General Dental Council

Communications research

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djs research

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Executive summary

Objectives and methodology

In January 2017, the GDC published a discussion document called Shifting the balance (StB), which laid out the GDC's proposals for the future of dental regulation. Within the 'moving upstream' category there is a focus on more effective engagement with current and future dental professionals (DPs). As such, the GDC commissioned DJS Research (an independent market research agency), to explore and understand the most effective channels for the GDC to use to communicate with key audiences.

This research used a mixed methodology comprising telephone interviews and an online survey with registrants, stakeholders[1] and students. The research was conducted in 2 phases:

- Phase 1: an initial set of 6 telephone interviews with 3 registrants and 3 stakeholders,
- Phase 2: an online survey with 4280 completes, including 4101 registrants, 52 stakeholders and 127 students.

The findings from the telephone interviews are not representative or statistically robust, but they do add depth and further insight to the results. The online survey results presented in this report are based on weighted data for registrants[2] and non-weighted data for stakeholders and students. Significant differences are reported at a 95% confidence level. Within the results, please assume that data is taken from the online survey unless it is explicitly stated that it is from the telephone interviews.

Main research findings

Communication with the GDC

Types of communication received

During the telephone interviews, registrants and stakeholders were asked about the types of communications they recalled receiving from the GDC. Both registrants and stakeholders recalled a regular GDC newsletter. Registrants felt that they mainly received communications from the GDC about Fitness to Practise (FtP) procedures or requests for annual fees – so

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[1] Included those working as Health Professional Regulators, Defence Bodies, Dental Schools, Education providers, Patient groups / charities, Professional Associations, System Regulators, Government officials and NHS agencies.
[2] Applying a weight to data is a statistical technique that brings the surveyed sample proportions in line with what is known about the population. For example, a survey sample with x% dentists would be adjusted to match the whole population of y% dentists through weighting to correct for this discrepancy

typically communications from the GDC were viewed quite negatively or created a feeling of unease due to FtP.

Respondents were shown a list of different types of communications and were asked whether they recalled receiving each of these communications from the GDC. Overall the most frequently recalled communications include the newsletter (66%), fee information (54%) and training updates (34%).

Usefulness of different types of communication

Respondents were asked how useful they found each of the communications that they receive from the GDC. For registrants, inspection information (90%) and training updates (90%) were the most useful communications. For stakeholders, inspection information (100%) and results from FtP hearings (100%) were the most useful. Students found communications relating to FtP outcomes (100%) the most useful.

Communication format and preferences

Respondents were asked about the format of GDC communications. For registrants (90%) and stakeholders (75%) email was the main communication method recalled, while students most commonly stated that they don't receive any communications from the GDC (34%). Almost half of stakeholders (46%) said that the GDC communicates with them through face-to-face meetings, this was much lower for registrants and students (1% and 0% respectively).

Respondents were then asked to rate each communication format from definitely not a preference, to strongly preferred. Overall, email was the most preferred communication type (82%), the GDC website the second (54%) and letters were third (46%).

Communication improvements

During the telephone interviews, respondents were asked about any improvements they would like to see to GDC communications. Registrants would prefer emails which are more succinct and which cover more positive topics. Rather than focusing on FtP successes, they would prefer to hear more about other things such as educational or professional development opportunities. They would like to see the GDC engaging face-to-face with working dental professionals, stakeholders and students, rather than communicating indirectly via emails and articles.

Frequency of communications

Respondents were asked how happy they were with the current level of communication from the GDC. A total of 46% of registrants and stakeholders, and 33% of students, were happy with the frequency. Dentists were significantly less likely to be 'very happy' with the current frequency of communication compared to all other DPs.

The minority of respondents (10%) who were not happy with the frequency of communications were asked if they would prefer more frequent or less frequent communications. Most (72%) wish to receive more frequent communications from the GDC.

Likelihood of opening emails

Respondents who received emails from the GDC were asked how often they open them. Stakeholders were the most likely group to always open emails from the GDC (69%), followed by registrants (50%) and finally students (41%).

Desired communications from the GDC

Respondents were presented with a list of topics and were asked whether they would like to receive further communications on these topics. Registrants (73%) and students (83%) would most like to receive more information about 'standards and guidelines updates', while stakeholders would most like to receive information about the 'GDC's progress on key projects' (77%).

Future communication formats from the GDC

Respondents were provided with a list of future communication formats and asked whether they think the GDC should consider using these. The favoured communication format that registrants (54%), stakeholders (42%) and students (51%) believe the GDC should consider was a GDC app. The second most common was videos for students (37%), while registrants (28%) and stakeholders (35%) both selected webinars.

Review of the GDC website

Frequency of visiting the GDC website

Respondents were asked about their frequency of use of the GDC website. Registrants (38%) and students (31%) most commonly visit the website a few times each year, while stakeholders most commonly visit the GDC website a few times each month (27%). Only 2% of respondents have no intention of visiting the site at all. The main reasons for not visiting the website included a lack of interest in the content, the website is not considered relevant or useful, and also that it is difficult to navigate and log-in to

Usefulness of the GDC website

Respondents who had used the GDC website were asked to rate how useful they find it. The majority of respondents find the site either fairly or very useful, with 93% of students, 84% of registrants, and 76% of stakeholders all finding the site useful. Respondents were then asked how the GDC website could be improved. Suggested improvements include easier log in, simpler language, easier navigation and an improved search tool. A more interactive webpage is also desired along with a GDC portal for CPD courses.

Respondent-led contact

Initiating contact with the GDC

Respondents were asked about whether they had ever initiated contact with the GDC. Stakeholders were most likely to have initiated contact with the GDC (77%), followed by registrants (41%) and lastly students (16%). Dentists were significantly less likely to have initiated contact compared to other DPs.

Method of and reasons for contact

Those who had initiated contact with the GDC were then asked how they had been in contact. Both registrants (77%) and students (75%) most commonly contacted the GDC via the telephone, while stakeholders most commonly used email (93%).

Respondents then were asked why they had initiated contact with the GDC. For registrants, the main reasons for initiating contact were registration (51%) and general queries (48%). The main reasons for stakeholders were general queries (58%), for guidelines / standards information (45%) and FtP queries (45%). Finally, the main reasons for students were registration (50%) and training / CPD / education (50%).

Ease of contact

Respondents were also asked to rate how easy it was to make that contact with the GDC, rating from very difficult to very easy. Overall respondents found it easy to make contact with the GDC (73%). Students were most likely to find it easy (90%), then stakeholders (75%) and finally registrants (73%).

General media usage

Use of social media

Respondents were asked which social media platforms they currently use in their day to day life. The most used platform was Facebook for all three respondent types (66%). Instagram was the second most used for both students (65%) and registrants (43%), while stakeholders selected LinkedIn (44%).

Media used for general news updates

Respondents were asked which type of media they regularly use for general news updates. Overall, TV news channels (56%), online news websites (53%) and social media (47%) were the most used channels. The BBC was the most commonly used TV news channel (87%) and online news website (80%). The BBC was also rated the most trustworthy news source (59% rated it the most trustworthy).

Interest in the dental sector

Five attitudinal statements were presented to all respondents and they were asked to select which they believe best describes their views. Registrants were mainly split between those who actively keep up to date with news / trends (30%), those who passively keep up to date (26%) and those who would like to learn more but with minimal effort (25%). Stakeholders were most likely to be those who actively keep up to date with trends / the sector (65%). Students were also mainly split between those who passively keep up to date (30%) and those who would like to learn more with minimal effort (39%).

Implications

Overall, the communications that the GDC sends out are considered to be useful, in particular, information on QA inspections and training / CPD are valued highly. However, for registrants, communications from the GDC can be viewed negatively as they perceive that these are mainly related to FtP and the annual renewal fee (ARF). There is an opportunity to change registrants' perceptions by engaging with them about topics such as professional development, inspections, updates in guidelines / standards or trends in the dental sector. Targeted communications that are only sent to the most relevant people would also be welcomed, e.g. if the GDC want feedback on education, then speaking specifically to heads of dental schools would be advised rather than sending out to all databases.

Registrants and students mainly receive indirect or impersonal communications from the GDC via email, letter or by visiting the GDC website. There is an opportunity for the GDC to increase the number of face-to-face meetings it undertakes with these groups, and to engage with registrants and students through discussion groups and open sessions. We are aware that work to improve engagement with all groups is currently in progress.

Students are least likely to have had any form of contact with the GDC. There is an opportunity for the GDC to open up more direct communication channels with students from the outset of their course. The GDC could further increase the impact of its engagement with students by changing the style of communications to be more interactive, including the use of videos and apps to raise awareness and engagement with key initiatives.

Most respondents have used the GDC website and find it fairly useful. However, the website is not visited frequently and it can be difficult to navigate. To increase usage, the GDC could improve its usability, by including more engaging content and by making it more interactive. We are aware that a project to improve the navigation, accessibility and interactivity of the current website is underway.

Amongst registrants, stakeholders and students, the BBC channels (app, website and TV channel) are highly used and respected. As such, the BBC should be a key target when the GDC is looking to communicate information about improvements and changes. Facebook is also widely used and would be a valuable channel for communicating information about less

newsworthy stories, for sharing relevant content and to engage with younger audiences, particularly students and newly graduated registrants. Newspapers are not widely read by respondents, so should not be a key channel of focus for the GDC; however, the most widely read are The Times, The Telegraph and The Guardian.

Introduction

The General Dental Council (GDC) was established over 60 years ago and is the UK-wide statutory regulator of almost 42,000 dentists and almost 68,000 dental care professionals. The primary purpose of the GDC is to protect patient safety and maintain public confidence in dental services. To achieve this, the GDC registers qualified dental professionals, sets standards for the dental team, investigates complaints about dental professionals' fitness to practise, and ensures the quality of dental education.

In January 2017, the GDC published a discussion document called Shifting the balance (StB), which laid out the GDC's proposals for the future of dental regulation, ultimately making the system better for patients and fairer for dental professionals. StB consists of four main areas of proposals including; 1) Moving upstream, 2) First tier complaints, 3) Working with partners, and 4) Refocusing fitness to practise.

Within the 'moving upstream' category there is a focus on more effective engagement with current and future dental professionals. As such this research was commissioned to explore and understand the most effective channels for the GDC to use to communicate with key audiences. The GDC commissioned DJS Research, an independent market research agency, to undertake this research.

Objectives

The overall objective of the research is to provide the GDC with a robust and reliable evidence base regarding stakeholders'[3], registrants', and students' communication preferences. This objective can be broken down into 3 key areas:

- To establish by which channels stakeholders, registrants and students currently receive information about the GDC's activities
- To understand which channels they would prefer to receive this information through
- To identify which media channels they use regularly to receive general news and information

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[3] Included those working as Health Professional Regulators, Defence Bodies, Dental Schools, Education providers, Patient groups / charities, Professional Associations, System Regulators, Government officials and NHS agencies.

Methodology

This research used a mixed methodology comprising telephone interviews and an online survey with registrants, stakeholders and dental students.

Overview of methodology

Phase 1: An initial set of 6 telephone interviews were conducted (3 registrants and 3 stakeholders). Interviews were conducted 13th – 29th August 2018 and lasted up to 45 minutes. A copy of the discussion guide can be found in the Appendix. This preliminary phase of interviews was conducted to provide an initial understanding of the type of topics and themes that would be most relevant to test in a larger scale survey.

Phase 2: An online survey was conducted with registrants, stakeholders and students. The survey was hosted online from 17th September – 14th October 2018. The survey lasted 10-15 minutes, and a copy of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix. This phase was conducted to provide robust responses to identify respondents' communication channel preferences.

Sampling

The GDC provided DJS with 2 databases, a database of all registrants (with almost 68,000 dental professionals and almost 42,000 dentists) and a database of approximately 300 stakeholders. A student database was not available, so students were contacted via university deaneries.

Phase 1: In the initial phase of telephone interviews, the GDC was interested hearing the views of influential voices in the sector so provided a list of respondents of interest. DJS contacted respondents on this list and interviewed 3 registrants and 3 stakeholders. The GDC is unaware who from the list was contacted and completed an interview, and all feedback provided to the GDC was anonymised to ensure respondent confidentiality.

Phase 2: For the online survey, all registrants and stakeholders within the GDC database were personally invited via email to take part in the survey. Students were emailed via university deaneries. To ensure the registrant sample was representative of the GDC database, the final data was weighted by age, gender, registrant type, registrant role and region (please see section 'Weighting of survey data' for further information).

Online survey

All respondents received a personalised invitation email which contained a unique link to the survey. During fieldwork, 4 reminder emails were issued to encourage respondents to take part. Respondents were able to save their progress and return to the survey at a later time.

Over the course of the 4 weeks of fieldwork, a total of 4280 respondents took part (4101 registrants, 52 stakeholders and 127 students) which provides a robust sample size for analysis. The tables below provide a demographic breakdown of registrants (*Table 1*), stakeholders (Table *2*) and students (Table *3*).

Table 1. Demographic profile of registrants (weighted)

Registrants sample profile (n=4101)		
Gender	Male	22%
	Female	77%
	Prefer not to say	*1%*
Age	18-21	2%
	22-30	27%
	31-40	29%
	41-50	21%
	51-60	15%
	61-65	3%
	65+	2%
	Prefer not to say	*1%*
Type of care	NHS with private	46%
	Private with NHS	14%
	NHS only	19%
	Private only	16%
	Prefer not to say	*5%*
Role inc. dual registration *(multi-coded question)*	Dentist	34%
	Clinical Dental Technician	<1%
	Dental Hygienist	5%
	Dental Nurse	53%
	Dental Technician	5%
	Dental Therapist	4%
	Orthodontic Therapist	1%
	Other	*6%*
Practice setting	Stand-alone / single practice	40%
	Practice that is part of a group	15%
	Corporate practice	13%
	NHS Hospital	5%
	Hospital involved in teaching university students / Dental school / university	8%
	Dental Laboratory	3%
	Armed forces	1%
	Salaried primary care dental service	5%
	Other / prefer not to say	*10%*
Number of clinical operators	1	3%
	2-4	34%
	5+	54%
	Not applicable / prefer not to say / other	*9%*
Country	England	80%

	Wales	5%
	Scotland	10%
	Northern Ireland	3%
	Channel Islands	1%
	Other / prefer not to say	*2%*

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2. Demographic profile of stakeholders (unweighted)

Stakeholder sample profile (n=52)		
Gender	Male	60%
	Female	40%
Age	22-30	2%
	31-40	12%
	41-50	12%
	51-60	52%
	61-65	13%
	65+	10%
Type	Stakeholder only	60%
	Stakeholder and registrant	40%
Place of work	Health Professional Regulators	15%
	Defence Bodies	8%
	Dental Schools or Dental Schools Council	15%
	Education providers / academics	12%
	Employers	6%
	Patient groups / charities	2%
	Professional Associations	15%
	System Regulators	6%
	Government officials	2%
	NHS commissioners and agencies	4%
	Other / prefer not to say	*15%*
Country organisation represents *(multi-coded question)*	England	35%
	Wales	13%
	Scotland	15%
	Northern Ireland	6%
	All of the UK	33%
	Other	*2%*

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Stakeholder data has not been weighted as the sub-group base sizes are too small.

Table 3. Demographic profile of students (unweighted)

Student sample profile (n=127)		
Gender	Male	15%
	Female	85%
Age	18-21	20%
	22-30	57%
	31-40	18%
	41-50	5%
	51-60	1%
Year of study *(dentists-only)*	Fourth year	30%
	Fifth year	70%
Role studying for	Dentist	35%
	Dental Hygienist	8%
	Dental Nurse	30%
	Dental Technician	6%
	Dental Therapist	11%
	Orthodontic Therapist	5%
	Other	6%
Country	England	83%
	Wales	2%
	Scotland	10%
	Northern Ireland	6%

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Student data has not been weighted as the sub-group base sizes are too small.

Interpretation of the research findings

Weighting of survey data

The sample of registrants who chose to participate in the survey was broadly representative of the registrant population in terms of demographics.[4] We applied a complex weighting system to match each sample to the population profiles supplied by the GDC in terms of nation, age, gender and role. The weights were calculated for dentists and dental professionals separately since the demographics are quite distinct for these two groups.

In addition to the weighting based on demographics and role we also adjusted the sample for respondents who have dual roles – for example, registrants who are both dental hygienists and

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[4] *However, it was necessary to match the profile of the population in both the sample who completed this survey and those who completed the communications survey (see 'Perceptions Research' publication for more details on the 2nd survey).*

dental nurses count as double responses.[5] All registrant results presented in this report are based on weighted data. Data for stakeholders and students has not been weighted.

Interpreting quantitative data

Analysis has been undertaken at total sample level and by respondent type (registrants, stakeholders, students). Significant differences in views by demographics and other key sub-groups are noted in tables or text boxes where relevant, significant differences are only reported on sample sizes above 100. Significant differences are reported at a 95% confidence level.

Percentages may not always sum to 100% for a number of reasons including rounding, multi-code responses, or where only the most common answers are displayed.

As the online survey was undertaken with a sample of respondents (and not the entire population) the results are subject to sampling tolerances. However, as the response rate to the online survey was high (4280 completes) the margin of error is low. Standard error has been calculated at a 95% confidence level – this means that 95% of similar samples of registrants would report a percentage that is +/- 1.5% of the figures reported here. For example, when interpreting the results to a survey question in which all respondents answered, where 50% of respondents provided a particular answer there is a 95% chance that this result would not vary by more than +/- 1.5% (e.g. between 48.5% and 51.5%). In instances where not all respondents have answered a question, the sample size is smaller (for example with stakeholders) and hence the margin of error would increase. The table below shows the statistical reliability for the total sample size and by respondent type.

Table 4. Statistical reliability

	Sample size	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
Total	**4280**	0.9	1.37	1.5
Registrants	**4101**	0.92	1.4	1.53
Stakeholders	**52**	13.59	12.46	8.15
Students	**127**	5.22	7.97	8.7

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[5] *This additional dual-role weight adds a level of complexity which means that it is more difficult to assess the efficiency of the weighting system. We have very few respondents (3%) who have a weight >3 and the median weight is 0.92.*

Interpreting qualitative data

When interpreting data from telephone interviews, it is important to note that this data has been collected in a qualitative manner, so findings are not meant to be representative or statistically robust, but they do add depth and further insight into the results. Within the results, please assume that data is taken from the online survey unless it is explicitly stated that it is from the telephone interviews.

Main research findings

This section of the report presents the detailed research findings for the Communications Survey 2018.

The findings follow the results of the online survey, which are supported where relevant by evidence from the telephone interviews. The results of the online survey are presented in tables and charts, supported by analysis and actions where relevant. The findings from the qualitative research are illustrated by verbatim comments.

DJS Research has also supplied the GDC with a full set of data tables related to the survey. The views expressed in this report are those of DJS Research and are not necessarily shared by the General Dental Council.

Communication with GDC

Types of communication received

During the phase 1 telephone interviews, registrants and stakeholders were asked about the types of communications they currently receive from the GDC. Both registrants and stakeholders recall receiving a regular GDC newsletter. Registrants felt they mainly received communications from the GDC about Fitness to Practise (FtP) procedures or requests for annual fees – so typically communications from the GDC were viewed quite negatively or created a feeling of unease due to FtP.

*"You hear from the GDC and suddenly it's a strike of panic… You should get to know a bit more about the GDC and not just think of them as Fitness to Practise." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews***

*"Apart from your annual subscription, you don't hear anything from them occasionally you'll get a newsletter through… So if they were to contact me outside my annual retention letters I'd be panicking if a GDC letter dropped on my doorstep." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews***

*"I do (read the newsletters) but to be honest, I don't particularly enjoy reading about dentists being struck off. Sometimes you read them and somebody had done something horrific and you fully understand why they have been struck off, but other times you think 'oh gosh that could happen to anybody'" **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews***

*"The GDC Gazette comes through, I think, and that's really it. The GDC Gazette, yes, email. So, I guess it's just kind of, news from the GDC. Sometimes they put up developments, directions they're going in. Sometimes its notice of fees. Those kinds of things." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews***

Within the online survey, respondents were also asked about the types of communications they receive from the GDC (*Figure 1*). Overall the most frequently recalled communications include the newsletter, fee information and training updates. Registrants were most likely to remember receiving regular newsletters from the GDC (68%), stakeholders typically remember receiving communications from the GDC via press releases (62%), whilst students most commonly stated that they didn't receive any communications from the GDC (42%).

When looking at the split by registrant role (Table *5*), regular newsletters were the most frequently recalled communication for all roles apart from clinical dental technicians (CDTs), who mostly recall receiving communications relating to fee information and updates (71%).

