

## The Dental team

**A dental technician** (or dental mechanic) is an essential member of the dental team who is skilled in the design, construction, repair and adjustment of a variety of dental appliances. They work from a written instructions and direct communication with the dentist.

The dental technician takes a two-dimensional design diagram and written instructions into a three-dimensional products:

- Restoring natural teeth (crowns, inlays/onlays, veneers);
- Replacing teeth (bridges, partial and full dentures, dental implant prosthesis);
- Replacing oral soft and hard structures (aesthetic reconstruction);
- Moving, retaining and protecting teeth (orthodontics: mouthguards, splints, trays, stents); and
- Aligning the jaw position (orthognathics: TMJ, sleep apnoea, etc.).

**A dental therapist** is a healthcare professional that provides restorative and preventive dental services to children, and adults. As a clinician they are required to work together with a dentist to decide the appropriate treatment procedures for each individual patient. Once a treatment plan has been agreed with the dentists the therapist will undertake all the restorative treatment and extractions of deciduous teeth.

They do not undertake endodontic treatment, advanced restorative treatment, minor oral surgery or the provision of dentures.

**A dental hygienist** is a healthcare professional who provides highly skilled preventive services on all age groups without cutting or removing teeth. As a clinician they work in consultation with a dentist to determine the best preentive treatment for each individual patient, but work independently in delivering their dental services. They often deal with patients with severe or progressive periodontal disease and undertake the scaling and cleaning of teeth to help the patient maintain their teeth.

**Specialist Dentists** are dentists who have studied and taken further qualifications to provide advanced special care in one type of dentistry. They are often called consultants when they have demonstrated superior skills and knowledge to the Universities and colleges.

**Orthodontists:** Specialise in the developing dentition of children and planning treatment to correct any malocclusions. They will also treat some adults that need the alignment of their teeth corrected.

**Oral Surgeons:** specialise in surgery within the mouth which would include extractions of impacted or buried teeth, biopsies of tissue, removal of pathology.

There are also specialist dentists in Periodontologists –periodontal treatment, Prosthodontists –dentures, Endodontists – Root treatments, Paedodontists – care of children, Oral medicine specialists, Restorative dentists, Implantologists,

### **Administrative support**

A clinic or **practice manager** will be responsible for the management of the clinic to ensure there are procedures in place for the safe working of the clinic as well as the payment of staff and finance control of the clinic. The **receptionist** will be responsible for managing patient appointments, recalls and payments and the administration of patient records.