

The last issue of DCR News covered the main findings from the interim evaluation report and gave information about *Starting Well*, the new NHS England led prevention programme, aiming to improve the oral health of children under the age of 5.

This issue will look at the recent engagement events that were held with the current prototype practices and give more detail about the preventative clinical pathway at the heart of the dental contract reform programme.

Evaluating the Dental Prototypes - Engagement events

The programme invited all prototype practices and their commissioners to one of five evaluation engagement events held in September. The aim of the events was to share the findings that will form the basis of the evaluation report. The aim of sharing the information was to allow practices and commissioners to provide feedback on the narrative and data to be used in the completion of the report. There was also a policy update provided on the dental contract reform programme.

As well as sharing the data for the evaluation, the facilitated discussions and networking also allowed participants an opportunity to share learning and best practice with their peers and the programme team.

The events were attended by 147 delegates directly from the prototypes plus representatives from NHS England local offices.

Key stakeholders were also invited, including representation from software suppliers, BDA, GDC and the NHS BSA. The events were facilitated by Primary Care Commissioning and supported by senior programme team members from both the Department of Health and NHS England.

The agenda included an update on the programme, but the majority of the day was spent on the themes from the evaluation report and looking at the data being used to inform the report. Delegates had an opportunity to discuss the data, put forward their views and to pose further questions for the programme to consider as part of the prototype evaluation.

The evaluation engagement events covered the five key themes from the evaluation report:

- Oral health and clinical pathway
- Quality
- Sustainability

- Access and accessibility
- Contract delivery – value for money

At each facilitated session delegates were invited to give a key message on each of these themes. The key messages and discussions from each session being used to inform the published evaluation report.

There was a panel question session at the end of the day, with representation from the Department of Health, NHS England and the BDA. This was an opportunity for delegates to ask questions in relation to the evaluation and wider programme. The events were well attended and there was some lively discussion. The programme team would like to extend their thanks to all the delegates who attended the events and contributed to the discussion, this has been valuable in informing the upcoming prototype evaluation report.

The slideset shared at the events and the key messages given by delegates are available on the DCR website: <https://www.pcc-cic.org.uk/article/evaluation>

The Clinical Pathway in Dental Contract Reform Prototypes

The clinical pathway currently being used in the Dental Contract Reform Prototypes is based on the original ideas set out in the “Independent Review of NHS Dentistry”¹ by Professor Jimmy Steele and his team. The intention being to offer a standardised oral health assessment for patients, followed by appropriate preventive self-care advice and any preventive therapies by the dental team. Subsequent to this, the provision of any treatment that is clinically necessary, and a plan for a recall appointment for oral health review at an appropriate interval for that particular patient.

The detail of this pathway was developed by a working group comprising general dental practitioners, academics, dental public health specialists, representatives of patients, commissioners and the Department of Health. The pathway was tested in the first pilots in 2011 and has subsequently been amended on 2 occasions².

It was agreed that the assessment should focus on 4 particular oral conditions:

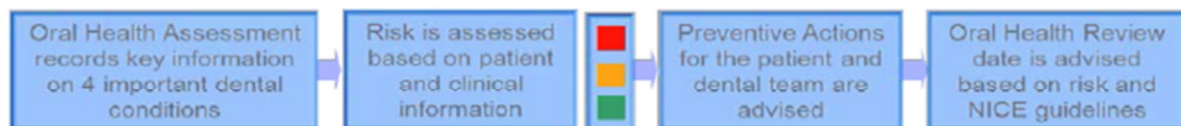
- Dental Caries (tooth decay)
- Periodontal Disease (gum disease)
- Tooth surface loss and
- Soft tissue pathology (focus on oral cancer).

For each of these clinical issues we know that the risk of developing them, or of the conditions progressing is related to clinical findings and information in the patient’s medical or social histories. This information is gathered at the oral health

assessment. On the basis of this information, a risk level – red, amber or green is assigned for each of these conditions as part of the oral health assessment. The assessment is supported by the software systems being used in the prototype practices and offers decision support based on the information held in the clinical record.

A number of things flow from this risk assessment:

- Members of the dental team discuss the risks with the patient and provide evidence based preventive advice relating to the patients daily oral hygiene practices and depending on the assessment findings, wider lifestyle choices, for example smoking or alcohol use.
- Members of the dental team provide any necessary evidence based preventive therapies, for example fluoride varnish, or plaque and calculus removal.
- The evidence base for these interventions is set out in “Delivering Better Oral Health”³
- A review or recall time is set based on the patients risk in line with NICE Guideline CG19⁴



The pathway approach and the focus on prevention has been well accepted by patients, with 79% saying that the advice they received was helpful and 75% reporting that they had changed the way they cared for their teeth or gums.⁵ This approach also fits well with the ideas set out in the Five Year Forward View for the NHS⁶, including promoting self-care, focussing on evidence based prevention and using NHS services only when needed.

- 1 Independent Review of NHS Dentistry http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130123200117/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_101137
- 2 DCR Clinical Pathway Review 2012 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213203/Clinical_Pathway_Review_Report_-_final.pdf
- 3 Delivering Better Oral Health 3rd edition https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/605266/Delivering_better_oral_health.pdf
- 4 Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg19>

- 5 ICM Research report for the Department of Health
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213000/dental-contract-reform-pilots-evaluation-research-report-for-dh-by-icm.pdf
- 6 Five Year Forward View <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf>

Up Next..

Regulations extending the prototype agreement scheme until 31 March 2020 have been laid and the next edition will set out what this means.

For further information about the prototype scheme please visit www.pcc-cic.org.uk/resources/dental-contract-reform.