Figure 1. Q14. Which of the following types of communication do you currently receive from the GDC? Base: All respondents
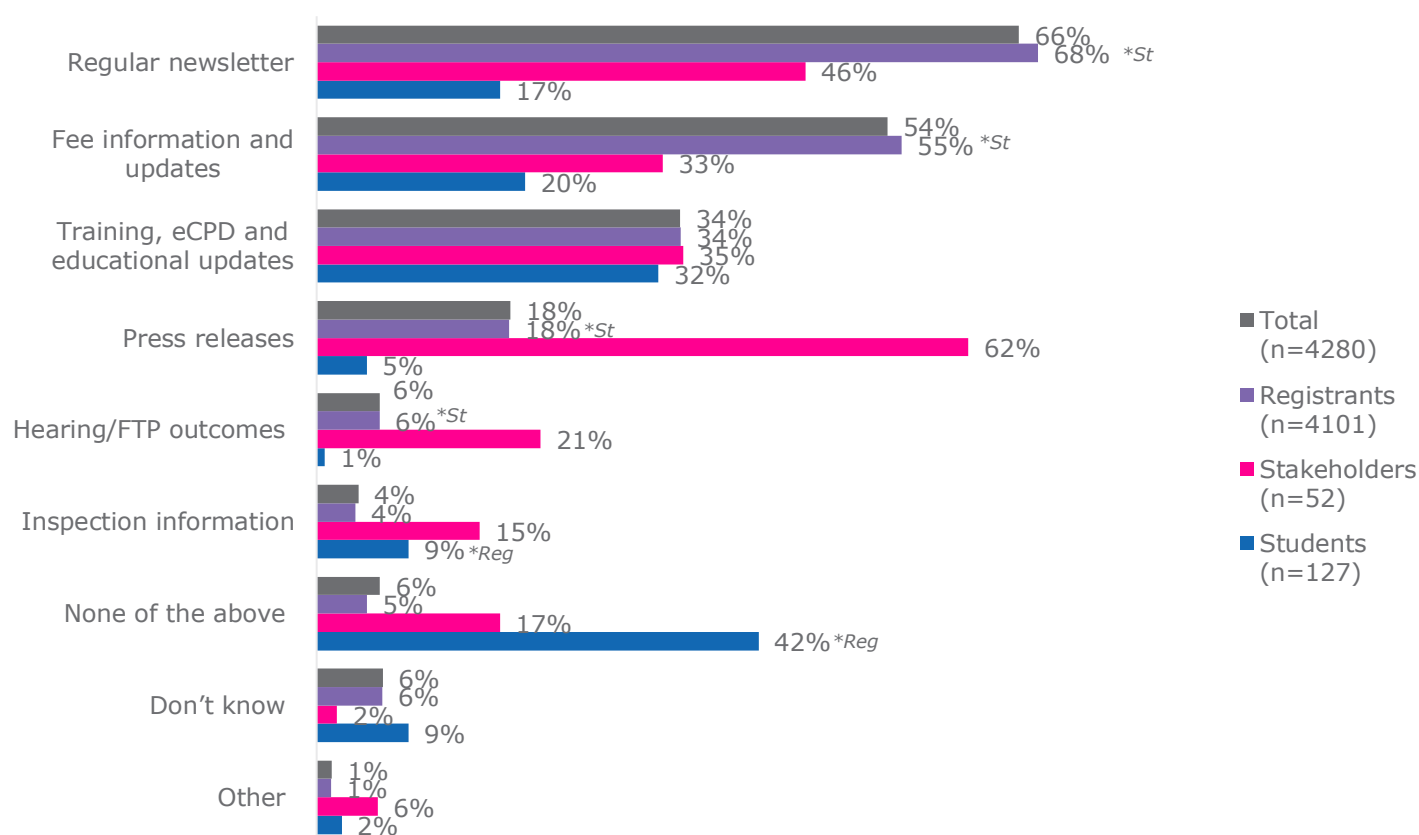
*indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg=Registrants, St=Students). Other includes (but is not limited to): Other email communications from the GDC.

Table 5. Registrants split by types of communication with the GDC – Top 3 received communication:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
Regular newsletters (67%)	Regular newsletters (72%)	Regular newsletters (78%)	Regular newsletters (56%)	Regular newsletters (66%)	Regular newsletters (75%)	Fee information & updates

						(71%)
Fee information & updates (54%)	Fee information & updates (57%)	Fee information & updates (56%)	Fee information & updates (54%)	Fee information & updates (54%)	Fee information & updates (61%)	Regular newsletters (70%)
Training, eCPD and educational updates (29%)	Training, eCPD and educational updates (27%)	Training, eCPD and educational updates (32%)	Training, eCPD and educational updates (28%)	Training, eCPD and educational updates (40%)	Training, eCPD and educational updates (35%)	Press releases 50%)

Subgroup analysis

- Stakeholders who were also registrants were more likely to recall receiving regular newsletters, compared to those who were stakeholders-only.
- Those working in a single practice are more likely to recall receiving regular newsletters compared to those in a group practice, non-teaching practice, teaching hospital, and dental laboratory. Those in the armed forces are more likely to recall receiving fee information and updates, compared to other practices.
- Respondents who work for the NHS are less likely to recall receiving regular newsletters compared to those who work privately.
- Training, eCPD and educational updates are less likely to be recalled by those who have 1 clinical operator in their work setting, compared to those who have 2 or more.

Usefulness of different types of communication

Within the online survey, the respondents who recalled receiving some form of communication from the GDC were asked how useful they found those communications (Figure *1*). Three quarters of respondents felt that each type of communication sent out by the GDC was useful. Communications on fees, QA inspections and training were the most useful types of communications.

For registrants, inspection information (90%) and training updates (90%) were the most useful and for stakeholders, inspection information (100%) and results from FtP hearings (100%) were the most useful. Students found communications relating to FtP outcomes (100%) the most useful overall. Stakeholders typically found all types of communication more useful than dentists and students. Feedback from the telephone interviews suggests that stakeholders were very happy with the content of the communications from the GDC and all felt these had improved over the last few years. Registrants were less positive, only because they felt that some communications were too heavily focused on FtP processes and outcomes.

"I think the GDC are very good at communicating and they are looking at always making sure they communicate with us and they are a key stakeholder. I think they keep improving their communication and it is not an area that I could criticise about them….I think they make every effort to make sure that all registrants are well informed with what is happening at the GDC." **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews**

"I think really apart from bulletins, I'm not sure many of the dentists sit down and read it as an avid read. I think the communications have been generally perceived negatively by the profession." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews**

Overall, each registrant role finds the different communication types useful (Table *6*). Training, CPD and education updates are typically seen as one of the most useful by all roles, as well as Hearing / FtP outcomes.

Focusing on the communications which were deemed less useful, overall press releases and the regular newsletter were the least useful communication types (Figure *2*). When looking across the 3 respondent types, registrants found the press releases least useful (22% not useful), stakeholders found fee information and updates least useful (18%) and students found the newsletter least useful (23%).

Figure 2. Q15. How useful do you find each of these types of communication from the GDC?
Base: All who receive information from the GDC n=3756 (Registrants n=3651, Stakeholders n=42, Students n=63)

Inspection information (169)

Audience	Not useful	Neutral	Useful
Total	6%		90%
Registrants	6%		90%
Stakeholders			100%
Students	9%	9%	82%

Training, CPD and educational updates (1470)

Audience	Not useful	Neutral	Useful
Total	9%		90%
Registrants	9%		90%
Stakeholders	6%		94%
Students	5%		93%

Fee information and updates (2307)

Audience	Not useful	Neutral	Useful
Total	12%		87%
Registrants	12%		87%
Stakeholders	18%		82%
Students	8%		88%

Hearing / FTP outcomes (255)

Audience	Not useful	Neutral	Useful
Total	12%		86%
Registrants	13%		85%
Stakeholders			100%
Students			100%

Regular newsletter (2839)

Audience	Not useful	Neutral	Useful
Total	19%		79%
Registrants	19%		79%
Stakeholders	17%		83%
Students	23%		77%

Press releases (784)

Audience	Not useful	Neutral	Useful
Total	21%		77%
Registrants	22%		76%
Stakeholders	6%		94%
Students	17%		83%

■Not useful   ■Neutral   ■Useful

Note: bases vary for audience type between communication types

Table 6. Registrants breakdown - usefulness of communications (NET: useful)

	Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1222)	Dental Therapist (n=136)	Dental Technician (n=182)	Dental Nurse (n= 1962)	Dental Hygienist (n=195)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=15)
Regular newsletter	79%	71%	69%	69%	84%	85%	53%
Press releases	100%	68%	86%	71%	85%	91%	55%
Training CPD and educational updates	100%	80%	82%	93%	93%	84%	100%
Inspection information	0%	88%	100%	70%	91%	100%	100%
Fee information and updates	89%	80%	95%	71%	93%	95%	82%
Hearing /FtP outcomes	100%	80%	100%	82%	90%	90%	100%

Subgroup analysis

- Those aged between 18-21 are less likely to find regular newsletters useful (72%) compared to those over 41. The same age group (18-21) are more likely to find training, CPD and educational updates most useful (98%) compared to those aged between 22-65.
- Those who have initiated contact with the GDC previously are more likely to find press releases (79%) and hearing / FtP outcomes more useful (90%) compared to those who have not initiated contact with the GDC (80%).

Communication format

During the phase 1 telephone interviews, stakeholders and registrants were asked about how the GDC communicates with them (i.e. via email, face-to-face meetings etc). Stakeholders recalled receiving regular updates via email, through face-to-face meetings, workshops and events. Registrants mainly recalled receiving communications from the GDC via email or a letter detailing an FtP case against them / a colleague. Registrants also visited the GDC website and social media for FtP information, but usually when they were directed there by a colleague for negative reasons ("see what they (GDC) have done now").

"I think I am on the regular updates which the GDC send me and that is very helpful. I think the email communication is very good by and large. I was recently over with the GDC for a

workshop; all heads of dental schools were invited to tell us about all the new specs in process and again that was very good." **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews**

"We get regular emails and updates, we get the newsletter and I know our members get the newsletter. I think they have got the message of what their role is, how they should be communicating, and what sort of media they should be using to communicate."
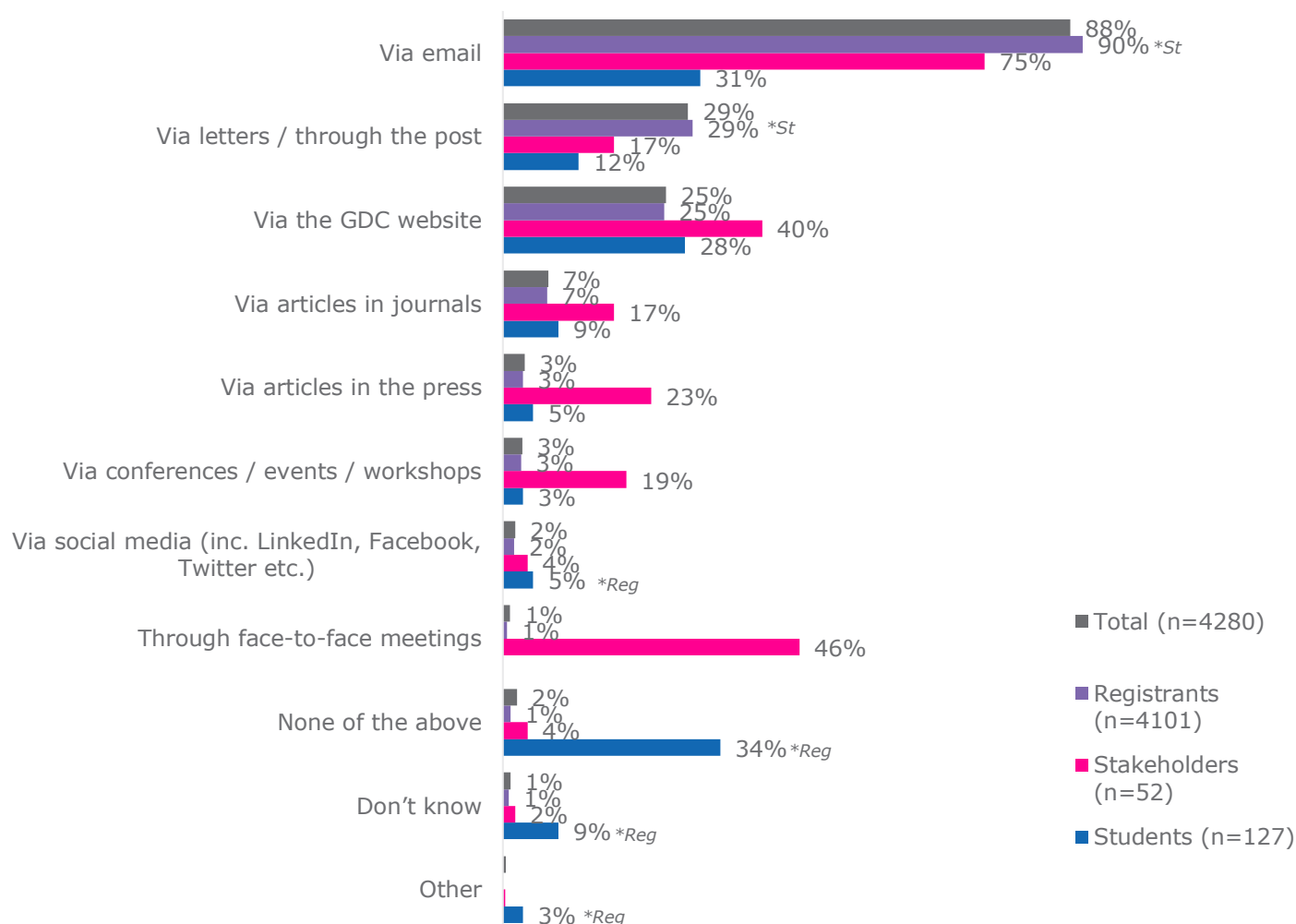**Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews**

"I do sometimes have a look on their website when people send me links to Fitness To Practise cases. That's about the only time I look on their website really. And looking at hearing outcomes and things. Basically, yes, someone sends me a link like "see what they've done now!" and I go on and feel scared. People have sent me links to things that have come out of the GDC on social media and it's been, you know, dentists who've had a Fitness to Practise hearing, they have put out on social media almost triumphantly. 'Look, we beat the dentists'." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews**

Within the online survey, respondents were asked about how the GDC communicates with them. Figure *3* shows the majority of respondents (88%) recalled being communicated with via email. For registrants (90%) and stakeholders (75%) email was the main communication method, while students most commonly stated that they don't typically receive any communications from the GDC (34%). Nearly half of stakeholders (46%) said that the GDC communicates with them through face-to-face meetings, this was much lower for registrants and students (1% and 0% respectively).

When registrants were split by role, the top 3 communication types received by all were email, letters and the GDC website (Table *7*).

Figure 3. Q16. How does the GDC typically communicate with you? Base: All respondents

Via email
- Total: 88%
- Registrants: 90% *St
- Stakeholders: 75%
- Students: 31%

Via letters / through the post
- Total: 29%
- Registrants: 29% *St
- Stakeholders: 17%
- Students: 12%

Via the GDC website
- Total: 25%
- Registrants: 25%
- Stakeholders: 40%
- Students: 28%

Via articles in journals
- Total: 7%
- Registrants: 7%
- Stakeholders: 17%
- Students: 9%

Via articles in the press
- Total: 3%
- Registrants: 3%
- Stakeholders: 23%
- Students: 5%

Via conferences / events / workshops
- Total: 3%
- Registrants: 3%
- Stakeholders: 19%
- Students: 3%

Via social media (inc. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc.)
- Total: 2%
- Registrants: 2%
- Stakeholders: 4%
- Students: 5% *Reg

Through face-to-face meetings
- Total: 1%
- Registrants: 1%
- Stakeholders: 46%

None of the above
- Total: 2%
- Registrants: 1%
- Stakeholders: 4%
- Students: 34% *Reg

Don't know
- Total: 1%
- Registrants: 1%
- Stakeholders: 2%
- Students: 9% *Reg

Other
- Students: 3% *Reg

Legend:
- Total (n=4280)
- Registrants (n=4101)
- Stakeholders (n=52)
- Students (n=127)

*indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St=Students). Other includes via academic staff / uni.

Table 7. Registrants breakdown on top 3 most received communication from the GDC:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
Email (75%)	Email (89%)	Email (91%)	Email (88%)	Email (91%)	Email (93%)	Email (100%)
Letters/post (46%)	Letters/post (30%)	Letters/post (36%)	Letters/post (39%)	Letters/post (28%)	Letters/post (36%)	GDC website (46%)
GDC website (39%)	GDC website (25%)	GDC website (29%)	GDC website (21%)	GDC website (25%)	GDC website (29%)	Letters/post (29%)

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged 18-21 were significantly less likely to recall receiving communications from the GDC via email compared to all other age groups. Those aged 61+ were significantly more likely to recall receiving communications via articles in the press, compared to those under 61.
- CDTs were more likely to recall communicating with the GDC through face-to-face meetings compared to all other registrant roles, while orthodontic therapists were least likely to recall communication via email.
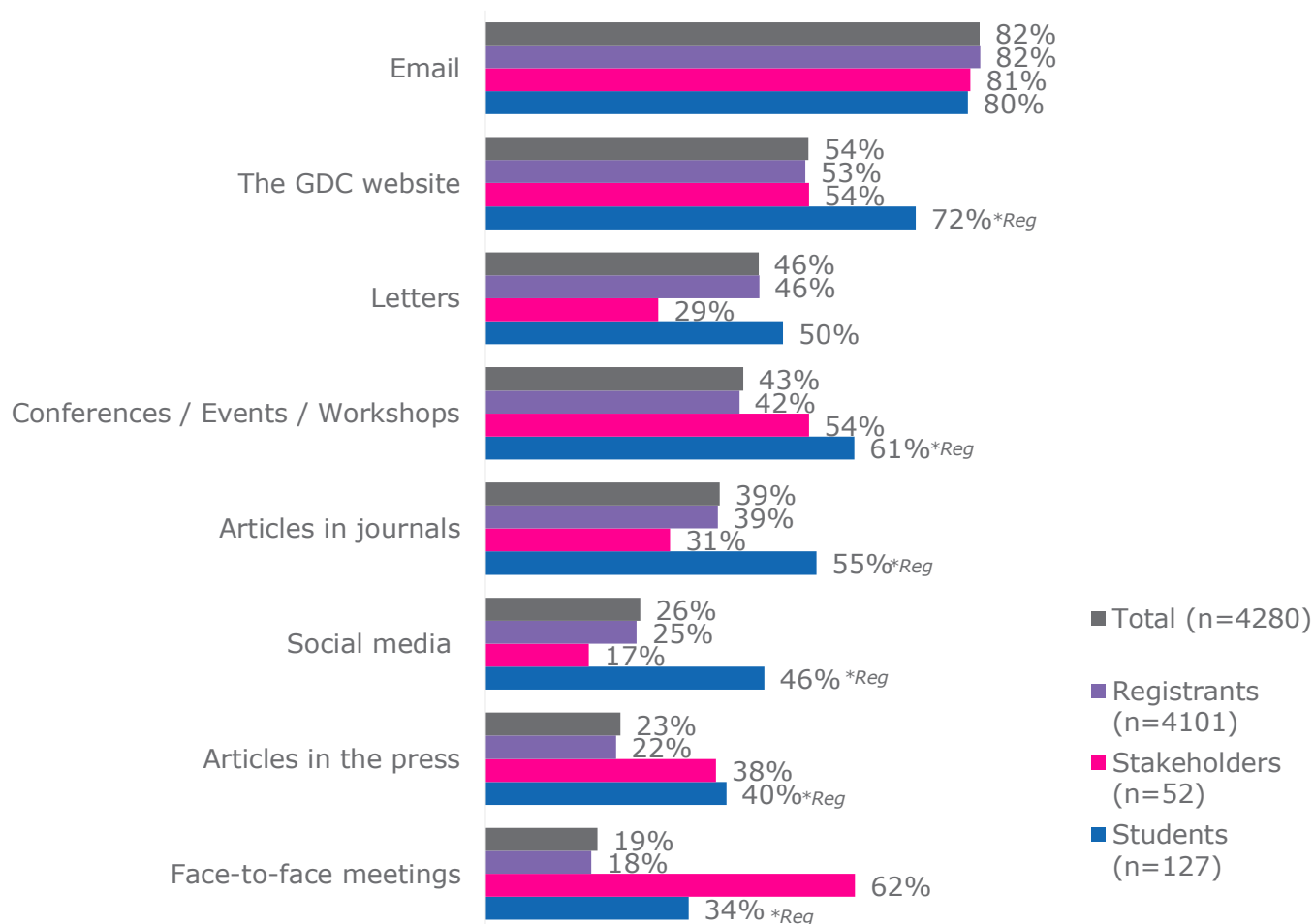
Communication preferences

Respondents were asked to rate each communication type from definitely not a preference, to strongly preferred (Figure *4*). Overall, email was the top most preferred communication type (82%), with the GDC website the second (53%) and letters third (46%). For registrants, the most preferred method of communication was via email (82%) and the GDC website (54%), for stakeholders it was email (81%) and face-to-face meetings (62%).

For students, the most preferred method of communication was email (80%) and the GDC website (72%). Students were also significantly more likely to prefer communication via the GDC website (72%), conferences (61%), journals (55%), social media (46%), the press (40%) and face-to-face (34%) compared to registrants. Email was also the most preferred communication type to receive by all registrants' roles.

Figure 4. Q17. Please rate your preference for receiving information via each of the following:
Base: All respondents

	Email	The GDC website	Letters	Conferences / Events / Workshops	Articles in journals	Social media	Articles in the press	Face-to-face meetings
Total (n=4280)	82%	54%	46%	43%	39%	26%	23%	19%
Registrants (n=4101)	82%	53%	46%	42%	39%	25%	22%	18%
Stakeholders (n=52)	81%	54%	29%	54%	31%	17%	38%	62%
Students (n=127)	80%	72% *Reg	50%	61% *Reg	55% *Reg	46% *Reg	40% *Reg	34% *Reg

*indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants)

Table 8. Registrants split by preferred types of communication– Top 3 preferred:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
Email (63%)	Email (84%)	Email (86%)	Email (80%)	Email (82%)	Email (86%)	Email (100%)
Letters (50%)	Letters (47%)	GDC website (59%)	Letters (49%)	GDC website (59%)	Conferences /events /workshops (64%)	Letters (91%)
GDC website (40%)	GDC website (45%)	Conferences /events /workshops (58%)	Conferences /events /workshops (44%) GDC website (44%)	Letters (45%)	GDC website (58%)	Conferences /events /workshops (68%)

> **Subgroup analysis:**
> - Those aged 18-21 were more likely to prefer communications via social media compared to all other age groups, and significantly less likely to prefer communications via letters. This younger age group was also significantly more likely to prefer face-to-face meetings compared to all other age groups.

