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**Information Booklet**  
**For**  
**Registered Dental Nurses**

**THE DENTAL COUNCIL**  
**57 Merrion Square**  
**Dublin 2**

## **DENTAL NURSES AND THE LAW**

- 1.1** In accordance with the Scheme made by the Dental Council under the provision of Part VII of the Dentists Act 1985 registered dental nurses are permitted to carry out the following dental work:
1. Provide assistance, short of the practice of dentistry, to the dentist or dental hygienist in the delivery of dental treatments.
  2. Assist at the chairside during all dental procedures.
  3. Preparation of surgeries for dental procedures.
  4. Preparation and sterilization of dental instruments and the disinfection of equipment.
  5. Recording of dental charting and maintenance of treatment records.
  6. The care of patients including assistance in medical emergencies.
  7. Assistance in the care of patients receiving treatment under general anaesthesia and sedation.
  8. Assistance in the taking of dental radiographs.
  9. Reception, patient welfare and health promotion.
  10. Appropriate clerical and administrative duties.
- 1.2** Dental Nurses are permitted to carry out the aforementioned dental work only under the supervision of a registered dentist.
- 1.3** Supervision shall involve regular inspection of the dental nurse's work by the supervising dentist who shall retain overall responsibility for the patient. The supervising dentist shall accept full responsibility for the dental work carried out by the dental nurse under his/her supervision.

- 1.4 A dental nurse who has successfully completed a Dental Council approved course of training in radiation protection and techniques may take radiographs in the practice of dentistry under the direction and supervision of a dentist
- 1.5 A dental nurse who carries out dental work amounting to the practice of dentistry or who presents or holds himself/herself out as being willing and ready to undertake dental work amounting to the practice of dentistry shall be guilty of an offence under the Dentists Act 1985.

## **ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

The dental nurse shall be motivated by the aims of maintaining the honour and integrity of the profession and of assisting the dentist in safeguarding the health of patients and promoting the welfare of the community.

## **THE PROFESSION**

- 2.1 Dental nurses shall maintain their professional knowledge and skill by continuing education and by keeping themselves informed of up-to-date developments in dentistry.
- 2.2 Dental nurses should support the advancement of their profession through membership of scientific and professional organisations and should share the fruits of their experience and research.
- 2.3 Dental nurses shall maintain the honour, morality and integrity of their profession and shall avoid any conduct which might lower its esteem in the eyes of the public.
- 2.4 Unprofessional conduct and improper statements or certificates must be avoided at all times.
- 2.5 Dental nurses must only carry out dental work which they are legally entitled to perform.

- 2.6** Patients must not be canvassed from other practices. Particular attention in this regard must be paid by those acting as locums or operating in a number of different practices.
- 2.7** A registered dental nurse should not practise under a name other than the name under which he/she is registered in the Register of Dental Nurses.
- 2.8** Persons whose names are entered in the Register may use the title “registered dental nurse” and the letters RDN after their names.
- 2.9** A dental nurse must not falsely suggest or imply that he/she possesses special qualifications or skills and must not use any title or description which could reasonably be calculated to suggest that he/she possesses any professional status or qualification other than the professional status or qualification which he/she in fact possesses and which is entered in the Register of Dental Nurses.
- 2.10** A dental nurse must not make comments of a derogatory or disparaging nature on the services or treatment of other members of the profession or on the services or treatments of dentists or dental hygienists.
- 2.11** Dental nurses must not under any circumstances disclose information of a personal or professional nature acquired in the course of their work, whether related to their patients or the practice in which they are employed, except to the dentist under whose supervision they are working and then only in matter relating to their work.
- 2.12** The dental nurse must comply with both the national and Council regulations regarding the control and custody of drugs and the use of x-ray equipment.
- 2.13** The dental nurse should arrange to have his/her current Certificate of Registration displayed at his/her practice locations at all times while engaged in the duties of a dental nurse.

## **THE PATIENT**

- 3.1** The primary duty of the dental nurse shall be to safeguard the welfare of patients entrusted to his/her care without regard to the patient's nationality, sex, race, creed, opinions or social and economic standing.
- 3.2** Professional secrecy shall be absolutely observed by the dental nurse subject only to any limitations imposed thereon by the laws of the state.
- 3.3** The dental nurse should act correctly and sympathetically towards patients at all times.
- 3.4** The dental nurse shall respect the special professional relationship that exists between the patient and members of the dental team and shall do nothing which abuses that relationship.
- 3.5** The dental nurse must be competent in basic emergency resuscitation procedures.

## **THE COMMUNITY**

- 4.1** The dental nurse should assume a responsible role in the community. He/she should assist in the promotion of measures to improve the general and dental health of both the individual and the Community. For this purpose he/she should be prepared to engage in health education and in particular dental health education programmes. In performing such a service, a dental nurse must not promote any dental practice or canvass for patients.
- 4.2** The dental nurse has a duty to protect his/her patients, other staff and himself/herself from the risk of cross-infection in the dental surgery. The dental nurse shall follow the guidelines on cross-infection control issued by the Dental Council.

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