

Summary of Decisions

From the Dental Council meetings in October 2020

Level 8
Kordia House
109-125 Willis Street
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

PO Box 10-448
Wellington 6143
New Zealand

Tel: +64 4 499 4820
Fax: +64 4 499 1668
inquiries@dcnz.org.nz

www.dcnz.org.nz

The Dental Council (Council) is the statutory body constituted under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) to maintain the health and safety of members of the public by providing mechanisms to ensure that health practitioners are competent and fit to practise. Council endeavours to keep its key stakeholders up to date with key decisions.

This document is a summary of Council's decisions from the meetings held in October 2020.

Consultation – proposed changes to the working relationship requirements for oral health practitioners and the practising conditions for dental hygiene activities

The Council approved the consultation document following its review of:

- whether the current scope of practice requirement for a working/consultative professional relationship for dental therapy, dental hygiene, orthodontic auxiliary, and oral health therapy should remain, and the associated working/professional relationship practice standards
- the current practising conditions (clinical guidance and direct clinical supervision) for the dental hygiene scope of practice.

The key proposals are:

1. Review of the requirement for a professional relationship:
 - a. Retain the scope of practice requirement for a 'working relationship' between a dental therapist, dental hygienist, orthodontic auxiliary or oral health therapist, and dentist, and re-define it as a 'consultative professional relationship'; but remove the need for a signed agreement.
 - b. To remove the working relationship practice standards, and replace them with the following guidance documents:
- Guidance for the consultative professional relationship between an oral health therapist, dental therapist, dental hygienist, or orthodontic auxiliary and dentist/dental specialist.
- Guidance for the professional relationship between a dental technician or clinical dental technician and other health practitioners.
2. To make the following changes to the dental hygiene scope of practice:
 - Remove the requirement for direct clinical supervision for the administration of local anaesthetic and application of prescription preventive agents. Direct clinical supervision for currently specified orthodontic activities to remain.
 - Remove 'clinical guidance' for the remainder of the scope activities.
 - The scope activities to be performed within a consultative professional relationship with a dentist or dental specialist.
 - Align the description of the following scope activity with current dental hygiene practice in the following way: *obtaining and reassessing medical and dental oral health histories*.

The consultation will open in October and close December 2020.

Ministry of Health – draft guidance for the assessment, diagnosis and surgical treatment of tongue tie in babies

The Ministry of Health has developed draft guidance for health practitioners (including dentists), and a draft consumer leaflet for patients on tongue-tie. The guidance is targeted for newborn babies up to the age of six weeks.

Overall Council agreed to support the draft guidance, subject to - the inclusion of dentists being listed along with midwives as a credentialing provider; and seeking further information from the Ministry around the credentialing process for frenotomies.

With regard to developing a position statement on procedures for babies older than six weeks of age, Council agreed that due to the low number of treatment injury cases related to tongue ties reported to the Health and Disability Commissioner and ACC, and the level of risk to the public, there was insufficient information to develop a position statement at this time.