During the phase 1 telephone interviews, respondents were asked what improvements they would like to see to GDC communications. Registrants would like to see emails which are more succinct and are written in plain English, as some found them confusing. Registrants would also like to see fewer negative topics covered, so rather than focusing on FtP "successes" (which can instil a feeling of fear in dentists / DPs), they could focus on other things like educational or professional development opportunities (e.g. updates and trends in the sector).

"I'll be honest with you I think the GDC always word things in a tricky to understand manner in my opinion, instead of clear English." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews**

"To be honest the GDC newsletter doesn't interest me greatly which is probably why I have not missed receiving it over the last few months. I'd would like to see things that increase my knowledge about different subjects. I'm registered with the British Society of Palaeontology, what they publish is a bit more interesting. And going onto specific courses from the local deanery, that's how I get the information that I need, I don't think the GDC provide me with anything like that." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews**

Stakeholders mentioned that they would like to see more targeted communications which are only sent to the most relevant people, e.g. if the GDC want feedback on education, speaking specifically to heads of dental schools and not sending out to all databases. Both registrants and stakeholders would like to see the GDC engaging face-to-face with working dental professionals, as well as stakeholders and students, rather than communicating indirectly via emails and articles.

"I do think that being on the road more, which is what they are trying to do, is important. I think getting out and meeting the key stakeholders in the four UK countries is a very important thing. Communication is not just about sending emails and letters and things like that; it is about getting out and meeting people and doing that. Although, I appreciate that they have got a lot of things to do and it is not always easy to do that." **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews**

"I think they are trying, it's just they need to get more out there, for the profession in general, that they are working with all the stakeholders; and that they know that because I don't think that they do know that. I think maybe shouting out a little bit more about 'we are doing this'; showing what they do and that they're working with stakeholders in various means." **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews**

"I really hate to criticise them too much but there is no doubt that sometimes we are all very busy people and I think sometimes they may wish to be a little more targeted in the way they do consult and communicate with people. Sometimes it might be for example if they are doing something about education, while I think it is important that they allow all dentists to have a view on undergraduate education. I think that they might wish to say right we are particularly pleased to hear from all the heads of dental schools about this. I do think there is a value in asking people who deliver, not all the other dentists, 27,000 of them in the UK."
Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews

Respondents would also like the GDC to use more varied styles of communication as email updates aren't always read and can feel a little tired. For example, consistent messaging which spans a variety of communication channels (emails, social media, publications etc) would be beneficial to get across more positive messages about how the GDC is working to make improvements.

"A different and varied approach to getting their message out and repeating it. If you get a lot of emails, you probably miss something, but if its repeated enough times in the right time frame, it eventually gets picked up. I follow the GDC on twitter and it's rare to see them tweeting anything apart from one off when a report comes out or maybe if there's a consultation that is on-going." **Registrant, phase 1 interviews**
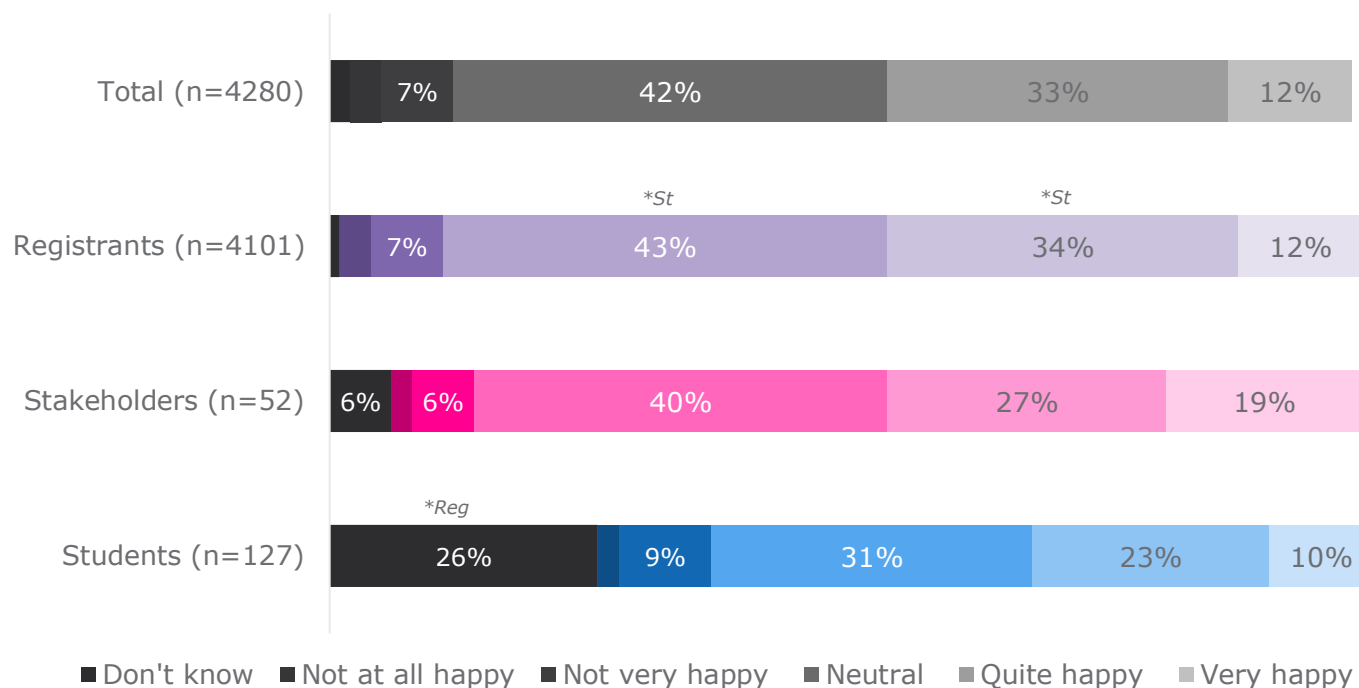
Frequency of communications

In the phase 1 telephone interviews, stakeholders were generally quite happy with the level of communication they had with the GDC – typically feeling well informed and up-to-date. Registrants were also quite happy with the frequency and wouldn't want to hear more from the GDC. This is because registrants appear to typically associate any communication from the GDC as negative (FtP), so hearing from the GDC more would indicate they had done something wrong.

In the online survey, respondents were asked how happy they were with the current level of communications they receive from the GDC, from not at all happy, to very happy (*Figure 5*). Overall, 45% of respondents were happy with the frequency of communications and only 10% were unhappy. A total of 46% of registrants and stakeholders, and 33% of students, were happy with the frequency. Just over a quarter of students couldn't provide an answer about frequency.

When split by role, opinions differed. The majority of orthodontic therapists were happy with the frequency of communications, while just over half of dental therapists, dental nurses and dental hygienists were happy. Less than half of dentists, dental technicians and CDTs were happy with the current frequency of communications they receive, with CDTs being the least happy.

Figure 5. Q18a. To what extent are you happy with the frequency of communications? Base: All respondents

*indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St = Students)

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Table 9. Happiness with frequency of communications by registrant role (NET: Happy):

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
79%	29%	55%	37%	56%	54%	20%

Subgroup analysis:

- Dentists were significantly less likely to be 'very happy' with the current frequency of communication compared to all other DPs.
- Those who have initiated contact with the GDC before were significantly more likely to be unhappy about their current frequency of communication from the GDC, compared to those who have not initiated contact with the GDC.

The minority of respondents (10%) who were not happy with the frequency of communications were asked if they would prefer more frequent or less frequent communications (Figure *6Figure 6*).

The results show that most (72%) wish to receive more frequent communications from the GDC. The same is true when looking across the respondent types, with 71% of registrants and

100% of student and stakeholders preferring more frequent contact from the GDC. This is in contrast to the findings from the telephone interviews which suggested that registrants, in particular, would not want to hear from the GDC more frequently. When we dig a little deeper to understand this, registrants would like to see more information about different topics, such as standards and guidelines, or new topics rather than more frequent communications with the same content included as at present.

When split by registrant role (Table *10*), most would like to receive more communications, with 100% of both orthodontic therapists and CDTs wanting the frequency to increase.

Figure 6. Q18b. Would you like to hear from the GDC more or less frequently? Base: All who are not happy with frequency of contact
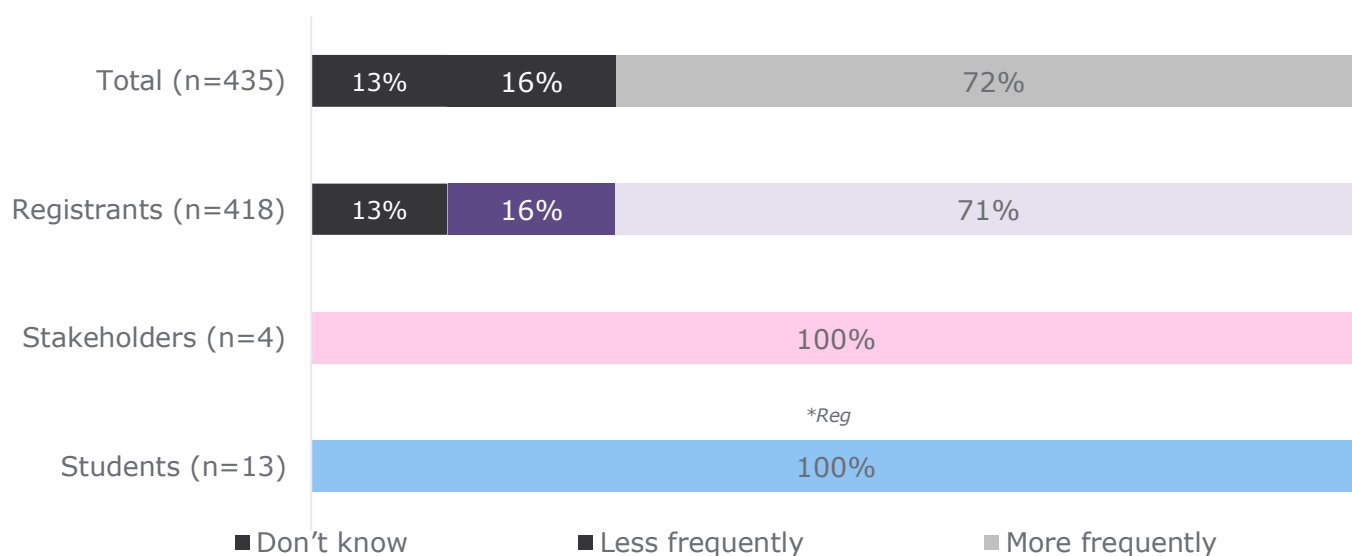
indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St = Students)

Table 10. Registrants' split by more or less frequent communications required

	Orthodontic Therapist (n=1)	Dentist (n=212)	Dental Therapist (n=16)	Dental Technician (n=35)	Dental Nurse (n=146)	Dental Hygienist (n=17)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=5)
More frequently	100%	66%	81%	73%	78%	68%	100%
Less frequently	0%	19%	7%	12%	12%	21%	0%

Likelihood of opening emails

The respondents who receive emails from the GDC were asked how often they open such emails (Figure *7*). Overall, the majority of respondents either 'often' (23%) or 'always' (50%) open the emails they receive from the GDC. Stakeholders were the most likely group to always open the emails from the GDC (69%), followed by registrants (50%) and finally students (41%).

Looking at registrants by role (Table *11*), orthodontic therapists were the most likely to always open emails they receive from the GDC (68%) while CDTs were the least likely (27%) to.

Figure 7. Q19. How often do you open the emails you receive from the GDC? Base: All who receive emails
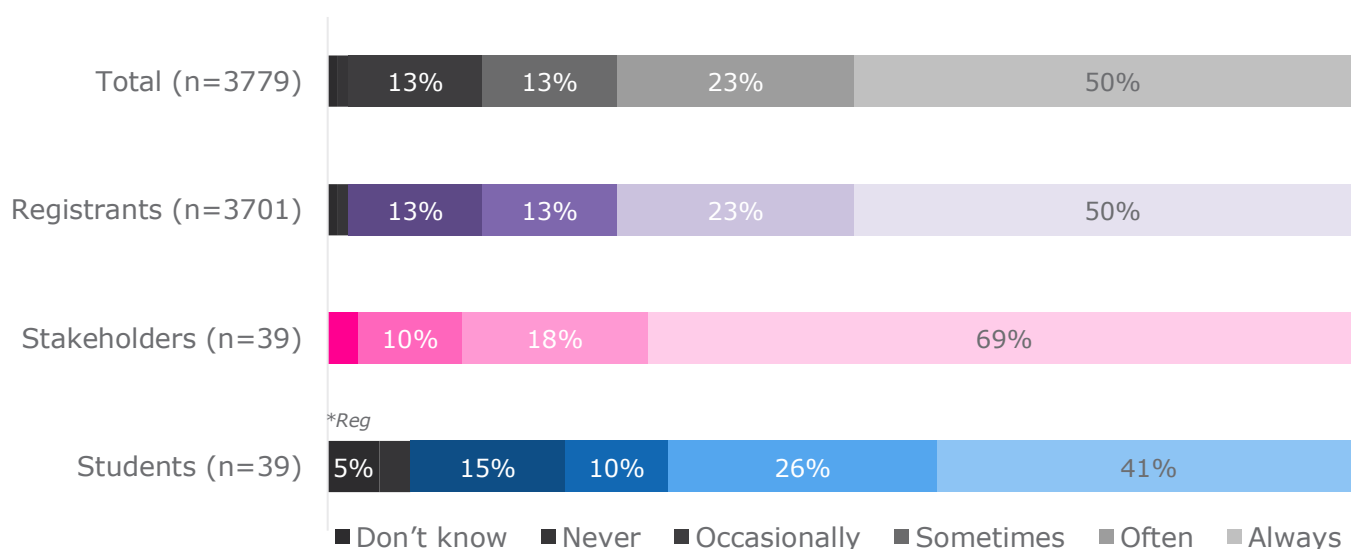
indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants).

Table 11. Registrants split by opening of emails– % who always open emails:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=18)	Dentist (n=1232)	Dental Therapist (n=134)	Dental Technician (n=196)	Dental Nurse (n=1983)	Dental Hygienist (n=195)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
68%	48%	50%	54%	52%	56%	27%

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged 18-21 were significantly more likely to open the emails they receive only sometimes, compared to all other age groups; while those over 65 were significantly more likely to always open the emails compared to 18-50 year-olds.
- Those who rarely or never visit the GDC website were significantly more likely to never open the emails they receive, compared to those who visit the website occasionally or regularly.
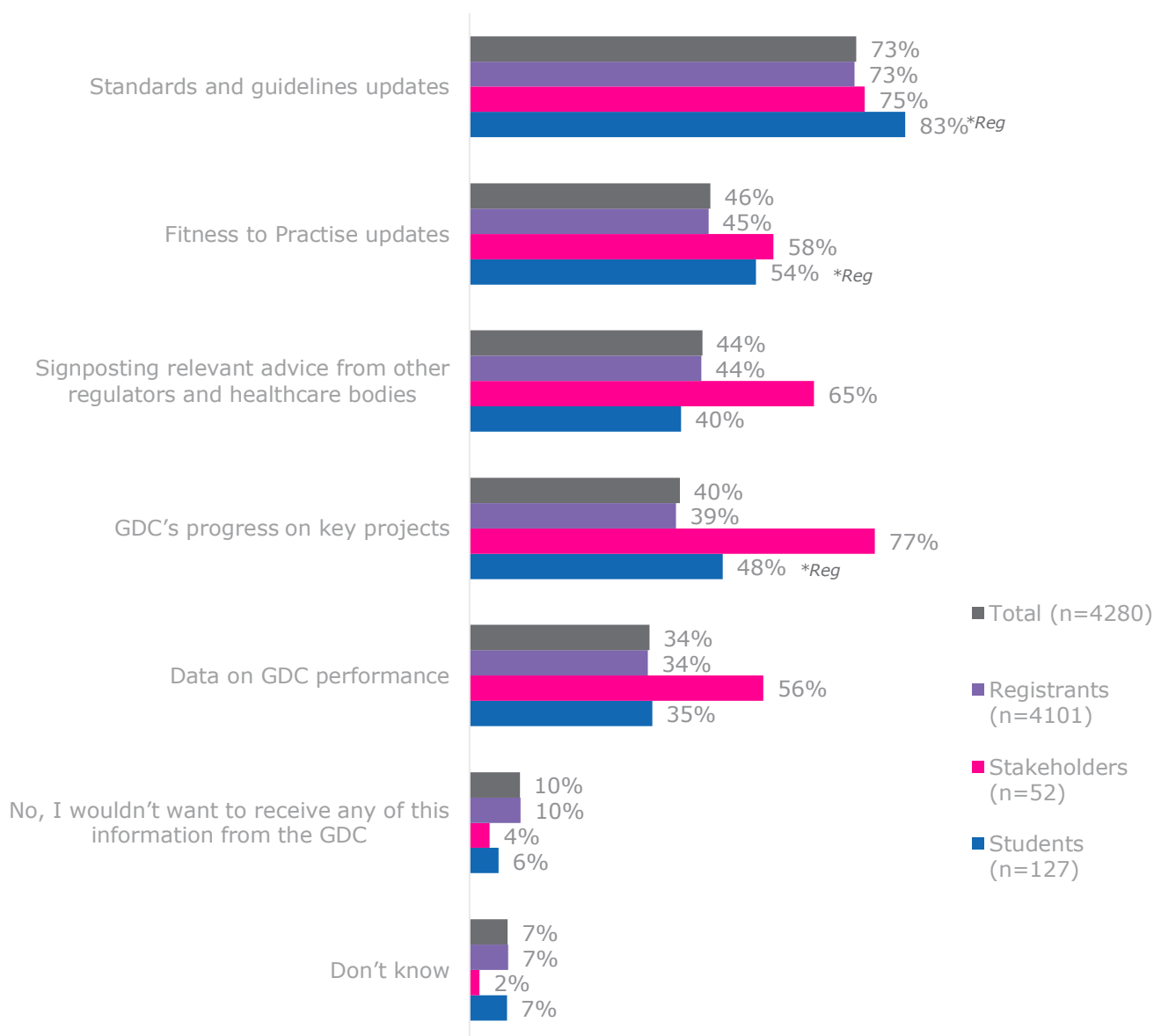
Desired communications from the GDC

Respondents were presented with a list of topics and were asked whether they would like to receive further communications on these topics (Figure *8*). Overall, respondents were most likely to want to receive information about standards and guidelines updates. When looking at differences across respondent types, both registrants (73%) and students (83%) would most like to receive standards and guidelines updates, while stakeholders would most like to receive information about the GDC's progress on key projects (77%). Receiving data on the GDC's performance was the least desired by all respondent types. Only a small proportion (10%) do not want to receive any of these types of information from the GDC.

When looking across the different registrant roles, standards and guidelines updates were the most commonly selected (Table *12*), with the exception of CDTs who most commonly selected Fitness to Practise updates.

Figure 8. Q24.Would you like to receive any of the following (% Yes)? Base: All respondents

Standards and guidelines updates
- 73%
- 73%
- 75%
- 83%*Reg*

Fitness to Practise updates
- 46%
- 45%
- 58%
- 54% *Reg*

Signposting relevant advice from other regulators and healthcare bodies
- 44%
- 44%
- 65%
- 40%

GDC's progress on key projects
- 40%
- 39%
- 77%
- 48% *Reg*

Data on GDC performance
- 34%
- 34%
- 56%
- 35%

No, I wouldn't want to receive any of this information from the GDC
- 10%
- 10%
- 4%
- 6%

Don't know
- 7%
- 7%
- 2%
- 7%

Legend:
- ■ Total (n=4280)
- ■ Registrants (n=4101)
- ■ Stakeholders (n=52)
- ■ Students (n=127)

indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants)

Subgroup analysis:

- 18-21-year olds were significantly more likely to not want to receive any of the information suggested, compared to all other age groups. The same age group was also significantly less likely to want to receive any data on GDC performance.
- Those who visit the GDC website regularly were significantly more likely to want to receive updates on standard and guidelines, compared to those who don't visit regularly.
- Dental technicians were less likely to want to receive standards and guidelines updates compared to all other registrants.

