

WRITTEN EVIDENCE FOR HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND SPORT COMMITTEE; NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES INQUIRY INTO DENTISTRY 2018

Wales Deanery Dental section is confining written evidence to the specific terms of reference in the inquiry which deals with the- *consideration of issues with the training, recruitment and retention of dentists in Wales.*

1. Background

The Dental Postgraduate Section of the Wales Deanery supports postgraduate education and training for the whole dental workforce (Dentists and Dental Care Professionals) in Wales and is responsible for the recruitment, quality management and satisfactory delivery of postgraduate dental training. The Deanery works closely with colleagues from Cardiff University Dental School and liaises frequently with the Office of the Chief Dental Officer (Welsh Government). The dental section is responsible on an annual basis for approximately 170 trainees.

1.1 Dental Foundation Training (DFT)

Dental Foundation Training is the first phase of continuing postgraduate education after graduation and is recognised as a part of career pathways in all sections of the dental profession. The Dental Postgraduate section currently offers opportunities to complete 1 year of Dental Foundation Training (DFT). This equates to one year of training working in GDS/CDS in an approved training practice, with one day a week allocated to educational study. There are up to 74 Dental Foundation trainees (dentists in their first year after qualification- this year is a mandatory requirement for dentists who intend to work in the General Dental Services providing NHS dentistry).

1.2 Dental Core Training (DCT)

Dental Core Training offers the opportunity to broaden knowledge and experience within the dental profession and is a recognised career pathway following the completion of Dental Foundation Training (DFT). Wales has four Dental Core Training Year 1 (DCT1) Schemes that commence in September of each year. There is a 30-day educational element (study days) covering both hospital and community practice.

The main aims of the scheme are to allow participants to broaden their understanding of the inter-relationship between branches of the profession, enabling a more informed career choice and to further develop their dental expertise and skills, building on previous training received as undergraduates and dental foundation practitioners. In addition, there are further career development posts known as Dental Core Training Year 2/3 posts (DCT2 or DCT3). These posts are normally undertaken following completion of training at DFT and DCT1. Currently there are 74 Dental Core Trainees (30 at level 1, 39 at level 2, and 5 at level 3). It is important to note that all of these posts support service delivery in hospital and/or community dental services

1.3 Speciality Training

Over the past few years Dental Specialty Training has expanded considerably and the Dental Postgraduate Section of the Wales Deanery is proud to support a variety of Deanery approved training programmes across 7 of the 13 GDC approved Dental specialties with a total of 21 current specialty trainees.

Dentists who wish to train to be a dental specialist must complete at least two years of training post-graduation, covering a broad clinical experience. At least one year should be spent in hospital or community practice, and each post must be occupied for a minimum of three months. The exact length of specialty training will depend on the specialty in question. All specialty trainees must register with the Director of Dental Postgraduate Education in Wales, who is responsible for monitoring the trainee's progress and the quality of training received. On completion of training, the trainee will need to pass relevant examinations (depending on the specialty) provided by one of the Royal Colleges and will become eligible for recommendation, by the Director to the General Dental Council (GDC), for the award of a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) which in turn should lead to their name being entered on the GDC's relevant specialist list.

1.4 Dental Care Professionals (DCPs)

Dental Care Professionals (DCPs) is a collective term that includes the following roles: Clinical Dental Technician (CDT), Dental Technician, Orthodontic Therapist, Dental Hygienist (DH), Dental Therapist (DT), and Dental Nurse (DN). The greater use of 'skill-mix', where DCPs play a more pivotal front-line role in dental service provision in the NHS is a principle that aligns with the Prudent Healthcare agenda in Wales.

'Skill-mix' can be divided into role substitution and role supplementation. The former is where DCPs undertake clinical tasks instead of dentists, whereas the latter is where DCPs augment the activity of a dentist. Both are considered to be important in shifting the future provision from a 'cure' to a 'care' model, particularly in dentistry with an emphasis on prevention. Wales Deanery provides a wide range of postgraduate programmes for DCPs which facilitate this process and develops the workforce, extending the skill sets. In particular, a Foundation Training Scheme for Dental Therapists to work in NHS GDS is provided annually with limited subsidised places. DCPs are essential members of any dental team. The GDC registers and regulates all members of the dental team, dentists and DCPs.

2. Current and future issues affecting delivery and success of the training programmes

Over the last few years the team at the Deanery have become aware of a number of issues that could present challenges to the delivery of dental training programmes. These include:

- Policy issues
- National Recruitment processes
- Recruitment and retention issues

2.1 Policy issues

Workforce Intelligence

In 2012 the Chief Dental Officer (Wales) commissioned a review of the dental workforce in Wales (***Analysis of Dental Workforce: NLI AH 2012***). The aim of the review was to compare the anticipated future supply of dental staff against possible future demand, and make recommendations on planning for a sustainable dental workforce. The report highlighted a number of important issues. One of the key problems that was identified was the ability to track dentists' career patterns was constrained by the available data; sufficient data was

available to identify the number of dental graduates produced in Wales since 2007 who were in the Welsh workforce in late 2011/early 2012. The data also showed the number of dentists who completed DF1 in Wales during 2007-2011 and were in the Welsh workforce in 2011/12. On average during the period 2007-2010, 58% of Welsh-trained dental graduates entered the Welsh workforce after completing DF1. **Undertaking DF1 training in Wales is a significant factor in the decision to continue working in Wales.** Of these, 90% undertook DF1 training in Wales and 10% undertook it elsewhere before returning to work in Wales.

