

Name: Mr Dominic O'Hooley
Via email: request-745231-886dc98f@whatdotheyknow.com

7 May 2021

Dear Mr O'Hooley

Thank you for your request for information dated 8 April 2021 where you asked for:

- 1. the date when the GDC first started to either internally, or instructed external operatives/companies to undertake under-guise investigations/operations against registered dental professionals as part of criminal, professional misconduct, health and/or performance alleged issues, whether these resulted in progression to Practice Committees or not.*
- 2. detailed minutes of formal meetings where the GDC decided to use under-guise investigations/operations as part of the investigatory process involving registered dental professionals. Please give the names of all meeting participants and include their recorded positions regarding the use of under-guise investigations/operations by the GDC.*
- 3. the name of the Chairperson of the GDC who was in position when under -guise investigations/operations were first approved for use by the GDC. Please state, for the record, their position regarding under-guise investigations/operations, by the GDC.*
- 4. Please give details of all minutes regarding the formal legal advice given to the GDC regarding the initial proposal/approval and actioning of under-guise investigations/operations, by the GDC.*

Your request is being handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

Your request 1.

We have searched our customer service management system (CRM), financial system, and liaised with long term members of GDC staff to gauge when the GDC first adopted under-guise investigations/operations in fitness to practise cases. From our financial records we can see that under-guise approaches were being used in 2013. However, we are unable to identify the point at which they first began.

To attempt to identify the actual date when the GDC first started to undertake under-guise investigations would require a manual search of paper records prior to 2013. We estimate there are approximately 3,000 boxes in offsite storage which may hold this information. A manual search of this information to determine if this information is held would greatly exceed the cost and time limits set by Section 12 of the FOI Act (£450 or 18 staff hours). We are therefore unable to provide this information.

Because we estimate the costs for the time to search for the information and retrieve the information from offsite storage would be considerably higher than the £450 limit, we are also unable to advise how your request could be refined.

Your requests 2-3.

Regarding your requests two and three, as we are unable to identify when the GDC first started carrying out under-guise investigations we are unable to provide the information. To be able establish whether and to what extent we hold this information would require the same searches described above.

Your request 4.

For your final request for the legal advice we carried out a search through our legal files and concluded we do not hold information relevant to your request.

I am sorry we cannot assist further with your request. If you are dissatisfied with this response or how your request has been handled, you can ask for an internal review to be carried out. Requests for a review should be addressed to:

Executive Director, Legal & Governance
General Dental Council
37 Wimpole Street
London
W1G 8DQ
Email: foirequests@gdc-uk.org

If, at the end of the review process, you are not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may write to the Information Commissioner, who is appointed to consider such complaints, at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Colin Lench
Deputy Information Governance Manager
General Dental Council
Email: foirequests@gdc-uk.org