Table 12. Most preferred contact topic split by registrant role:

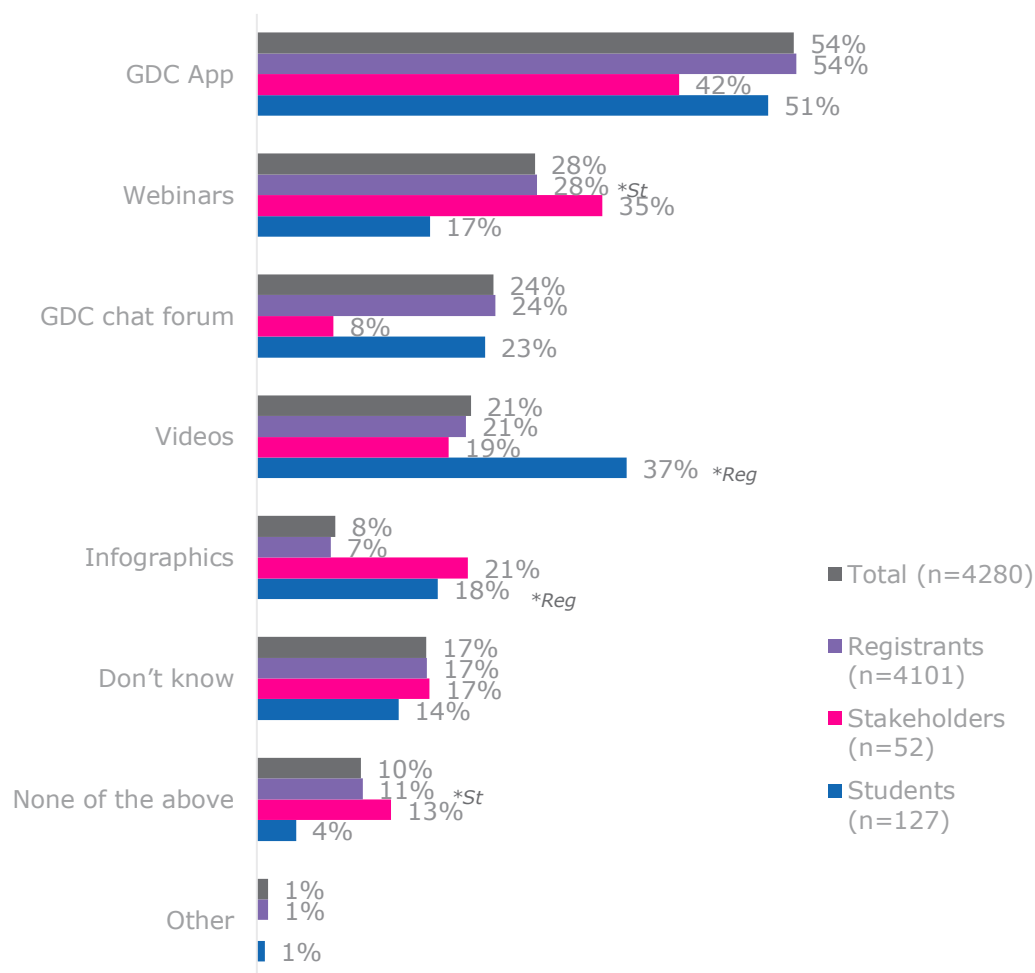| Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
Standards and guidelines updates (91%)	Standards and guidelines updates (79%)	Standards and guidelines updates (83%)	Standards and guidelines updates (58%)	Standards and guidelines updates (70%)	Standards and guidelines updates (81%)	Fitness to Practise updates (78%)
Signposting relevant advice (71%)	Signposting relevant advice (55%)	Signposting relevant advice (63%)	Fitness to Practise updates (39%)	Fitness to Practise updates (43%)	Signposting relevant advice (64%)	Standards and guidelines updates (71%)
Fitness to Practise updates (57%)	Fitness to Practise updates (48%)	Fitness to Practise updates (59%)	GDC's progress on key projects (36%)	Signposting relevant advice (36%)	Fitness to Practise updates (59%)	Signposting relevant advice (61%)

Future communication formats from the GDC

Respondents were provided with a list of different communication formats and asked whether they think the GDC should consider using them (Figure *9*). The most popular communication format that registrants (54%), stakeholders (42%) and students (51%) believe the GDC should consider is a GDC app. The second most common was videos for students (37%), while registrants (28%) and stakeholders (35%) both selected webinars. Only 10% of all respondents felt that the GDC should not consider any of these new formats.

When looking across the registrant roles, the GDC app was consistently the most favoured (Table *13*), however, the second most desired option differed across the various roles. Dentists (33%), dental therapists (54%) and dental hygienists (55%) all chose webinars, while orthodontic therapists (43%) and CDTs (49%) chose a GDC chat forum. Dental technicians were the only role to have selected video as one of the top 2 desired communication formats (29%).

Figure 9. Q25.Which of the following do you think the GDC should also consider using? Base: All respondents

indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St = Students) Other includes (but is not limited to): Anonymous online forum / open chat, seminars, workshops and a GDC magazine

Table 13. Registrant role – top 2 most preferred communication formats:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
GDC App (93%) *all others*	GDC App (55%)	GDC App (60%)	GDC App (56%)	GDC App (61%)	GDC App (61%)	GDC App (55%)
GDC chat forum (43%)	Webinars (33%)	Webinars (54%)	Videos (29%)	GDC chat forum (28%)	Webinars (55%)	GDC chat forum (49%)
Webinars (42%)	Videos (21%)	GDC chat forum (31%)	GDC chat forum (25%)	Webinars (23%)	GDC chat forum (30%)	Videos (42%)

Subgroup analysis:

- Ages 18-30 were significantly more likely to think the GDC should provide videos compared to all other age groups, while 18-21 year-olds were significantly less likely to want the GDC to provide webinars compared to those aged between 31-60.
- Generally, interest in videos, GDC app and a GDC chat forum declined as age increased.
- International respondents were significantly more likely to suggest the use of videos, compared to those in Wales, Scotland and Channel Islands.
- Dentists were significantly less likely to suggest the use of a GDC chat forum compared to other DPs.

Actions for the GDC

- The GDC is currently communicating with its key audiences in their most preferred formats (email, letter and via the website). However, more face-to-face contact with registrants, stakeholders and students through discussion groups would be welcomed.
- There is an opportunity to influence registrants' perceptions that the GDC is only in contact for negative reasons by communicating about other topics apart from FtP and the annual renewal fee. This could include more communications about opportunities for professional development and trends in the sector.
- Students were the most likely group to believe that they don't receive any communications from the GDC. There is an opportunity to open up more direct communication channels with students from the outset of their course. This will help to increase familiarity and awareness of the GDC at an early stage in a dental professional's career.
- Generally, communications from the GDC are considered to be useful. The most useful are inspection information and information on education and training. The least useful are the regular newsletter and press releases. Increasing communications about the most useful topics would help to change perceptions that the GDC is only in contact in negative circumstances.
- Younger age groups are the least interested in the regular GDC newsletters. Interest in the newsletter could be increased by changing the style to be more interactive, including video content, or considering using other channels, such as apps, to communicate with those in younger age groups.
- There is interest in new formats and styles of communication, in particular a GDC app. This would be another way in which the GDC could further open up communication channels with registrants, students and stakeholders.

Review of the GDC website

Frequency of visiting the GDC website

Respondents were asked about their frequency of use of the GDC website (Table *14*). At a total level, respondents were generally visiting the GDC website between a few times a month and a few times a year. Registrants (38%) and students (31%) most commonly visit the website a few times each year, while stakeholders most commonly visit the GDC website a few times each month (27%). Only 2% of respondents have no intention of visiting the site at all, and students are significantly more likely (15%) to have not visited the site (but do intend to) compared to registrants (1%).

OTs were the most likely registrant group to visit the GDC website frequently. A total of 35% visited the website a few times a month, while all other roles tended to only visit the GDC website a few times each year.

Table 14. Q20. How often do you visit the GDC website? Base: All respondents

	Total (4280)	Registrant (4101)	Stakeholder (52)	Student (127)
On a daily basis	0%	0%	10%	0%
A couple of times each week	1%	1%	6%	2%
Once a week	2%	2%	8%	2%
A few times each month	**17%**	**16%**	**27%**	**26%** *Reg*
A few times each quarter	**21%**	**21%** *St*	**19%**	12%
A few times each year	**38%**	**38%**	**12%**	**31%**
Once a year	12%	12% *St*	10%	4%
Less than once a year	4%	4%	6%	4%
I haven't visited at all, but intend to	2%	1%	2%	**15%** *Reg*
I don't visit the GDC website at all and do not intend to	2%	2%	2%	2%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	2%

indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St = Students)

Table 15. Frequency of visiting the GDC website by registrant role:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
A few times a month (35%)	A few times each year (45%)	A few times each year (40%)	A few times each year (29%)	A few times each year (35%)	A few times each year (41%)	A few times each quarter / a few times a year / less than once a year (all 19%)

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged over 65 were more likely to have not visited the GDC website and have no intention to do so in the future (7%), compared to all other age groups.
- Those who have not initiated contact with the GDC were significantly more likely to have not visited the website, but do intend to do so in the future (3%).

Reasons for visiting the GDC website

Those who previously stated that they have visited the GDC website were asked what their reason was for doing so (Figure *10*). Overall the top 3 reasons were:

- To pay the annual renewal fee (ARF)
- For education
- To update details

The top reason differs between the respondent types, registrants mostly visit the site to pay their ARF (73%) and for education (55%), while stakeholders mostly visit the site to search the registers (56%) and for standards / guidance (54%) and students mainly use the site for standards and guidance (68%) and for education (56%).

When looking at the differences across registrant role, most claim that the main reason why they visit the GDC website is to pay their ARF (Table *16*); however orthodontic therapists and CDTs say that their main reason for visiting the website is for educational or CPD reasons.

Figure 10. Q21a.Why do you visit the GDC website? Base: All who visit the website
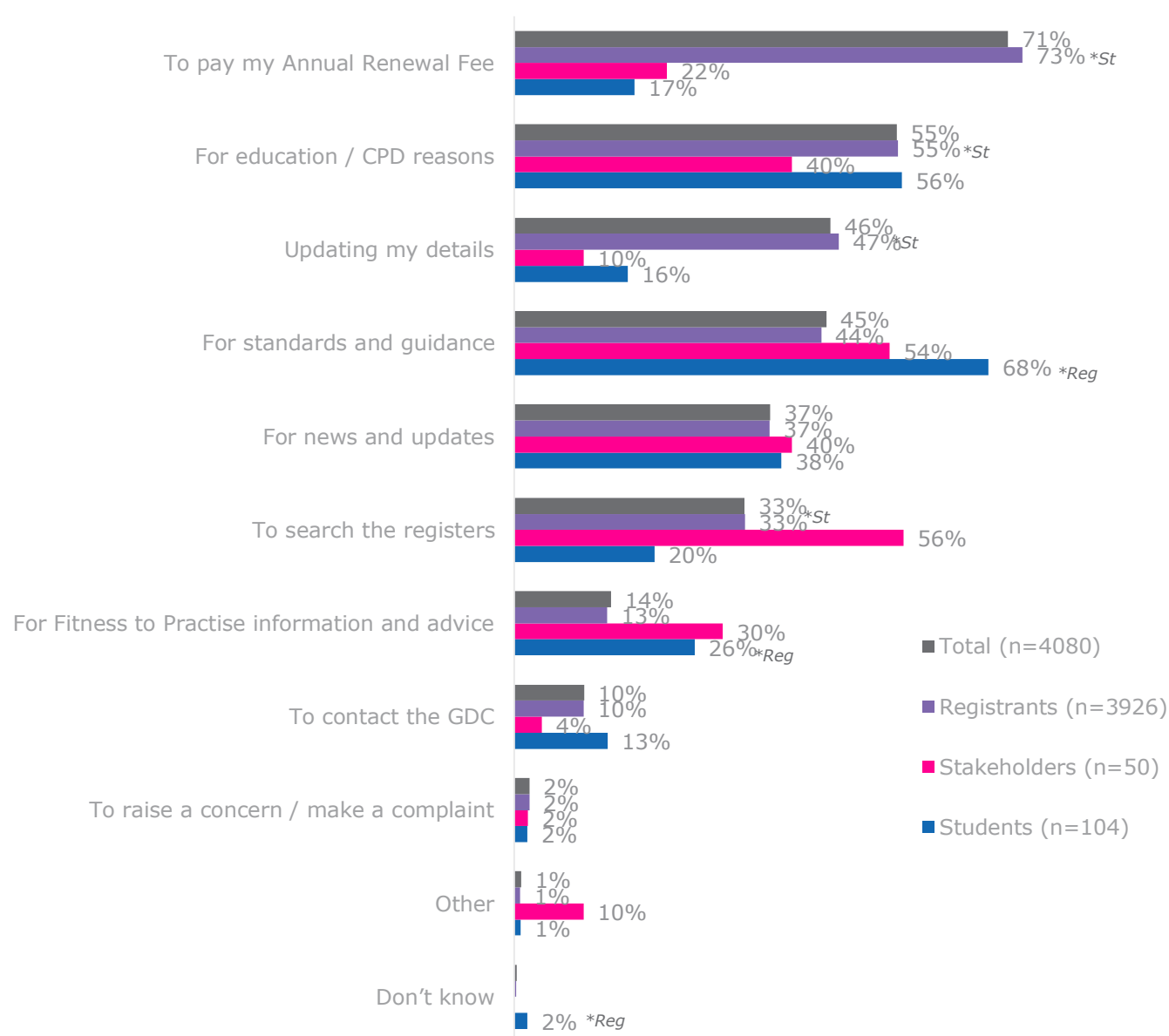
To pay my Annual Renewal Fee
- 71%
- 73% *St
- 22%
- 17%

For education / CPD reasons
- 55%
- 55% *St
- 40%
- 56%

Updating my details
- 46%
- 47% *St
- 10%
- 16%

For standards and guidance
- 45%
- 44%
- 54%
- 68% *Reg

For news and updates
- 37%
- 37%
- 40%
- 38%

To search the registers
- 33%
- 33% *St
- 56%
- 20%

For Fitness to Practise information and advice
- 14%
- 13%
- 30%
- 26% *Reg

To contact the GDC
- 10%
- 10%
- 4%
- 13%

To raise a concern / make a complaint
- 2%
- 2%
- 2%
- 2%

Other
- 1%
- 1%
- 10%
- 1%

Don't know
- 2% *Reg

Legend:
- Total (n=4080)
- Registrants (n=3926)
- Stakeholders (n=50)
- Students (n=104)

indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St = Students) Other includes: Hearing updates / outcomes and updating CPD records.

Table 16. Registrant roles split by reason for visiting the GDC website – most common reason for visiting (%).

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1308)	Dental Therapist (n=142)	Dental Technician (n=210)	Dental Nurse (n=2099)	Dental Hygienist (n=205)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
For education / CPD reasons (86%)	To pay ARF (70%)	To pay ARF (84%)	To pay ARF (73%)	To pay ARF (74%)	To pay ARF (82%)	For education / CPD reasons (66%)

To pay ARF (76%)	For education / CPD reasons (50%)	For standards and guidance (55%)	Updating my details (47%)	For education / CPD reasons (59%)	For education / CPD reasons (60%)	To pay ARF (60%)
Updating my details (74%)	Updating my details / for standards and guidance (43%)	Updating my details (50%)	For education / CPD reasons (46%)	Updating my details (49%)	For standards and guidance (57%)	To search the registers (58%)

> **Subgroup analysis:**
> - Those aged 18-21 or over 65 were significantly more likely to visit the GDC website for news and updates compared to all other age groups. Those aged 65+ were also significantly more likely to use the website for FtP advice.
> - Dentists were significantly less likely to use the GDC website for news and updates compared to all other DPs.

Those who had not visited the website (4% of all respondents) were asked why that was. The main reasons for not visiting the website included a lack of interest in the content, the website is not considered relevant or useful, and also it is difficult to navigate and log-in to.

Usefulness of the GDC website

During the phase 1 telephone interviews, registrants and stakeholders were asked about their views on the GDC website. One stakeholder said they found the website to be "opaque" and difficult to use and navigate, particularly finding documents could be a "nightmare". Feedback from registrants was the same. They reported that they often found the site difficult to navigate, to log-in to and also reported that the tone can come across as "anti-dentist".

> *"I use their website all the time but their website is famously opaque and it is a nightmare trying to find anything on it. Even though they have got this new website it is still not very good. It is really difficult to find anything; you have to know where it is before you go on there because even if you put something in the search engine you can't find it and then you will talk to a member of staff and they will send you a link and it isn't like it was on the website. The GMC website is much better."* **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews**

> *"Easier log on. A more obvious menu to get to ARF and eCPD information. Also, the site needs to be more intuitive and user friendly, and have a friendlier feel to it. We should feel the GDC is working with us to maintain standards not waiting to pounce if things do go wrong."* **Registrant, phase 1 telephone interviews**

In the online survey, respondents who have used the GDC website were asked to rate how useful they find the site (Figure *11*). The majority of all respondents said that they find the site useful, with 55% of registrants, 54% of stakeholders, and 48% of students all stating that they

find the site fairly useful, and 29% of registrants, 22% of stakeholders, and 45% of students finding it very useful.

When looking at the registrants split by role (Table *17*); dental hygienists were most likely to find the site useful (93%), while CDTs were the least likely to find the site useful (71%).
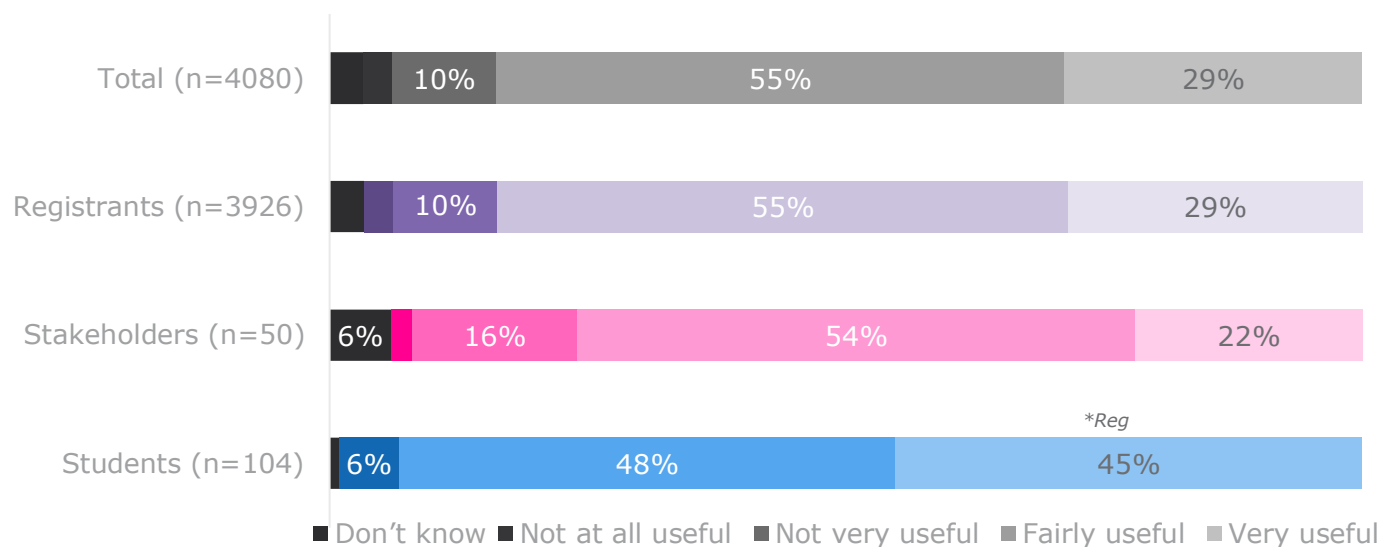

Figure 11. Q22. How useful do you find the GDC website? Base: All who visit the website

indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants)

Table 17. Registrant role by usefulness of the GDC website (Fairly / very useful)

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1308)	Dental Therapist (n=142)	Dental Technician (n=210)	Dental Nurse (n=2099)	Dental Hygienist (n=205)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
57% Fairly useful	60% Fairly useful	58% Fairly useful	48% Fairly useful	53% Fairly useful	56% Fairly useful	65% Fairly useful
23% Very useful	15% Very useful	34% Very useful	24% Very useful	37% Very useful	37% Very useful	6% Very useful

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged 18-21 were significantly more likely to find the GDC website very useful compared to all other age groups. As age increases, the perceived usefulness of the GDC website decreases.
- Those who regularly or occasionally visit the website, were significantly more likely to find it useful, compared to those who rarely or never visit the site.

In the online survey, respondents were asked about how the GDC website could be improved. Suggested improvements include easier log in (with many saying they struggle to log in as the site consistently asks for updated details), simpler / clearer language which is easier to navigate and with an improved search tool. A more interactive webpage is also desired which would allow registrants to chat with each other or leave comments / concerns. Given the recent changes to CPD, registrants would like to be able to log-on to a GDC portal, where they would find approved CPD courses, and could also track hours and their progress. Stakeholders would like to see more consolidated data, for example FtP data which is consolidated over the last 5 years similar to that available on the GMC's website.

"Now that ECPD is a requirement I really feel that GDC should have its own portal for us to log our progress and not rely on 3rd party companies to do this. It seems silly that we have to record how many hours ECPD we do via the website but have no way of tracking our own progress and having our own place for collecting all the information you demand of us within the GDC website" **Registrant, online survey feedback**

"For example (the GMC) they have a page that is all their Fitness to Practise data and then it is all broken down into links underneath; but what they also do on their Fitness to Practise data when they present it, they give you the comparative data; so, you can go back and have a look at 2012 data. I think they do it for the last five years. They pull it out and pre-empt what it is you want to do with the data and it is good data." **Stakeholder, phase 1 interview**

Actions for the GDC

- Most respondents had used the GDC website and they typically find it useful when they do use it, but the GDC website is not frequently used by registrants or students (mainly using it a few times a year when they really have to) and it also can be difficult to navigate around. Registrants mainly use it for administrative tasks (e.g. paying ARF, updating their details etc) and so aren't engaging or interacting with the website at present.
- To increase usage of the website, the GDC could improve its usability with better navigation and search functions. Also, inclusion of more engaging content (for example, increase the amount of CPD content available) and making it more interactive would increase engagement with the website rather than individuals using it mainly for transaction purposes, as at present.