Whilst the forecasts reported in the Review provide useful information around the expected future direction of the demand for and supply of dentists it is important to recognise, the forecasts have limitations because they do not capture the complexity that affect the dental marketplace. Therefore, any decisions about the supply of dentists should be informed by both the forecasts and additional information

Briefly, at the time of compiling this paper some data on the destination of new graduates (2018) has been obtained. These data indicated that only 28% (23 out of 75) of Cardiff University graduates have taken a DFT position in Wales this year. Trend data on previous cohorts of graduates are currently being analysed. The introduction of Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) in October 2018 will bring a significant boost to the development of workforce intelligence and workforce planning for NHS Wales.

Government policy

Two recently published national strategic policy initiatives will have a bearing on DFT training in the future. **Advancing Dental Care: Education and Training Review** published by Health Education England (HEE) recently outlined a number of areas which will affect the dental workforce, particularly with regards to commissioning education and training. If all proposals are realised this could signify an important policy shift in the way that all dentists and DCPs are trained. The outcome of this review will not be known for some time. In addition, the Cabinet Secretary has released a written statement “**A Healthier Wales: the oral health and dental services response**” which details the contribution oral health and dental services will make in achieving the vision of a whole system change, focused on health and wellbeing. This policy document will have a major influence on how oral health services are organized and delivered in the future, and the workforce needed to support this.

2.2 *National Recruitment processes*

DFT

Since National DFT recruitment commenced in 2014/15, there has always been competition for DFT places from both UK, EU and overseas graduates. Over recent years a small minority of UK graduates have been unable to gain a place on the programme. This has put a strain on the system as these graduates need to be accommodated in an approved process of training/equivalence in order to obtain a place on a scheme to be able to work in the NHS General Dental Services.

DCT

A National recruitment process for DCTs has recently been introduced. This process has thrown up some different issues for dental services in Wales. Some providers have found it difficult to recruit suitable candidates for these positions. The reasons for this are multifactorial, however the pay differences between England and Wales and the specific geographical locations of these positions have been mentioned in feedback as problems from previous post holders

Specialty

Speciality training places are strictly limited due to the lack of specific funding and, all of the jobs that have been advertised over the last few years have attracted a large cohort of applicants. However, there are issues with the development of new (and the replacement of current) consultant led specialist services in some specialities (in particular – orthodontics and restorative dentistry). There are very many consultant orthodontist vacancies in all parts of the UK. The major issue appears to be the pay differences between a specialist and a consultant working in the field of orthodontics. A qualified specialist orthodontist (with 3 years training) can earn almost twice the salary of an NHS consultant (with 5 years training).

2.2 Recruitment and retention issues

The Dental Section are convinced that there are number of influences that need to be factored into the discussion that relate to the long-term retention of dentists in Wales. These factors include issues relating to the recruitment and delivery of undergraduate dentist (BDS) and DCP programmes at Cardiff University, pay differentials between England and Wales for training grade salaries (see appendix 1) and, the popularity and opportunity of work placements in primary dental care (in rural and remote areas) for those graduates who have completed their DFT programme.

Some rural areas in Wales (and in other parts of the UK) have found it harder than others to recruit and retain dentists. Training additional dentists does not guarantee that they will choose to apply for posts (or establish practices) in these particular areas. Social, cultural and professional opportunities afforded by life in a city have been shown to be important factors in the decision-making process of dental graduates about where they work. If these difficulties remain, government and health service planners will need to develop new and innovative solutions to meet the oral health needs of the local populations. Solutions developed in other parts of the UK; in particular, Scotland should be investigated. The dental workforce in Wales cannot be considered in isolation from the workforces in other parts of the UK and the wider EEA.

In summary the key issues that the dental section would propose to address these problems can be summarised as:

- **HEIW working with Cardiff University to develop a strategy to increase the numbers of Welsh domiciled applicants and entrants**
 - Collect and analyse further relevant demographic data and link to workforce planning
 - Analyse whether the use of cultural and social determinants could be incorporated into CU entry requirements
 - Develop a closer working relationship between undergraduate and postgraduate training processes (e.g. flexible use of outreach facilities)

- **HEIW must ensure that the recruitment and delivery of DFT programmes is improved**
 - Collect and analyse further relevant demographic data and link to workforce planning
 - Identify and use multi-surgery/trainers' dental practices in geographical areas where it is hard to recruit, and, award flexible long-term trainer contracts
 - Develop better training relationships with corporate providers who hold the majority of NHS contracts in North and West Wales
 - Work and publicise improving the undergraduate/postgraduate transition process

- **HEIW must work with LHBs to provide ongoing work/training experiences in the GDS**
 - Using/top slicing in-year LHB GDS NHS dental contract funds to fund and deliver additional DFT+ places in areas of dental access and disease need, in order to provide patients with some continuity of care and practice
 - Working with WG and LHBs to develop an incentives package to encourage working in less popular areas in Wales
 - Working with WG to develop cogent GDP career pathways
 - Work with Government contract reform programme to develop ongoing work opportunities for dentists/DCPs who have completed foundation training.

Appendix 1
Dental Training Grade Pay scales in UK 2017/18

Annual Salary - £ Gross	England	Scotland	Wales	NI	Comment
DFT	31,356	30,468	31,044	31,176	Wales - Based upon 2017 figures NI – As per SDR 17-18
DCT 1	36,461	34,674	30,665	36,461	Wales - WG pay circular M&D(W)1_2017 dated 6 th April 2017 NI – As per Pay and conditions Circular (M&D) 1/2017
DCT 2	36,461	35,121- 37,041- 38,960- 40,880	32,548	36,461	Scotland – Scale Wales - WG pay circular M&D(W)1_2017 dated 6 th April 2017 NI – As per Pay and conditions Circular (M&D) 1/2017
DCT 3	46,208	35,121- 37,041- 38,960- 40,880	34,430	46,208	Scotland – Scale Wales - WG pay circular M&D(W)1_2017 dated 6 th April 2017 NI – As per Pay and conditions Circular (M&D) 1/2017