

# PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Dentists infected with bloodborne viruses to perform more procedures, after lobbying by Dental Protection**

**Dental Protection is pleased to see Public Health England’s new guidance for healthcare workers infected with bloodborne viruses, which will enable affected members of the dental team to perform a wider range of non-exposure prone procedures. This has been achieved by reclassifying the treatments normally performed by dental team members within their registered scope of practice.**

For years dentists, hygienists and therapists infected with bloodborne viruses, including HIV, were restricted to working on edentulous patients in the UK. The Department of Health lifted the ban in 2014, replacing it with regular testing and registration. Public Health England has now developed a new risk-based categorisation of exposure-prone procedures, which is released today.

### **Kevin Lewis, Dental Director at Dental Protection said:**

“Dental Protection has actively lobbied on this issue for over ten years on behalf of members and the wider profession. We know that affected oral healthcare professionals are keen to continue in their chosen profession and the combination of the confidential register and new categorisation means that the worry of a sudden loss of income will no longer compound worries about their own health, to anything like the same extent.

“The ability of oral healthcare professionals to continue with a dental career in the event that they are diagnosed as HIV-positive is a huge step forward and a welcome example of science and the evidence-base overcoming ill-informed concerns and prejudices. Once on the Department of Health register, and as long as medical supervision is followed and standard infection control precautions are taken, the majority of normal dental procedures pose no risk of transmission of bloodborne viruses from an infected clinician to a patient.

“We will continue to work with the Department and other agencies to monitor the evidence base that gave them the confidence to bring about a change. As an international organisation, we would like to see other nations, who look to the UK for a lead, align their own policies on this subject.”

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Notes to editor:

1. To access the General dentistry exposure-prone procedure (EPP) categorisation from Public Health England, click here [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/511570/UKA\\_P\\_General\\_Dentistry\\_EPP\\_Categorisation\\_FINAL\\_to\\_be\\_uploaded.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/511570/UKA_P_General_Dentistry_EPP_Categorisation_FINAL_to_be_uploaded.pdf)

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## About Dental Protection

Dental Protection is a registered trademark and a trading name of The Medical Protection Society Limited (“MPS”). MPS is the world’s leading protection organisation for doctors, dentists and healthcare professionals. We protect and support the professional interests of more than 300,000 members around the world. Membership provides access to expert advice and support together with the right to request indemnity for complaints or claims arising from professional practice.

Our in-house experts assist with the wide range of legal and ethical problems that arise from professional practice. This can include clinical negligence claims, complaints, medical and dental council inquiries, legal and ethical dilemmas, disciplinary procedures, inquests and fatal accident inquiries.

Our philosophy is to support safe practice in medicine and dentistry by helping to avert problems in the first place. We do this by promoting risk management through our workshops, E-learning, clinical risk assessments, publications, conferences, lectures and presentations.

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