Respondent-led contact

Initiating contact with the GDC

During the phase 1 telephone interviews, stakeholders and registrants were asked about any interactions they had initiated with the GDC. Stakeholders felt that email communications were typically initiated by the GDC, whereas phone calls were usually initiated by themselves (the stakeholder). One stakeholder mentioned that they had difficulties getting through to the GDC and would often call multiple times before getting through. Of the registrants we spoke to, none had initiated contact with the GDC.

*"I would say it is maybe about once a month, a phone call or an email or something like that. Then from time to time they will contact me. It is more often I contact them." **Stakeholders, phase 1 interviews***

*"Emails, phone calls and meetings. It is very difficult getting people on the phone which is a shame really because you could do more things on the phone and not have meetings and it is a bit of a schlep for us to go over there." **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews***

In the online survey, respondents were asked whether they had ever initiated contact with the GDC (Figure *12*).There was a mixed response between respondent groups. Stakeholders were most likely to have initiated contact with the GDC, with over three quarters saying they have done so (77%). Registrants were the second most likely to have initiated contact, with just under half having done so (41%). Students were the least likely to have initiated contact, with only 16% having done so.

Responses also differ across registrant role (Table *18*), with dentists (36%) and nurses (42%) the least likely to have initiated contact and CDTs being most likely (81%).

Figure 12. Q26.Have you ever initiated contact with the GDC? Base: All respondents

Group	Don't know	No	Yes
Total (n=4280)		55%	41%
Registrants (n=4101) *St		54%	41%
Stakeholders (n=52)	21%		77%
Students (n=127) *Reg		80%	16%

■ Don't know   ■ No   ■ Yes
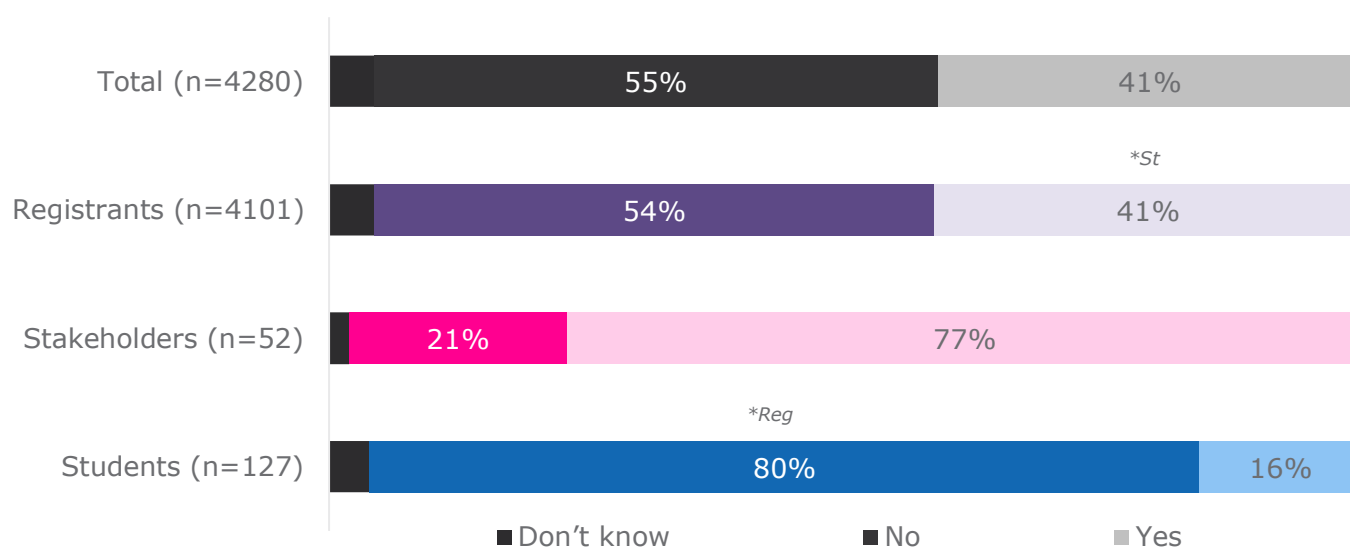
*indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St = Students)

Table 18. Registrants role – those who have initiated contact with the GDC:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
68%	36%	61%	52%	42%	58%	81%

Subgroup analysis:

- Dentists were significantly less likely to have initiated contact compared to other DPs.
- Those aged between 22-30 were significantly less likely to have initiated contact compared to those aged 31+.
- International respondents were significantly more likely to have initiated contact with the GDC compared to those in the UK.
- Those who visit the GDC website regularly were significantly more likely to have initiated contact with them, compared to those who don't visit the site regularly.

Method of contact

Those who said that they have initiated contact with the GDC were then asked how they had been in contact (Figure *13*). Overal,l the most common form of communication was via telephone (77%). Both registrants (77%) and students (75%) most commonly contacted the GDC via telephone, while stakeholders most commonly used email (93%).

When looking at registrants by role (Table *19*); all roles typically use phone calls to contact the GDC, with the exception of CDTs, who most commonly initiate contact via email (65%).

Figure 13. Q27.Which of the following have you used to contact the GDC? Base: All who have initiated contact with the GDC.
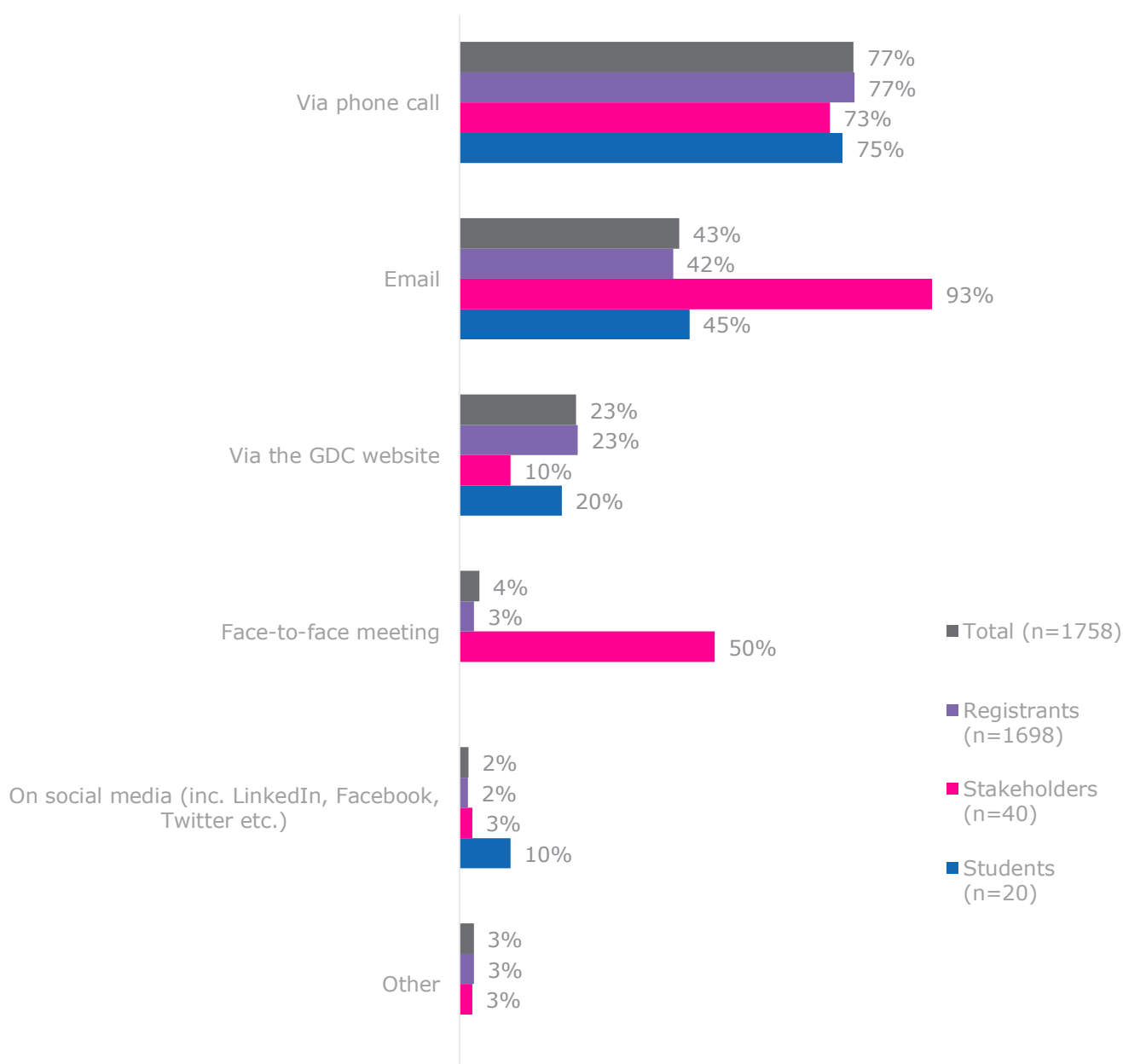
Other includes post / formal letter.

Table 19. Top three methods used to contact the GDC – split by registrants

Orthodontic Therapist (n=16)	Dentist (n=496)	Dental Therapist (n=89)	Dental Technician (n=115)	Dental Nurse (n=916)	Dental Hygienist (n=121)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=16)
Via phone call (61%)	Via phone call (74%)	Via phone call (79%)	Via phone call (68%)	Via phone call (79%)	Via phone call (77%)	Email (65%)
GDC website (32%)	Email (50%)	Email (48%)	Email (48%)	Email (35%)	Email (49%)	Via phone call (60%)
Email (19%)	GDC website (17%)	GDC website (16%)	GDC website (20%)	GDC website (27%)	GDC website (19%)	Face-to-face meeting (36%)

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged 61+ were significantly more likely to have communicated with the GDC via face-to-face meetings, compared to those under 61.
- CDTs (19%) and dental technicians (8%) were more likely to have used social media to contact the GDC compared to all other DPs. CDTs were also significantly more likely to have used face-to-face meetings to communicate with the GDC (36%) compared to all other DPs.

Reasons for initiating contact

During the phase 1 telephone interviews, registrants and stakeholders were asked about the main reasons why they would contact the GDC. Stakeholders were typically in contact due to FtP procedures or queries relating to guidelines and standards. Whereas registrants mainly contacted the GDC for administrative purposes (i.e. queries about registration, fees etc.) and only when they absolutely had to contact the GDC.

*"For me it is usually policy about the Fitness to Practise procedure, it is one of the things they are working on within Shifting the balance and any number of those initiatives. My colleagues we talk to them all of the time, we want to talk to them about individual members cases in Fitness to Practise." **Stakeholder, phase 1 interviews***

In the online survey, respondents were asked why they had initiated contact with the GDC. Reasons different across all three respondent types (Figure *14*). For registrants, the main reasons for initiating contact were registration (51%), general queries (48%), and fees (30%). The main reasons for stakeholders were general queries (58%), guidelines / standards (45%), and FtP (45%). Finally, the main reasons for students to have initiated contact were the register (50%), training CPD / education (50%), and general queries (40%).

When registrants are looked at by role (Table *20*), the main reasons were either registration queries or general queries.

Figure 14. Q28.which of the following best describes the reason why you contacted the GDC? Base: All who have initiated contact with the GDC.
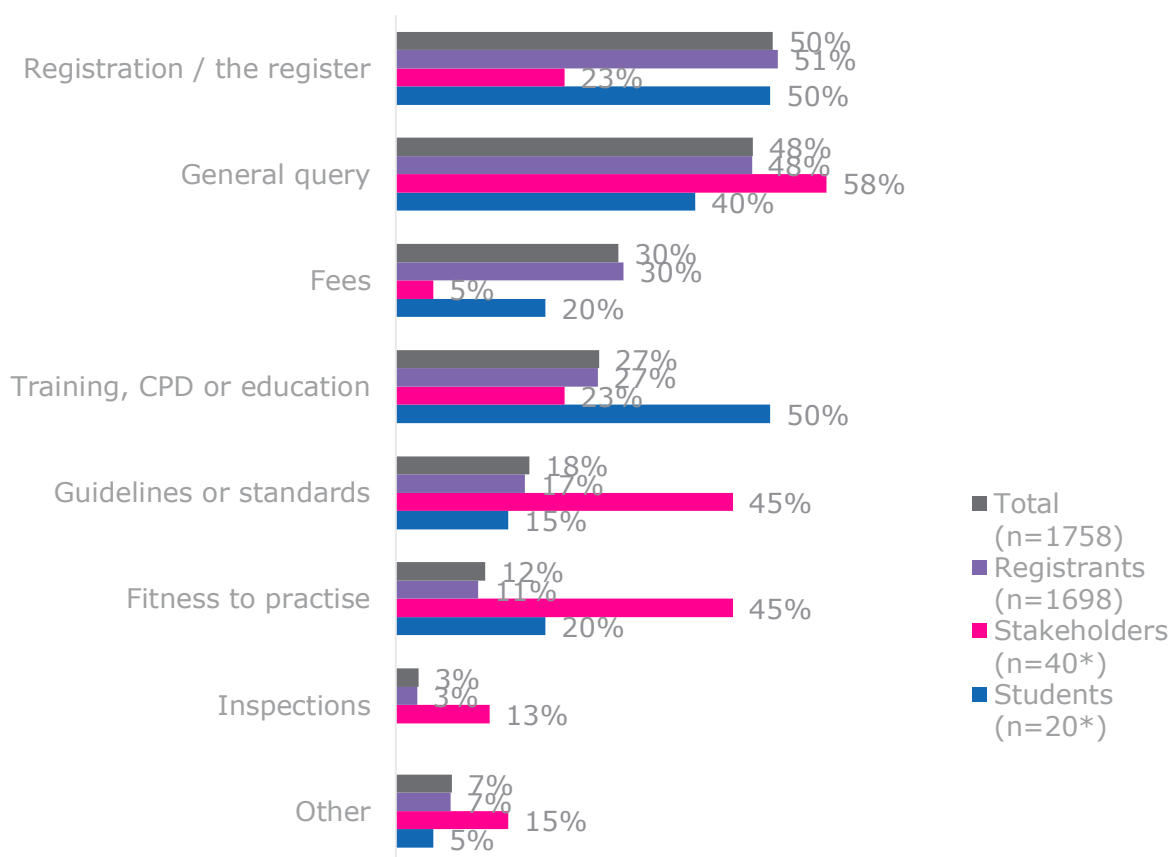
*Other includes (but is not limited to): Reporting illegal teeth whitening, raising a concern with another DP or patient and updating details. *Caution – low base*

Table 20. Registrants role split – most common reason for contacting the GDC:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=16)	Dentist (n=496)	Dental Therapist (n=89)	Dental Technician (n=115)	Dental Nurse (n=916)	Dental Hygienist (n=121)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=16)
General query (47%)	Registration /the register (47%)	General query (57%)	General query (51%)	Registration /the register (53%)	Registration /the register (62%)	General query (49%)
Registration /the register (43%)	General query (39%)	Registration /the register (52%)	Registration /the register (45%)	General query (50%)	General query (56%)	Registration /the register (48%)
Fees (40%)	Fees (26%)	Fees (26%)	Training, CPD or education (21%)	Fees (35%)	Training, CPD or education (29%)	Fitness to practice (36%)

Ease of contact

Respondents who have initiated contact with the GDC were also asked to rate how easy it was to make that contact, from very difficult to very easy (Figure *15*). Overal,l respondents found it easy to make contact with the GDC (73%). Students were most likely to find it easy (90%), then stakeholders (75%) and finally registrants (73%).

Across all registrant roles, the majority found it easy to contact the GDC (Table *21*), dental therapists were most likely to find it easy (83%), and dentists (65%) and orthodontic therapists (61%) were least likely to have found making contact easy.

Figure 15. Q29.How easy was it to contact the GDC? Base: All who have initiated contact with the GDC.
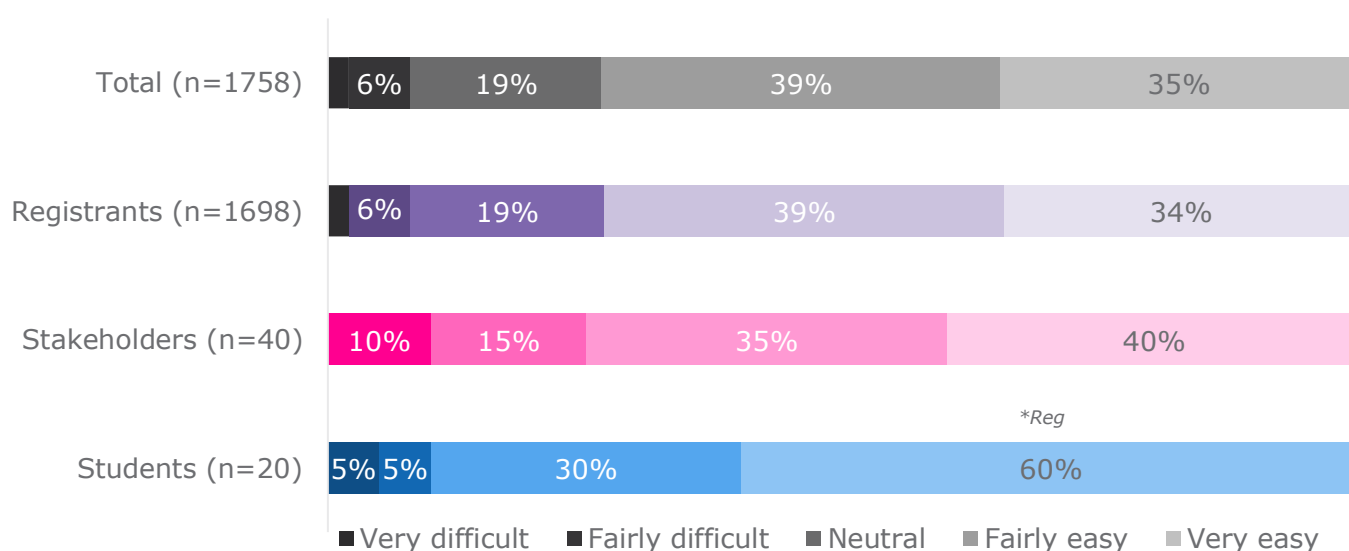
indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants)

Table 21. Registrant role split - ease of contacting the GDC (NET easy %)

Orthodontic Therapist (n=16)	Dentist (n=496)	Dental Therapist (n=89)	Dental Technician (n=115)	Dental Nurse (n=916)	Dental Hygienist (n=121)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=16)
61%	65%	83%	71%	78%	79%	76%

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged 18-24 and 61-65 were significantly more likely to have found it easy to contact the GDC, compared to those aged between 31-40, 51-60 and 65+.
- International respondents were significantly more likely to have found contact with the GDC easy, compared to those from the UK, with the exception of Wales.
- Those who rarely or never visit the GDC website were significantly less likely to find contact with the GDC easy, compared to those who visit occasionally or regularly.

Actions for the GDC

- Phone and email are the most common ways in which stakeholders, students and registrants contact the GDC. Face-to-face interactions are particularly low for students and registrants. Therefore, one way of improving engagement with these groups would be for the GDC to increase the number of face-to-face meetings it holds with them.
- The GDC is perceived to be easy to contact but registrants, in particular, generally only contact the GDC for administrative purposes (e.g. queries relating to registration or fees), rather than for guidance or advice. If the GDC wishes to strengthen its relationships with registrants it needs to engage more effectively with them. Achieving this would enable it to improve perceptions and to encourage registrants to make contact for reasons other than transactional purposes.

General media usage

Use of social media

Respondents were asked which social media platforms they currently use in their day to day lives (Figure *16*). The most used platform was Facebook for all three respondent types (66%). Instagram was the second most used for both registrants (43%) and students (65%), while stakeholders selected LinkedIn (44%).

Facebook was also the most commonly used across all registrant roles (Table *22*), while YouTube was the second most used for dentists (40%) and dental technicians (50%), and Instagram for occupational therapists (56%), dental therapists (53%), dental nurses (52%) and dental hygienists (44%). The second most common response from CDTs was 'none of the above' (31%).

