89%) were working primarily as a dentist, a further 9% as a specialist, and a further 1% as a clinical dental technician.
4	Which of the following best describes your current employment situation in the dental sector?	More than half (60%) were self-employed/agency or working as a locum, a fifth (20%) were employees, and 15% were business owners/part owners.
5	Considering all dental sector work you do, on average how is your time spent between clinical and non-clinical work?	Most (86%) were working predominantly (at least 75% of time spent) or fully in clinical role. A further 9% were undertaking a mix of clinical and non-clinical work.
6	How many hours do you normally work a week as a dental professional?	Less than half (45%) were working 30 hours a week or less, with the same proportion (45%) working between 30 and 40 hours a week.
7	Which dental setting/s do you work in?	Just over two-thirds (68%) were working in general dental practice. 6% were working in a dental hospital, 5% in community dental services and 4% in other hospital settings.
8	How many places of work do you commonly work in?	More than half (60%) were commonly working in one location, whilst more than a third (38%) were regularly working in more than one location.
9	Considering all dental sector work you do, which of the following best describes the type of dental care you most commonly provide?	A fifth (20%) were only providing private care, with no NHS and a further 14% said they worked predominantly (over 75% of their time) in private care. More than two-fifths (41%) of dentists were spending at least 75% of their time delivering NHS care. 14% were providing only NHS dental care.

General Dental Council

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