

Advancing Dental Care Review

FAQs

Q1: What is the purpose of the Advancing Dental Care Review?

HEE's *Advancing Dental Care* (ADC) Education & Training Review was commissioned to consider the skills and composition of the future dental workforce that will best meet future patient need, and the training structures and funding models that will deliver that workforce.

The Review's aim is to develop an education and training infrastructure that can respond to the changing needs of patients and services.

Q2: What is the scope of the Review?

ADC is exploring flexible training pathways for the oral healthcare workforce in England that will produce an optimum skills-mix for future patient-centred care. All dental registrants are within the scope of the Review: both dentists and Dental Care Professionals (DCPs).

While a key focus of the Review is workforce optimisation, the existing General Dental Council (GDC) Scope of Practice for dental registrants is not under review. ADC's focus is on enabling registrants to fulfil their potential as members of the multi-professional dental team, by promoting opportunities within the Scope of Practice, and identifying and removing barriers to these.

The Review will not make recommendations regarding the General Dental Services (GDS) or Personal Dental Services (PDS) Agreement. However, HEE recognises that the ongoing dental contract reforms will be integral to enhancing working lives, improving retention and enabling dental teams to support patient care pathways. On this basis, we are liaising with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to understand developments in the contract reform process and the potential workforce implications of these.

Q3: Why is HEE reviewing dental education and training now?

HEE is responsible for ensuring that there is an effective mechanism in place for education and training in the NHS and public health system.

At present, the composition of the dental workforce, and its underpinning training structures are largely the product of historic decisions. The key factors for reviewing education and training now are population need, workforce supply and, more recently, the publication of the NHS Long Term Plan and People Plan.

Population need: There have been significant improvements in recent decades in adult oral health in England that are projected to continue. At the same time, the population is ageing and there are some entrenched pockets of poor oral health. This suggests that dental care should focus on oral health promotion, whilst providing targeted interventions for high-need and vulnerable groups.

HEE is therefore considering how to optimise the collective skills and competencies of dental registrants to provide timely, prevention-oriented oral healthcare.

Supply of education and training: The 2015 Spending Review announced education funding reforms to pre-registration nursing, midwifery, allied health and dental hygiene and dental therapy courses. These reforms took effect from 1 August 2017 and withdrew NHS bursaries for students of these courses. Alongside this, different entry routes into healthcare education, such as apprenticeships, are changing the way the future DCP workforce is trained.

HEE is now working with partners to develop a fair and sustainable funding mechanism for healthcare workforce supply. ADC will ensure that dental training is considered throughout this process. Britain's planned exit from the European Union also necessitates a renewed focus on retaining and optimising the UK-qualified workforce.

The NHS Long Term Plan and Interim People Plan: The NHS published its Long Term Plan (LTP) in January 2019, setting out an ambitious 10-year vision for healthcare in England. It described a new integrated service model where more action is taken on prevention and health inequalities, improving care quality and health outcomes. In May 2019, the Interim NHS People Plan described how the workforce would deliver the LTP vision

The NHS reform agenda provides an exciting opportunity to embed oral health into the 21st century healthcare system. ADC is taking an active role in this process, by developing flexible training structures for dental workforce supply and retention, and supporting the development of dental leadership.

Q4: How has HEE taken forward the Review since the publication of the first Advancing Dental Care report in April 2018?

Phase I of ADC established widespread support for the case for change and developed 21 recommendations for further developing the evidence-base to underpin and test potential education reform. HEE's Executive Team approved a three-year continuation of the Review in May 2018, and this commitment was repeated in HEE's Mandate from the DHSC for 2019-20.

Dr Malcolm Smith, Postgraduate Dental Dean for the North East, has been appointed as the ADC Chair for Phase II of the Review, and the General Dental Council (GDC) has also joined the Review Assurance Board alongside the Chief Dental Officer for England, Dr Sarah Hurley.

Phase II of the Review is focused on the delivery of three core objectives:

1. Collate a robust evidence-base on the population's oral health needs in a technology enabled, prevention-oriented system, and model the most appropriate dental workforce for meeting those needs.
2. Identify and audit the effectiveness of existing innovative training approaches and develop recommendations for adapting or upscaling exemplars within the available funding envelope.
3. Understand the CPD requirements of the existing workforce and identify best practice.

The HEE Dental Deans are chairing workstreams with specific delivery priorities linked to these objectives. Evidence to support the delivery of these objectives has been collated throughout 2018/19 and will continue until completion of Phase II activities in 2021.

Q5: How has HEE produced its evidence base?

During Phase II of the Review, HEE has conducted detailed scoping, research and analysis of the current dental service, workforce and dental education to establish future need, workforce aspiration, and best training practice. We have collated evidence that will help us to answer the following questions:

- What are the current and projected population needs?
- What is the workforce profile and skills mix that will most effectively meet population needs?
- How can the education and training commissioning model be adapted to meet that workforce prototype?
- What are the training needs of the existing qualified workforce?

Q6: What are the main challenges for ADC?

Data quality and availability have presented a significant challenge for HEE in developing an accurate understanding of the current workforce, its NHS commitment and the specific activities performed by different dental registrants.

HEE has worked closely with partners, including the GDC, Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Digital to collate and interpret the information available in the current system. We have triangulated information, wherever possible, to develop a comprehensive and consistent picture of the dental workforce and its activity in England, as well as population need.

Q7: How is HEE engaging with the dental system?

In Autumn 2019, HEE will engage widely with the dental workforce, its professional membership bodies, specialty associations, educators, learners, service providers, and public health experts.

The purpose of this exercise will be to share the Review's findings to date; to expand our evidence-base where there are gaps and new data sources can be identified; and to seek stakeholder views on existing innovation and the potential for new flexible training models.

HEE will publish a discussion document on the ADC website, which will provide a summary of our research findings and pose questions to prompt debate. The discussion document will provide the basis for face-to-face workshops and the online crowdsourcing of opinion on training pathways during engagement activity. Where General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) allows, the underpinning evidence base, including data tables and full research reports, will also be published by HEE as it becomes available.

HEE will host a national stakeholder forum with key national stakeholders on 22nd October, which will launch an England-wide engagement exercise hosted by the HEE Dental Deans in their seven regions.

Q8: What will be the Review's Phase II outputs?

HEE has committed to explore more flexible dental training pathways in the Interim NHS People Plan.

Phase II of the Review will develop and evaluate pilot training initiatives from September 2020, with the objective of providing greater flexibility, to deliver an oral health service that both meets patient needs and responds to dental registrants' career aspirations. This will culminate in a series of recommendations regarding future models of training.

Q8: What is the timeline for delivery?

The five month engagement phase will run from October. The Review team will review feedback and refine its recommendations for flexible training models and share these widely with stakeholders for comment by May 2020.

We are evaluating existing innovation in training models throughout 2019/20 and HEE's local offices will pilot a range of new training programmes from September 2020.

The evaluation outcomes will determine the final recommendations to HEE's Executive Team in 2021 regarding future models of training.

Q9: How can I contribute to the Review or get more information?

For more information on the Review and opportunities to share your views, contact the Review team at advancingdentistry@hee.nhs.uk.