Figure 16. Q30.Which of the following social media sites do you use? Base: All respondents
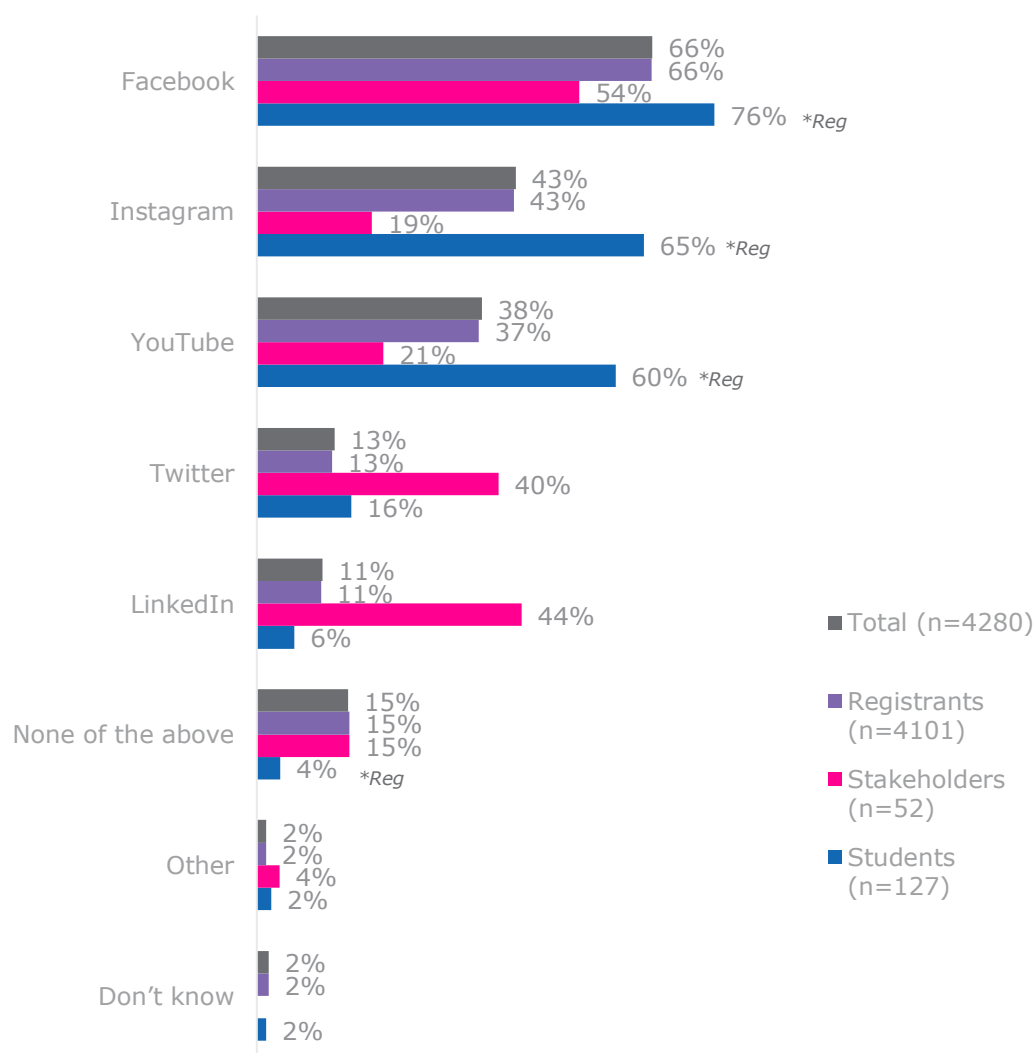
indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants,) Other includes WhatsApp and Snapchat.

Table 22. Top two most used social media platform by registrant role:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
Facebook (65%)	Facebook (56%)	Facebook (77%)	Facebook (60%)	Facebook (72%)	Facebook (71%)	Facebook (69%)
Instagram (56%)	YouTube (40%)	Instagram (53%)	YouTube (50%)	Instagram (52%)	Instagram (44%)	None of the above (31%)
None of the above (32%)	Instagram (30%)	YouTube (31%)	Instagram (36%)	YouTube (34%)	YouTube (31%)	YouTube (28%)

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged 18-21 were significantly less likely to use LinkedIn (1%) compared to all other age groups, however they were significantly more likely to use both Twitter (31%) and Instagram (85%) compared to all other ages.
- International respondents were significantly more likely to use LinkedIn (25%) compared to those in the UK.
- Those who have initiated contact with the GDC were significantly more likely to use LinkedIn (13%), compared to those who haven't initiated contact (9%). While those who haven't initiated contact were significantly more likely to use Instagram (45%) and Facebook (68%).

Media used for general news updates

Respondents were asked which type of media they regularly use for general news updates (Figure *17*). Overall, TV news channels (56%), online news websites (53%) and social media (47%) were the most used channels. This was true for both registrants and stakeholders, while for students, social media was the mostly commonly used (60%), followed by online news websites (52%) and then TV news channels (50%).

When looking across the different registrant roles, TV news channels were the most commonly used (Table *23*), with the exception of two groups: dental technicians mostly use online news websites (52%), and dental nurses typically use social media (55%).

Figure 17. Q31. Which of the following do you regularly used for general news updates? Base:
All respondents
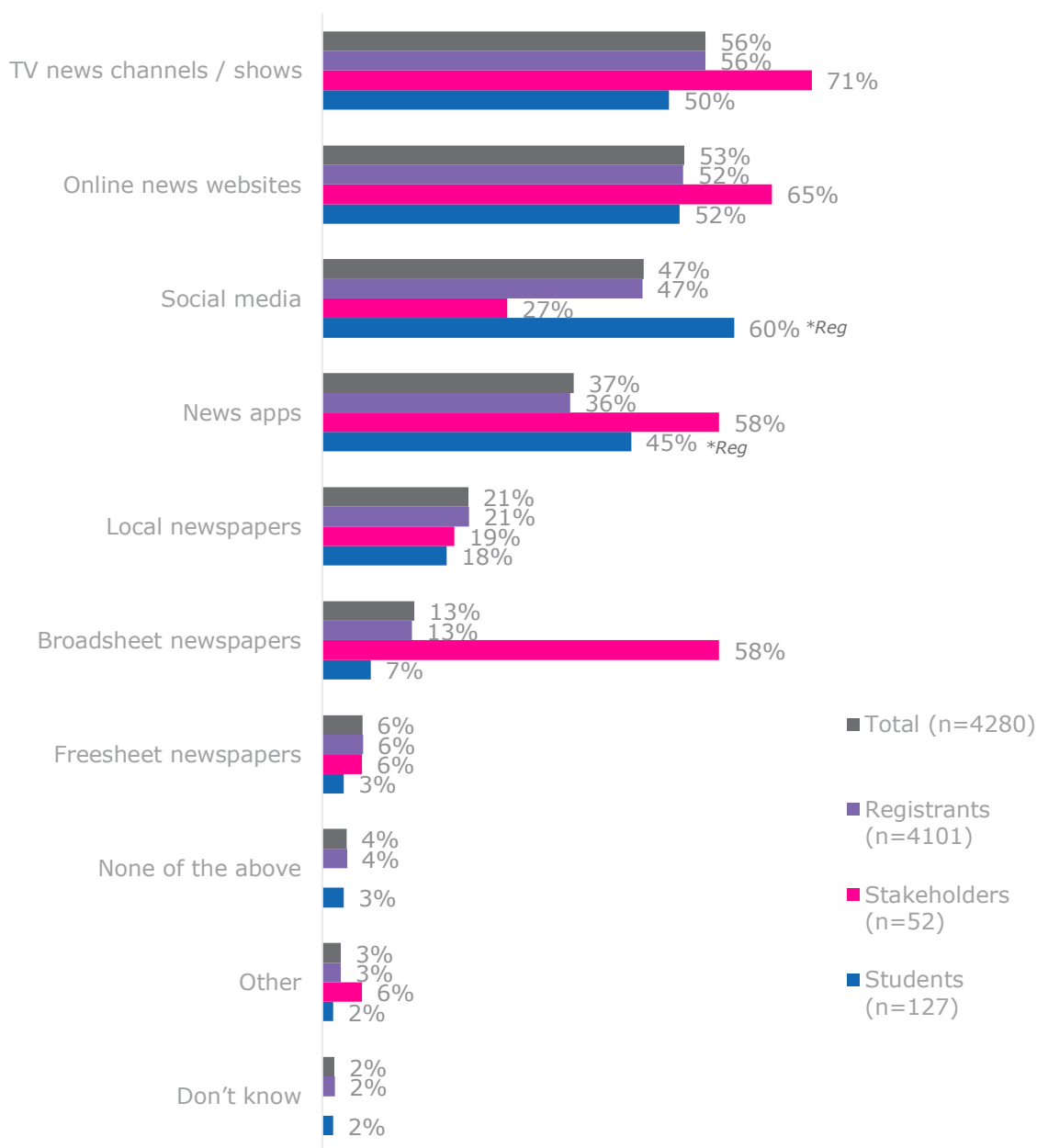
TV news channels / shows
56%
56%
71%
50%

Online news websites
53%
52%
65%
52%

Social media
47%
47%
27%
60% *Reg*

News apps
37%
36%
58%
45% *Reg*

Local newspapers
21%
21%
19%
18%

Broadsheet newspapers
13%
13%
58%
7%

Freesheet newspapers
6%
6%
6%
3%

None of the above
4%
4%
3%

Other
3%
3%
6%
2%

Don't know
2%
2%
2%

■ Total (n=4280)

■ Registrants (n=4101)

■ Stakeholders (n=52)

■ Students (n=127)

indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St=Students) Other includes: Radio and other newspapers / magazines.

Subgroup analysis

- Those aged 61-65 were significantly less likely to use news apps (27%) compared to those aged 60 years or younger, while those over 65 were significantly more likely to read both broadsheet newspapers (57%) and local newspapers (38%) than those aged 60 and under.
- Orthodontic therapists were less likely to use online news websites for general news updates (15%) compared to other DPs.

Table 23. Registrant role split– most commonly used for general news updates:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
TV news channels / shows (47%)	TV news channels / shows (58%)	TV news channels / shows (63%)	Online news websites (52%)	Social media (55%)	TV news channels / shows (64%)	TV news channels / shows (55%)
Social media (46%)	Online news websites (58%)	Social media (59%)	TV news channels / shows (51%)	TV news channels / shows (53%)	Social media (50%)	Social media (53%)
News apps (29%)	News apps (41%)	Online news websites (39%)	Social media (42%)	Online news websites (50%)	Online news websites (46%)	Other (23%)

Most commonly used news apps

All respondents who said that they use apps for general news updates were asked which apps specifically (Figure *18*). Overall, the BBC was the most used news app across all three respondent groups. Sky News was the second most used for both registrants (32%) and students (23%), while stakeholders use the Guardian news app (33%) (Table *24*). The BBC was the most used news app across registrant roles (Table *25*), with the exception of orthodontic therapists who most commonly use the Mail Online (43%).

Figure 18. Q31a. When using news apps, which do you most usually use? Base: All who selected news apps

BBC	82%
Sky News	31%
Google News	24%
MailOnline	21%
ITV News	18%
The Guardian	17%
The Telegraph	13%
The Times	12%
Buzzfeed	10%
Twitter	10%
Independent Daily Edition	4%
The Economist	4%
Financial Times	3%
Reuters	3%
Other	4%
Don't know	2%

■ Total (n=1564)
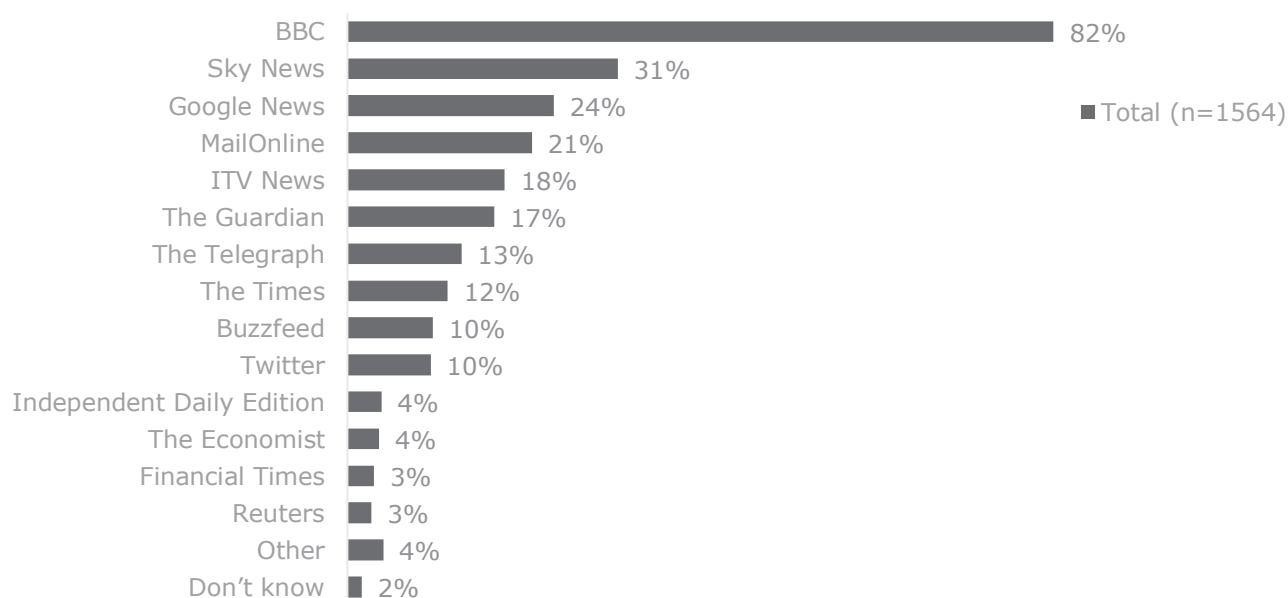
Other includes Apple news app.

Table 24. Registrant / stakeholder / student split by news apps – top 3 most commonly used:

Registrant (1477)	Stakeholder (30)	Student (57)
BBC (82%)	BBC (93%)	BBC (82%)
Sky News (32%)	The Guardian (33%)	Sky News (23%)
Google News (25%)	The Times (23%) & Twitter (23%)	ITV News (18%) & The Telegraph (18%)

Table 25. Registrant split – Top 3 most commonly used news apps:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=7)	Dentist (n=562)	Dental Therapist (n=52)	Dental Technician (n=74)	Dental Nurse (n=723)	Dental Hygienist (n=74)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=2)
Mail Online (43%)	BBC (87%)	BBC (93%)	BBC (73%)	BBC (78%)	BBC (91%)	BBC (65%)
BBC (38%)	Sky news (24%)	Sky News (34%)	Sky News (42%)	Sky News (30%)	Sky News (27%)	ITV news (35%)
The Telegraph (17%)	The Guardian (23%)	Mail Online (29%)	Google news (36%)	Google news (30%	Mail Online (27%)	The Telegraph (35%)

Subgroup analysis

- Those aged 31-65 were significantly less likely to use the Buzzfeed app compared to those aged between 18-21. Those over 65 were significantly more likely to use The Times app compared to those under 60.
- Dentists were less likely to use the Mail Online app (13%) compared to all other DPs.

Most commonly used news websites

All those who use news websites were asked which sites they use (Figure 19). Again, the BBC was overall the most used news website, used for all three respondent groups (80%) (Table 26). Google News was the second most used website by both registrants (27%) and students (30%), while the Guardian was the second most used website by stakeholders (29%). The BBC remains the top most used website across all registrant roles (Table 27).

Figure 19. Q31b. When using online news websites, which do you most usually use? Base: All who selected online news websites

Website	Total (2252)
BBC	80%
Google News	26%
Sky News	24%
MailOnline	20%
ITV News	19%
The Guardian	18%
The Telegraph	11%
The Times	9%
Buzzfeed	7%
Twitter	7%
Independent Daily Edition	5%
Financial Times	4%
The Economist	4%
Reuters	2%
Other	5%
Don't know	2%
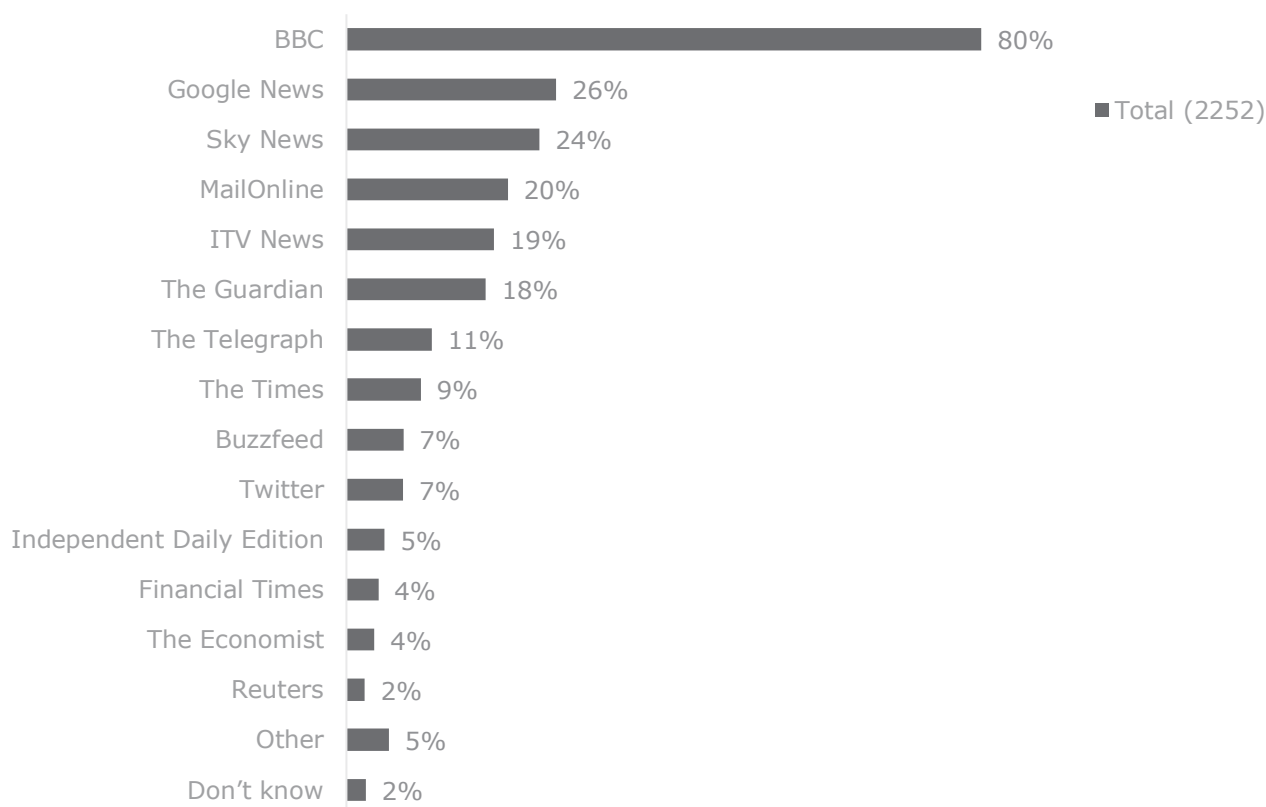
Other includes: Local news websites e.g. Manchester Evening News.

Table 26. Registrant / stakeholder / student split by news websites – top 3 commonly used:

Registrant (2152)	Stakeholder (34)	Student (66)
BBC (80%)	BBC (94%)	BBC (85%)
Google News (27%)	The Guardian (29%)	Google News (30%)
Sky News (25%)	The Times (18%)	The Guardian (26%)

Table 27. Registrant split– Top 3 most commonly used news websites:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=4)	Dentist (n=798)	Dental Therapist (n=57)	Dental Technician (n=115)	Dental Nurse (n=1090)	Dental Hygienist (n=97)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=4)
BBC (100%)	BBC (85%)	BBC (76%)	BBC (75%)	BBC (76%)	BBC (76%)	BBC (100%)
ITV news (75%)	The Guardian (24%)	Google news (32%)	Sky news (30%)	Google news (32%)	Google news (37%)	Sky news (31%)
Financial Times (60%) Mail Online (60%)	Sky news (19%)	Sky news (22%)	Google news (30%)	Sky news (29%)	Mail Online (21%)	Google news (19%) ITV news (19%)

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Most commonly watched news channels

All those who watch the news via TV news channels were asked which sites they use. The same pattern follows for TV channels (Figure *20*,) with the BBC the most commonly used channel across all respondent types (87%). ITV was the second most used for registrants (48%) and students (52%), and for stakeholders it is Channel 4 (35%). When looking across registrant roles, the BBC was again the most used TV channel across all registrant roles (Table *28*).

Figure 20. Q31c. When using TV news channels, which do you most usually use? Base: All who selected TV news channels

BBC: Total 87%, Registrants 87%, Stakeholder 92%, Students 88%
ITV: Total 47%, Registrants 48%, Stakeholder 27%, Students 52%
Channel 4: Total 25%, Registrants 25%, Stakeholder 35%, Students 38%
Sky News: Total 23%, Registrants 23%, Stakeholder 22%, Students 19%
Channel 5: Total 8%, Registrants 8%, Students 6%
CNN: Total 5%, Registrants 5%, Students 8%
Don't know: Total 2%, Registrants 2%, Stakeholder 3%, Students 3%
Other: Total 2%, Registrants 2%, Students 2%

Legend: Total (2384), Registrants (2283), Stakeholder (37), Students (64)

Other includes (but is not limited to): Freeview, STV.

Table 28. Registrant split – Top 3 most commonly watched TV news channels:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=11)	Dentist (n=805)	Dental Therapist (n=92)	Dental Technician (n=114)	Dental Nurse (n=1158)	Dental Hygienist (n=134)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=11)
BBC (97%)	BBC (94%) *all others except OT*	BBC (88%)	BBC (90%)	BBC (82%)	BBC (88%)	BBC (72%)
ITV (70%)	ITV (29%)	ITV (44%)	ITV (47%)	ITV (62%)	ITV (38%)	ITV (61%)
Sky news (15%)	Channel 4 (26%)	Channel 4 (24%)	Channel 4 (31%)	Sky news (24%)	Channel 4 (20%)	Channel 4 (24%)

- 22-30 year-olds were significantly more likely to watch ITV, compared to those aged over 30. While those over 65 were significantly more likely to watch Sky News compared to all other age groups, with the exception of 31-40 year-olds. Generally, viewing of both Channel 4 and Channel 5 declines with age.
- Dentists were less likely to watch ITV (29%) and were more likely to watch BBC (94%), compared to all other DPs.

Most read broadsheet newspaper

Those who read broadsheet newspapers were asked which broadsheets they usually read (Figure *21*). The most widely read broadsheet was The Times for all 3 respondent types. The Guardian was also in the top 3 most read broadsheet newspapers for all respondent groups. When looking across the registrant roles, the picture is more mixed. Dentists and dental nurses were most likely to read The Times, dental therapists and dental hygienists were most likely to read The Telegraph; and dental technicians were most likely to read The Guardian. Orthodontic therapists read a wide variety of broadsheets.

Figure 21 Q31d. Which broadsheet newspapers do you usually read? Base: All who selected broadsheet newspapers

The Times
- Total (573): 43%
- Registrants (534): 42%
- Stakeholders (30): 53%
- Students (9): 56%

The Telegraph
- Total (573): 30%
- Registrants (534): 31%
- Stakeholders (30): 20%
- Students (9): 22%

The Guardian
- Total (573): 25%
- Registrants (534): 24%
- Stakeholders (30): 43%
- Students (9): 44%

The Sunday Times
- Total (573): 23%
- Registrants (534): 22%
- Stakeholders (30): 30%
- Students (9): 33%

The Independent
- Total (573): 16%
- Registrants (534): 16%
- Stakeholders (30): 10%
- Students (9): 22%

The Observer
- Total (573): 6%
- Registrants (534): 5%
- Stakeholders (30): 17%

Financial Times
- Total (573): 5%
- Registrants (534): 6%

Other
- Total (573): 10%
- Registrants (534): 10%
- Stakeholders (30): 7%

Don't know
- Total (573): 5%
- Registrants (534): 5%
- Stakeholders (30): 7%
- Students (9): 11%

Legend:
- ■ Total (573)
- ■ Registrants (534)
- ■ Stakeholders (30)
- ■ Students (9)

Other includes (but is not limited to): The Daily Mail, The Herald, The Scotsman.

Subgroup analysis

- Those aged over 60 were significantly more likely to read The Telegraph compared to those in younger age groups, while those aged 22-50 were significantly more likely to read The Independent compared to those aged 61+.
- Those who have initiated contacted with the GDC were significantly more likely to read both The Guardian (29%) and The Observer (8%), compared to those who have not initiated contact with the GDC (21% and 2% respectively).

Table 29. Registrants split by broadsheet newspapers – most commonly used:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=1)	Dentist (n=329)	Dental Therapist (n=11)	Dental Technician (n=28)	Dental Nurse (n=131)	Dental Hygienist (n=26)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=3)
The Guardian (100%)	The Times (50%)	The Telegraph (38%)	The Guardian (35%)	The Times (31%)	The Telegraph (30%)	Don't know (100%)
The Independent (100%)	The Telegraph (35%)	The Guardian (38%)	The Telegraph (21%)	Other (20%)	The Guardian (28%)	N/A
The Telegraph (100%) The Times (100%)	The Sunday Times (24%)	The Times (30%)	The Sunday Times (20%)	The Telegraph (20%)	The Times (26%)	N/A

Most trustworthy news sources

Respondents were asked how trustworthy they perceive certain news sources to be (Figure *22*). Overall, the BBC was considered to be the most trustworthy of all news sources (59%). For registrants the most trustworthy sources were The BBC (59%) and The Independent (33%). For stakeholders the most trustworthy were The BBC (71%) and The Times / The Financial Times (63%). For students, the most trustworthy sources were The BBC (69%) and The Guardian (54%). All registrants, apart from CDTs, also stated that the BBC was the most trustworthy (Table *30*).

Figure 22. Q32.How trustworthy do you perceive each of the following news sources to be? Base: All respondents. NET: Trustworthy:

BBC
- 59%
- 59%
- 71%
- 69% *Reg*

ITV
- 46%
- 46%
- 54%
- 49%

The Times
- 38%
- 38%
- 63%
- 52% *Reg*

Sky News
- 38%
- 38%
- 31%
- 48% *Reg*

The Guardian
- 35%
- 34%
- 56%
- 54% *Reg*

The Independent
- 34%
- 33%
- 46%
- 50%

Financial Times
- 34%
- 34%
- 63%
- 36%

The Telegraph
- 33%
- 32%
- 35%
- 43% *Reg*

Google News
- 21%
- 21%
- 4%
- 36% *Reg*

The Daily Mail
- 15%
- 14%
- 6%
- 24% *Reg*

Twitter
- 6%
- 6%
- 2%
- 13% *Reg*

Legend:
- ■ Total (n=4280)
- ■ Registrants (n=4101)
- ■ Stakeholders (n=52)
- ■ Students (n=127)

indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants)

Subgroup analysis:

- 18-21 year-olds were significantly more likely to perceive the BBC (76%) as trustworthy compared to all other age groups. Over 65s were significantly more likely to perceive the Financial Times as trustworthy (48%) compared to all other age groups, with the exception of 51-60 year-olds.
- CDTs were less likely to perceive both the BBC (6%) and The Independent (15%) as trustworthy news sources compared to all other DPs.

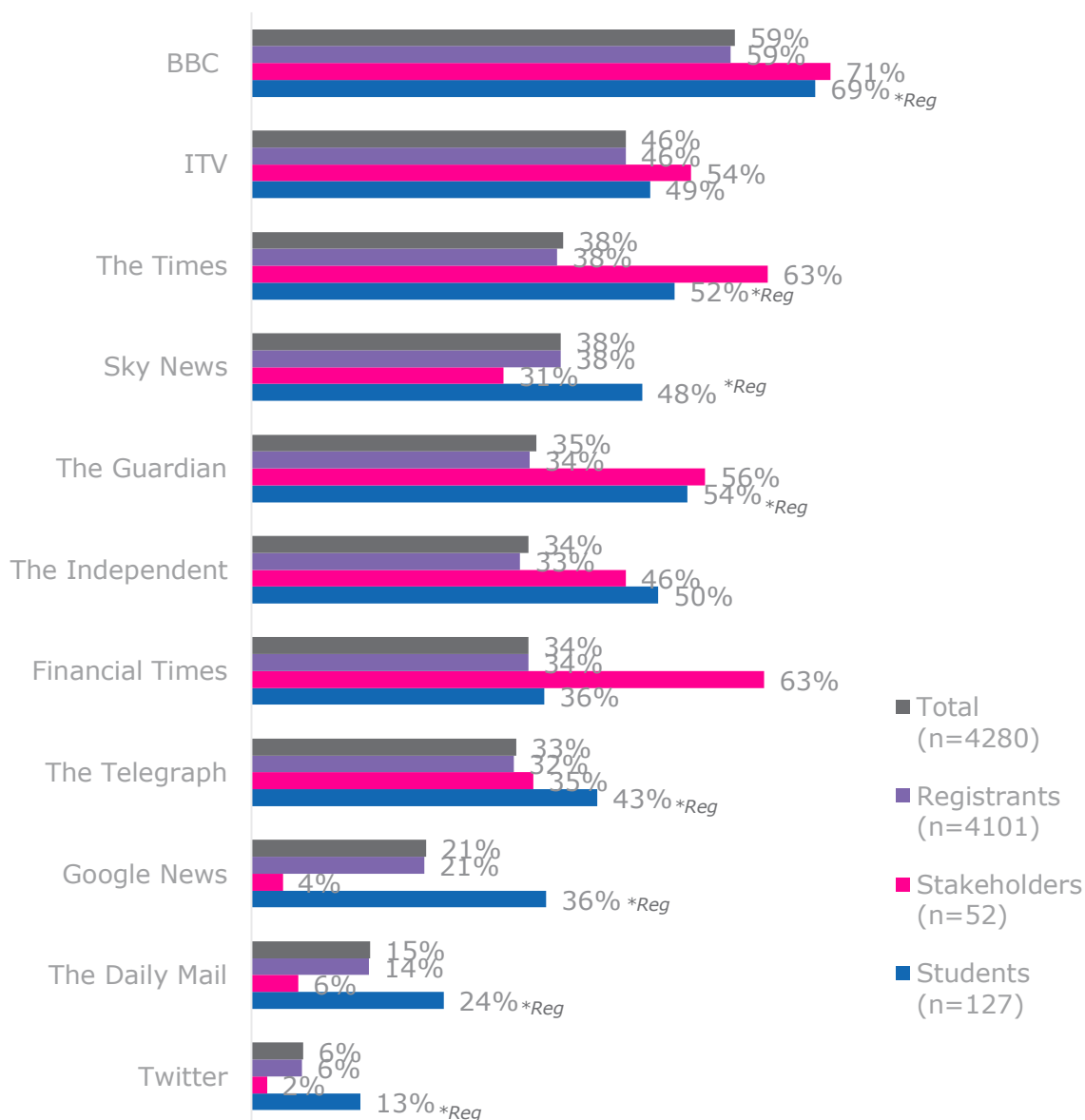Table 30. Registrant split – Top 3 most trustworthy news sources:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
BBC (50%)	BBC (63%)	BBC (58%)	BBC (53%)	BBC (57%)	BBC (60%)	The Independent (15%)
ITV news (44%)	The Times (48%)	ITV news (49%)	ITV news (41%)	ITV news (49%)	ITV news (49%)	BBC (6%)
The Times (24%)	Financial Times (46%)	The Independent (48%)	Sky News (34%)	Sky News (40%)	The Times (41%)	Google News / Sky News (6%)

Actions for the GDC

- The most frequently used social media site is Facebook and the BBC is the most widely used / viewed TV new channel, online news website and app. The BBC is also felt to be the most trustworthy news source. Therefore, the BBC should be a key channel of focus for the GDC to communicate with registrants, stakeholders and students about its major news stories.

- The use of Facebook would be an effective channel to use when communicating about small news stories, updates, and also to engage with younger audiences, particularly students and newly graduated registrants. Instagram and YouTube are also commonly used by students and, therefore, could be used alongside Facebook – for example sharing relevant articles or posts from respected bodies would help to increase the GDC's presence on these sites and hence improve awareness and engagement.

- Newspapers are not widely used so should not be a key channel of focus for the GDC. However, those most widely read are The Times, The Telegraph and The Guardian.

Interest in the dental sector

Five statements were presented to each respondent and they were asked to select which they believe best describes their views (Figure *23*). Registrants were mainly split between those who actively keep up to date with news / trends (30%), those who passively keep up to date (26%) and those who would like to learn more with minimal effort (25%). Stakeholders were most likely to be those who actively keep up to date with trends / the sector (65%). Students were also mainly split between those who passively keep up to date (30%) and those who would like to learn more with minimal effort (39%).

When looking across the registrant roles, most were those who actively keep up to date with news / trends (Table *31*), with the exception of orthodontic therapists who would like to learn more with minimal effort, and dental nurses who passively keep up to date.

Figure 23. Q33. Which of the following statements best describes your views? Base: All respondents.
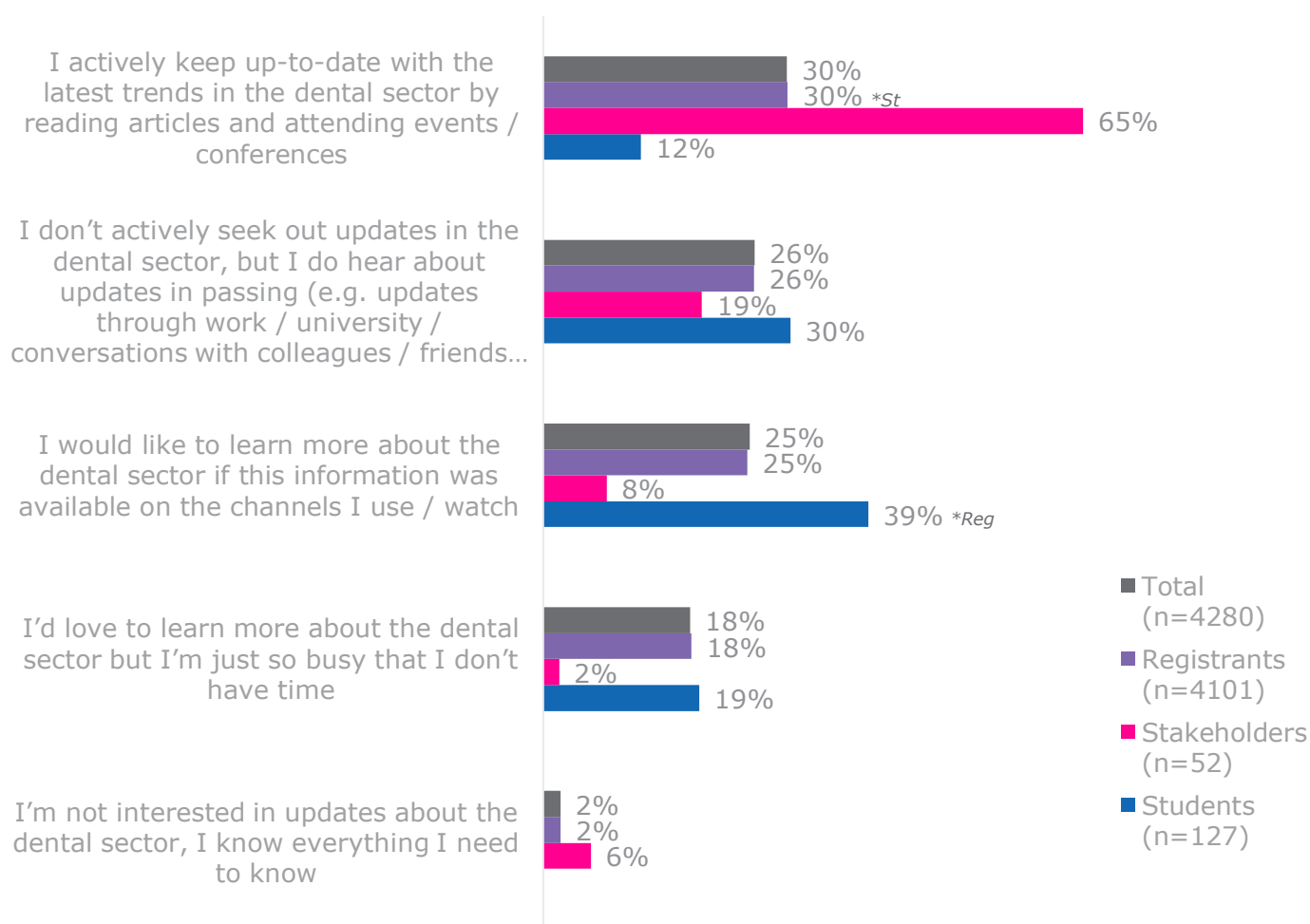
indicates significantly higher than group stated (Reg= Registrants, St = Students)

Table 31. Registrant split – most applicable statement:

Orthodontic Therapist (n=24)	Dentist (n=1377)	Dental Therapist (n=146)	Dental Technician (n=223)	Dental Nurse (n=2180)	Dental Hygienist (n=209)	Clinical Dental Technician (n=20)
I would like to learn more about the dental sector if this information was available on the channels I use / watch (46%)	I actively keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the dental sector by reading articles and attending events / conferences (41%)	I actively keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the dental sector by reading articles and attending events / conferences (36%)	I actively keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the dental sector by reading articles and attending events / conferences (30%)	Don't actively seek out updates in the dental sector, but I do hear about updates in passing (30%)	I actively keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the dental sector by reading articles and attending events / conferences (37%)	I actively keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the dental sector by reading articles and attending events / conferences (61%)

Subgroup analysis:

- Those aged 41+ were significantly more likely to select that they would actively keep up-to-date compared to those 40 and under.
- Those who have not initiated contact with the GDC were significantly more likely to want to learn more about the dental sector, but feel that they do not have the time, compared to those who have initiated contact with the GDC.

Actions for the GDC

- Almost a third of respondents actively seek out new information about the dental sector by attending conferences and reading articles. There is an opportunity for the GDC to become more active in this area by increasing its presence at conferences, publishing articles and sharing articles online from other respected institutions.
- Around a quarter of respondents would be more likely to keep up to date with the sector if information was available on the channels they frequently use. As the BBC is the most widely used channel, the GDC could utilise this to communicate with key audiences where this is possible
- For those who are too busy to keep up to date, there is an opportunity for the GDC to create communications and content which are shorter and more succinct summaries. For example, a '5-minute summary of the emerging trends in the dental sector' to further engage with this group.

Implications

Overall, the communications that the GDC sends out are considered to be useful, in particular, information on QA inspections and training / CPD are valued highly. However, for registrants, communications from the GDC can be viewed negatively as they typically associate emails / letters from the GDC with an upcoming FtP case (which causes "panic") or a request for money (the ARF). There is an opportunity to change registrants' perceptions that the GDC is only in contact for negative reasons by engaging with key audiences about other topics such as professional development, inspections, updates in guidelines / standards or trends in the dental sector. Targeted communications that are only sent to the most relevant people would also be welcomed, e.g. if the GDC want feedback on education, speaking specifically to heads of dental schools and not sending out communications to all databases.

Registrants and students mainly receive indirect or impersonal communications from the GDC via email, letter or by visiting the GDC website. There are also lessons to be learnt from the GDC's current communications with stakeholders. This group are the most likely to find communications from the GDC useful and are also the most likely to have face-to-face meetings with the GDC. There is an opportunity for the GDC to increase the number of face-to-face meetings it undertakes with these groups, and to engage with students and registrants in a similar manner to stakeholders by engaging with registrants and students through discussion groups and open sessions, as well as through discussion forums on the GDC website, to understand more about their views on the GDC as well as fears and concerns. We are aware that work to improve engagement with all groups is currently in progress.

Students are least likely to have had any form of contact with the GDC. There is an opportunity for the GDC to open up more direct communication channels with students from the outset of their course. This will help to increase familiarity and awareness of the GDC. In particular, with these younger age groups it would be beneficial to change the style of communications to be more interactive, through use of videos or apps to raise awareness and engagement with key initiatives. This is underway as part of the GDC's student engagement strategy and has included use of video in pilot face-to-face sessions.

Most respondents have used the GDC website but it is not frequently visited and it can be difficult to navigate. Registrants mainly use the GDC website for administrative tasks (e.g. paying ARF, updating their details etc) and aren't truly engaging / interacting with the website. To increase usage of the website, the GDC could improve its usability with better navigation and search functions. Also, inclusion of more engaging content (for example, having a CPD hub where registrants log their hours / progress with CPD) and making it more interactive could help to switch from more transaction usage to engagement and interaction. The GDC is currently undertaking a major project to redesign the website, with improvements expected to be launched next year.

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Amongst registrants, stakeholders and students, the BBC channels (app, website and TV channel) are highly used and respected. As such the BBC should be a key target when the GDC is looking to communicate information about key improvements and changes. Facebook is also widely used and would be a valuable channel for communicating information about less newsworthy stories, for sharing relevant content and to engage with younger audiences, particularly students and newly graduated registrants. Newspapers are not widely read by respondents, so should not be a key channel of focus for the GDC; however, the most widely read are The Times, The Telegraph and The Guardian.

Appendix

Phase 1 discussion guide

(I) Introduction	**2 mins**

Brief explanation of the purpose of the research	*Moderator to explain the nature of the research;* • I work for a company called DJS Research, we are an independent market research company and today we are working on behalf of the General Dental Council (GDC). • We are speaking to a number of different stakeholders and dental professionals to understand current perceptions of the GDC and whether opinions have changed over the last 12-18 months. The findings from these initial interviews will inform the design of a large-scale quantitative survey which will also include students. • *Moderator to reassure respondents about confidentiality / GDPR compliance.* • Feedback will be summarised into a report along with other research, we won't pass on names/specific details of who we have spoken to back to the GDC. • There are no right and wrong answers; we are just interested in your views, opinions and ideas. • *Brief explanation about audio recording information – we may use anonymised quotes in our report to illustrate the research findings, but these will not be attributed to you personally.*
Introductions	*Moderator to invite respondent to introduce themselves;* • Please tell me about your role, place of work and length of time in that role. o *For DPs also ask:* How big is the practice that you work in? Is it private, NHS or mix of both?

(II) Relationship and perceptions with the GDC	**10-15 mins**

Relationship / interactions with the GDC	**(Stakeholders)** • When did you first come across the GDC? How did your relationship with the GDC start? • What sort of relationship do you have with the GDC? • How long have you been involved with the GDC? **(Dental professionals)** • When did you first register with the GDC? • Did you have any interactions with the GDC before registering? Please explain. • Since registration, what kind of interactions have you had with the GDC? *Moderator – cover interactions briefly here as covered in more detail later*

Perceptions of the GDC	Ok so next moving on to understanding your perceptions of the GDC.
	
	• Which 3 words would you use to describe the GDC? Why did you pick these 3 words?
	• What are your perceptions of the GDC at present?
	    o What has influenced your opinions / perceptions of the GDC?
	    o *If not covered probe on:*
	        ▪ *Personal experiences?*
	        ▪ *Media including articles in magazines, newspapers, read online?*
	        ▪ *Reactions from colleagues?*
	        ▪ *Opinions of key outspoken professionals?*
	• Have your perceptions of the GDC changed at all over time?
	    o How did you feel about the GDC when you first became involved with them in *<insert answer from earlier>?* What formed your initial opinions / feelings towards the GDC? *Probes as per previous question*
	    o Have your feelings toward the GDC changed at all over the last 12-18 months? How have they changed? Why have they changed?
	• In your opinion, what are the main functions of the GDC? Are there any other functions of the GDC?
	• To what extent do you agree that the GDC is:
	    o Fair? Why?
	    o Transparent? Why?
	    o Responsive? Why?
	• Do you feel the GDC treats dental professionals with respect? Why?

(III) Remit of the GDC	**10 mins**

Remit of the GDC including review of core functions	Ok so next we'll look at the role and remit of the GDC in more detail focusing on the 4 core functions.
	
	• Let's start off with the first of the core functions, **'setting the standards in education'**.
	    o From your perspective how does the GDC perform on this? Why do you think that?
	        ▪ Has your perspective on this changed at all over the last 12-18 months? How has it changed? Why?
	    o Which areas, if any, do the GDC perform well within education? Why is that?
	    o Are there any areas within education that the GDC does not perform well or could be improved? How could these be improved?
	• Moving on to the second function, **'maintaining a register of dentists and dental care professionals and checking they meet the requirements to be on the register'.**

	o From your perspective how does the GDC perform on this? Why do you think that?
	▪ Has your perspective on this changed at all over the last 12-18 months? How has it changed? Why?
	o Which areas, if any, do the GDC perform well in terms of maintaining and checking the register? Why is that?
	o Are there any areas within checking and maintaining the register that the GDC does not perform well or could be improved? How could these be improved?
	• Moving on to the third core function, **'setting and promoting professional standards (including Continued Professional Development)'**.
	o From your perspective how does the GDC perform on this? Why do you think that?
	▪ Has your perspective on this changed at all over the last 12-18 months? How has it changed? Why?
	o Which areas, if any, do the GDC perform well within setting and promoting professional standards? Why is that?
	o Are there any areas within setting and promoting professional standards that the GDC does not perform well or could be improved? How could these be improved?
	• Finally, the fourth core function **'investigating allegations of impaired fitness to practise'**.
	o From your perspective how does the GDC perform on this? Why do you think that?
	▪ Has your perspective on this changed at all over the last 12-18 months? How has it changed? Why?
	o Which areas, if any, do the GDC perform well within fitness to practise? Why is that?
	o Are there any areas within fitness to practise that the GDC does not perform well or could be improved? How could these be improved?

(IV) Interaction with the GDC and areas for improvement	10-15 mins

Communication from GDC	Let's move on now to look at communications from the GDC.
	
	 • What sort of communications do you receive from GDC?
	
	   o What types of channels does this include? E.g. emails, newsletters etc?
	
	    ▪ Do you have a preferred channel? Why is this channel preferred?
	
	   o How satisfied are you with the contact via each channel? Why?
	
	   o How frequently do the GDC interact with you? How do you feel about the frequency of contact? Why?
	
	 • Are you aware of 'Shifting the balance'?
	
	   o *If yes,* what are your perceptions of it? Why?

	• What, if anything, could be improved about the way the GDC communicates with you?
	• Are there any other channels that you would like to see the GDC use? Why?

Interaction with the GDC	Ok so now thinking about how you interact with the GDC.
	
	• Do you feel like the GDC is interested in your views? Why?
	
	• Have you initiated contact / interacted with the GDC?
	
	    o *If yes:*
	
	        ▪ How did you interact with the GDC? E.g. phone calls, website content, social media?
	
	        ▪ For what reasons have you interacted with the GDC?
	
	        ▪ How would you rate those interactions? Could they be improved at all?
	
	    o *If no:*
	
	        ▪ Why have you not contacted / interacted with the GDC?
	
	        ▪ What could be improved to make you more likely to interact with the GDC?

(V) Areas for improvement and close	**8 mins**
Areas for improvement	Moving on to the final section now. • In your opinion, what would you say are the main areas that the GDC can improve upon? Why do you say that? o *Moderator to probe on any areas mentioned throughout rest of interview to understand which areas are of highest importance.* • How could the GDC enhance opinion amongst stakeholders and dental professionals on the way in which it delivers its regulatory objectives? Why do you say that?
Thank and close	• Is there anything else you would like to add to the topics that we have covered today? • Do you have any other advice for the GDC in regards to improving perceptions of the organisation? • Thank you very much for your time today. We will be in contact again soon about participation in the online survey. • Good bye / close.

Phase 2 online survey

Section A: Introduction

The General Dental Council (GDC) is the UK regulator of dentists and other members of the dental team. The GDC commissioned DJS, an independent market research company, to carry out a survey to understand your views and perceptions of them and the why you hold those views. This will help the GDC to improve the way in which they communicate and engage with you in the future.

<STAKEHOLDERS AND STUDENTS> The survey will take between 20-25 minutes – the full survey doesn't have to be completed at once, you can take a break and come back to it if needed. We'd really appreciate your input. <REGISTRANTS> The survey will take between 10-15 minutes. We'd really appreciate your input. <STUDENTS> As a thank you for taking part in the survey you will be entered into a prize draw, with first prize being a £50 amazon voucher and second prize being a £25 amazon voucher.

DJS Research abides by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct which means that all of your responses will remain confidential and will not be attributed to you personally. Your details will be stored securely and will not be passed to any third parties. All details will be automatically deleted after 6 months.

Section B: Screening

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Before the survey starts, we have a few screening questions.

S01.

BASE: ALL
Please select the gender you most closely identify with.
SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Male	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
2	Female	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
3	Other		CONTINUE
86	Prefer not to say		CONTINUE

S02.

BASE: ALL
Which of the following age bands do you fall into?

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SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Under 18		CLOSE
2	18-21	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
3	22-30	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
4	31-40	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
5	41-50	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
6	51-60	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
7	61-65	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
8	Over 65	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
86	Prefer not to say		CONTINUE

S03.

BASE: REGISTRANTS AND STUDENTS

Which country do you currently live in?

SINGLE RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	England	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
2	Wales	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
3	Scotland	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
4	Northern Ireland	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
5	Channel Islands	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
80	Other (please specify)	CODE AS INTERNATIONAL – FIXED, SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
86	Prefer not to say	FIXED	CONTINUE

S03b.

BASE: STAKEHOLDERS

Which of the following countries does your organisation represent?

MULTICODE RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	England		CONTINUE
2	Wales		CONTINUE
3	Scotland		CONTINUE
4	Northern Ireland		CONTINUE
5	Channel Islands		CONTINUE
6	All of the UK		CONTINUE
80	Other (please specify)		CONTINUE

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86	Prefer not to say	FIXED	CONTINUE

S04a.

BASE: REGISTRANTS

Which of the following best describes your current role? If you have dual registration, please select both roles.

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Dentist	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
2	Clinical Dental Technician	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
3	Dental Hygienist	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
4	Dental Nurse	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
5	Dental Technician	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
6	Dental Therapist	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
7	Orthodontic Therapist	SEE QUOTAS	CONTINUE
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	CONTINUE
86	Prefer not to say	FIXED	CONTINUE

S04b.

BASE: STAKEHOLDERS

Which of the following best describes the type of organisation that you work for?

Please rest assured that your answers will be reported at an aggregate-level and nothing will be personally attributed to you or your place of work.

SINGLE RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	**Health Professional Regulators** e.g. PSA, GMC, Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Osteopathy council, etc.		CONTINUE
2	**Defence Bodies** e.g. DDU, MDU, MDDUS etc.		CONTINUE
3	**Dental Schools or Dental Schools Council** e.g. University of Manchester, UCLan, University of Edinburgh, Dental Schools Council		CONTINUE
4	**Education providers / academics**		CONTINUE

	e.g. NHS Health Education Scotland, HEE North West, Dental Mentors UK, The Faculty of Dental Practice etc.		
5	**Employers** e.g. Bupa Dental, Dental Care Group, Smile Together, My Dentist, Practice plan		CONTINUE
6	**Patient groups / charities** e.g. Oral Health Foundation, Age UK, HealthWatch, National Voices etc.		CONTINUE
7	**Professional Associations** e.g. British Dental Industry Association, BDA, BAOMS, Local Dental Committees, etc.		CONTINUE
8	**System Regulators** e.g. CQC, HIS, HIW, RQIA, PHSO, Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency		CONTINUE
9	**Public Services Ombudsman**		
10	**Government officials** e.g. Scottish Government, Welsh Government, DHSSPS etc.		
11	**NHS commissioners and agencies** e.g. NHS Business Services Authority, NHS England, NHS National Services Scotland, Local Health Boards (e.g. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board) etc.		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN – FIXED, EXCLUSIVE	CONTINUE
86	Prefer not to say	FIXED - EXCLUSIVE	CONTINUE

S04bi.

Are you also a registered dental care professional?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		CONTINUE
2	No		CONTINUE
86	Prefer not to say		CONTINUE

S04c.

Which of the following best describes the role you are studying for?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Clinical Dental Technician		CONTINUE
2	Dental Hygienist		CONTINUE
3	Dental Nurse		CONTINUE
4	Dental Therapist		CONTINUE
5	Dental Technician		CONTINUE
6	Dentist		CONTINUE
7	Orthodontic therapist		CONTINUE
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN	CONTINUE
86	Prefer not to say		CONTINUE

S05a.

BASE: CLINICAL DENTAL TECHNICIANS, HYGIENISTS, NURSE, THERAPISTS AND TECHNICIANS (S04c_1,2,3,4,5,7, 80 and 86)

Are you in your final year of training?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		CONTINUE
2	No		CLOSE
86	Prefer not to say		CLOSE

S05b.

BASE: DENTISTS (S04c_6)

Which year are you in at university?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	First year		CLOSE
2	Second year		CLOSE
3	Third year		CLOSE
4	Fourth year		CONTINUE
5	Fifth year		CONTINUE
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN	CLOSE
86	Prefer not to say		CLOSE

INFO1.

Thank you for your time. Today we're looking for certain types of people to answer our survey and unfortunately, you do not qualify on this occasion. We apologise for any inconvenience caused. Please click the 'Finish Survey' button.

INFO PAGE

Section C: Perceptions research

PLEASE SEE 'STAKEHOLDER PRECEPTIONS' REPORT FOR RESULTS FROM THIS SECTION.

Section D: Communications research

INFO2.

BASE: REGISTRANTS
<SHOW FOR REGISTRANTS> We are conducting 2 surveys for the GDC, you have been selected to participate in the communications channel research.

INFO PAGE

Q14.

BASE: ALL
<STAKEHOLDERS AND STUDENTS ONLY> Next, we'll be looking at the communication channels between yourself and the GDC.

<ALL> Which of the following types of communications do you currently receive from the GDC?
Please select as many as you feel apply
MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Regular newsletter		
2	Press releases		
3	Training, eCPD and educational updates		
4	Inspection information		
5	Fee information and updates		
6	Hearing / FTP outcomes		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
87	None of the above	EXCLUSIVE -FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE - FIXED	

Q15.

How useful do you find each of these types of communication from the GDC?

SINGLE GRID QUESTION, RANDOMISE ROWS, ORDERED COLUMNS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW

Code	Answer list – COLUMNS	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Not at all useful		
2	Not very useful		
3	Fairly useful		
4	Very useful		
85	Don't know		
Code	**Answer list – ROWS**	**Scripting notes**	**Routing**
1	Regular newsletter	SHOW IF Q14_1 SELECTED	
2	Press releases	SHOW IF Q14_2 SELECTED	
3	Training, CPD and educational updates	SHOW IF Q14_3 SELECTED	
4	Inspection information	SHOW IF Q14_4 SELECTED	
5	Fee information and updates	SHOW IF Q14_5 SELECTED	
6	Hearing / FTP outcomes	SHOW IF Q14_6 SELECTED	
80	<PULL THROUGH TEXT FROM Q14_80>	SHOW IF OPEN END TEXT ENTERED AT Q14_80	

Q16.

BASE: ALL

How does the GDC typically communicate with you?

Please select as many as you feel apply

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Via email		
2	Via the GDC website		
3	Via social media (inc. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc).		
4	Via conferences/events/workshops		

5	Via articles in journals		
6	Via articles in the press		
7	Via letters / through the post		
8	Through face-to-face meetings		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
87	None of the above	EXCLUSIVE - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE - FIXED	

Q17.

Please rate your preference for receiving information via each of the following:

SINGLE GRID QUESTION, RANDOMISE ROWS, ORDERED COLUMNS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW

Code	Answer list – COLUMNS	Scripting notes	Routing
1	1- Definitely not a preference		
2	2		
3	3 – Neutral		
4	4		
5	5 – Strongly preferred		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	
Code	**Answer list - ROWS**	**Scripting notes**	**Routing**
1	Email		
2	The GDC website		
3	Social media (inc. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc).		
4	Conferences/Workshops/Events		
5	Articles in journals		
6	Articles in the press		
7	Letters		
8	Face-to-face meetings		
80	<PULL THROUGH TEXT FROM Q16_80>		

Q18a.

To what extent are you happy with the frequency of communications from the GDC?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Not at all happy		
2	Not very happy		
3	Neutral		
4	Quite happy		
5	Very happy		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	

Q18b.

BASE: THOSE WHO ARE NOT AT ALL HAPPY OR NOT VERY HAPPY (Q18_1/2)

Would you like to hear from the GDC more frequently or less frequently?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Less frequently		
2	More frequently		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	

Q19.

BASE: ALL WHO RECEIVE EMAILS (Q16_1)

How often do you open the emails you receive from the GDC?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Never		
2	Occasionally		
3	Sometimes		
4	Often		
5	Always		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE - FIXED	

Q20.

BASE: ALL

How often do you visit the GDC website?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	On a daily basis		
2	A couple of times each week		
3	Once a week		

4	A few times each month		
5	A few times each quarter		
6	A few times each year		
10	Once a year		
7	Less than once a year		
8	I haven't visited at all, but intend to		
9	I don't visit the GDC website at all and do not intend to		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE - FIXED	

Q21a.

Why do you visit the GDC website?

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	For news and updates		
2	To pay my Annual Renewal Fee		
3	Updating my details		
4	To contact the GDC		
5	For education / CPD reasons		
6	For standards and guidance		
7	To raise a concern / make a complaint		
8	To search the registers		
9	For Fitness to Practise information and advice		
80	Other (please specify)	OPEN - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE - FIXED	

Q21b.

Why do you not regularly visit the GDC website?

OPEN RESPONSE

Code	Open	Scripting notes	Routing
	OPEN		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	

Q22.

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How useful do you find the GDC website?

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Not at all useful		
2	Not very useful		
3	Fairly useful		
4	Very useful		
85	Don't know		

Q23.

What types of improvements, if any, would you make to the GDC website?

Code	Open	Scripting notes	Routing
	OPEN		
1	I wouldn't make any improvements to the GDC website	EXCLUSIVE	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	

Q24.

Would you like to receive any of the following from the GDC?
Please select as many as you feel apply

Code	Open	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Standards and guidelines updates		
2	Fitness to Practise updates		
3	GDC's progress on key projects		
4	Data on GDC performance		
5	Signposting relevant advice from other regulators and healthcare bodies		
6	No, I wouldn't want to receive any of this information from the GDC	EXCLUSIVE	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	

Q25.

In addition to current channels, which of the following do you think the GDC should also consider using?

Please select as many as you feel apply

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Videos		
2	Infographics		
3	Webinars		
4	GDC App		
5	GDC chat forum		
80	Other (please specify)	OPEN - FIXED	
87	None of the above	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q26.

BASE: ALL

Now moving on to think about instances where you may have initiated contact with the GDC.

Have you ever initiated contact with the GDC?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		
2	No		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q27.

BASE: THOSE WHO HAVE INITIATED CONTACT WITH THE GDC (Q26_1)

Which of the following methods have you used to contact the GDC?

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Please select as many as you feel apply

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Email		
2	Via the GDC website		
3	On social media (inc. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc).		
4	Via phone call		
5	Face-to-face meeting		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q28.

BASE: THOSE WHO HAVE INITIATED CONTACT WITH THE GDC (Q26_1)

Which of the following best describes the reasons why you contacted the GDC?

Please select as many as you feel apply

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Fitness to practise		
2	Training, CPD or education		
3	Guidelines or standards		
4	Registration / the register		
5	Fees		
6	Inspections		
7	General query		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q29.

BASE: THOSE WHO HAVE INITIATED CONTACT WITH THE GDC (Q26_1)

How easy was it to contact the GDC?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Very difficult		
2	Fairly difficult		
3	Neutral		
4	Fairly easy		
5	Very easy		

85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	

Q30.

Now thinking more generally about the types of media channels that you use outside of your working environment.

Which of the following social media sites do you regularly use?

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	LinkedIn		
2	Facebook		
3	Twitter		
4	Instagram		
5	YouTube		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
81	None of the above	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q31.

Which of the following do you regularly use for general news updates?

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	News apps		
2	Online news websites		
3	TV news channels / shows		
4	Broadsheet newspapers		
5	Local newspapers		
6	Freesheet newspapers		
7	Social media		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
81	None of the above	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

DP NOTE: IF NONE OF THE ABOVE (Q31_81) OR DON'T KNOW (Q31_85) SKIP TO Q32

Q31a

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ASK IF NEWS APPS (Q31_1)

When using **news apps**, which do you most usually use?

MULTI RESPONSE, ALPHABETISED ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	BBC		
2	Buzzfeed		
3	The Economist		
4	Financial Times		
5	Google News		
6	The Guardian		
7	Independent Daily Edition		
8	ITV News		
9	MailOnline		
10	Reuters		
11	Sky News		
12	The Telegraph		
13	The Times		
14	Twitter		
80	Other (please specify)	OPEN - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q31b

ASK IF ONLINE NEWS WEBSITES (Q31_2)

When using **online news websites**, which do you most usually use?

MULTI RESPONSE, ALPHABETISED ORDERED

1	BBC		
2	Buzzfeed		
3	The Economist		
4	Financial Times		
5	Google News		
6	The Guardian		

7	Independent Daily Edition		
8	ITV News		
9	MailOnline		
10	Reuters		
11	Sky News		
12	The Telegraph		
13	The Times		
14	Twitter		
80	Other (please specify)	OPEN - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q31c

When using **TV news channels**, which do you most usually use?

MULTI RESPONSE, ALPHABETISED ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	BBC		
2	Channel 4		
3	Channel 5		
4	CNN		
5	ITV		
6	Sky News		
80	Other (please specify)	OPEN - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q31d

Which **broadsheet newspapers** do you most usually read?

MULTI RESPONSE, ALPHABETISED ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Financial Times		

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
2	The Guardian		
3	The Independent		
4	The Observer		
5	The Telegraph		
6	The Times		
7	The Sunday Times		
80	Other (please specify)	OPEN - FIXED	
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE – FIXED	

Q32.

BASE: ALL

How trustworthy do you perceive each of the following news sources to be?

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE ROWS, ORDERED COLUMNS, SINGLE RESPONSE PER ROW

Code	Answer list - ROWS	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Not at all trustworthy		
2	Not very trustworthy		
3	Somewhat trustworthy		
4	Trustworthy		
5	Very trustworthy		
85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	
Code	Answer list – COLUMNS	Scripting notes	Routing
1	BBC		
2	Financial Times		
3	Google News		
4	The Guardian		
5	The Independent		
6	ITV News		
7	The Daily Mail		
8	Sky News		
9	The Telegraph		

10	The Times		
11	Twitter		

Q33.

Which of the following statements best describes your views?

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	I'm not interested in updates about the dental sector, I know everything I need to know		
2	I don't actively seek out updates in the dental sector, but I do hear about updates in passing (e.g. updates through work / university, conversations with colleagues / friends etc.)		
3	I would like to learn more about the dental sector if this information was available on the channels I use/watch		
4	I'd love to learn more about the dental sector but I'm just so busy that I don't have time		
5	I actively keep up-to-date with the latest trends in the dental sector by reading articles and attending events / conferences		

Q13.

To what extent to you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Code	Answer list - ROWS	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Strongly disagree		
2	Slightly disagree		
3	Neither		
4	Slightly agree		
5	Strongly agree		

85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE	

Code	Answer list – COLUMNS	Scripting notes	Routing
1	I respect the work that the GDC does		
2	I believe the GDC overly penalises dentists / dental professionals		
3	I think the GDC is currently improving		
4	I believe the GDC is unrepresentative		
5	I do not believe that the GDC cares about my opinions		

Section E: Classification

INFO3.

The last few questions are for purely for classification and will only be used for analysis purposes.
INFO PAGE

C01.

BASE: REGISTRANTS

What kind of setting/practice do you work in?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	"Stand-alone"/ single practice		
2	Practice that is part of a group		
3	Corporate practice		
4	NHS Hospital (not involved in teaching university students)		
5	Hospital involved in teaching university students/Dental school/university		
6	Dental Laboratory		
7	Armed forces		
8	Salaried primary care dental service		
80	Other (please specify)	OPEN	
86	Prefer not to say		

C02.

What type of care is provided at your work setting?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Predominantly NHS treatment with some private		
2	Predominantly private treatment with some NHS		
3	NHS only		
4	Private only		
86	Prefer not to say		

C03.

BASE: REGISTRANTS

How many clinical operators (dentists/hygienists/therapists/CDTs) provide dental treatment at your work setting?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	1		
2	2-4		
3	5+		
4	Not applicable – nonclinical / laboratory environment		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
86	Prefer not to say	FIXED	

C04.

BASE: REGISTRANTS

How many hours per week do you work? Include time you work at other practice locations as well.

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Less than 15 hours		
2	15-24 hours		
3	25-34 hours		
4	35-40 hours		
5	Over 40 hours		
86	Prefer not to say		

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C05.

Which of the following is your first language?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ALPHABETISED ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Arabic		
2	English		
3	French		
4	Japanese		
5	Mandarin		
6	Polish		
7	Portuguese		
8	Punjabi		
9	Spanish		
10	Welsh		
80	Other *(please specify)*	OPEN - FIXED	
86	Prefer not to say	FIXED	

C06.

What is your ethnic background?

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
	White		
1	Scottish/English/Welsh/Northern Irish/UK		
2	Irish		
3	Other European		
4	Any other white background		
	Mixed		
5	Mixed ethnic background (this refers to people whose parents are of a different ethnic background to each other).		
	Asian		
6	Indian		
7	Pakistani		
8	Bangladeshi		
9	Chinese		
10	Any other Asian background		
	Black		
11	Caribbean		
12	African		

13	Any other Black/African/Caribbean background		
	Other		
14	Arab		
80	Any other		
86	Prefer not to say		

C07.

BASE: ALL

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

We use the definition from the Equality Act 2010, which defines a disabled person as someone who has a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activity.

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		
2	No		
86	Prefer not to say		

End of survey

INFO4.

CLOSING TEXT:

You've now reached the end of the survey – on behalf of the GDC and DJS Research, thank you for your time!

INFO PAGE