



Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS White Paper

Consultation response from the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) (FGDP [UK]), based at the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCS), welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Government's consultation on the White Paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS'. We applaud the stated ambition to achieve and maintain world-class healthcare outcomes, with a focus on quality standards, within the NHS. We also welcome the approach to support more effective patient involvement in how services are developed, delivered and accessed.

Commissioning

The FGDP(UK) supports the proposed system of commissioning that empowers healthcare providers to make decisions based on local need. The FGDP(UK) has previously worked with the Department of Health in the development and publication of national guidelines and competency frameworks for Dentists with Special Interests (DwSI), a scheme which is aimed at delivering special interest services where there is a local need. The creation of an independent NHS Commissioning Board, as set out in the White Paper, could facilitate more effective implementation of DwSI and similar schemes where the need exists. Consideration should also be given to mechanisms for assessing the oral healthcare needs of disadvantaged or special care groups, such as the elderly.

It is essential that the proposed NHS Commissioning Board has access to the relevant clinical information and expertise necessary for the commissioning of primary dental care services. We would support representation of primary care

dentistry on the national NHS Commissioning Board to ensure that decisions are based on independent advice and evidence. It may also be appropriate to involve primary care professionals on the proposed local GP consortia groups in the interests of ensuring an integrated approach between dentists and GPs on issues regarding the general oral health care needs in a given community.

We would wish to see additional consultation on the mechanisms for local commissioning of primary dental care, and look forward to the opportunity for further engagement with the Government in this area.

New dental contract

The FGDP(UK) notes the Government's plans to introduce a new dental contract. We welcome the stated aim of improving quality and raising standards of dental care, and would support a system that actively promotes better oral health nationwide, with an additional focus on schoolchildren.

We recognise the issues raised by some in the profession concerning the constraints of the current contractual arrangements and potential impact on the quality of care delivered to patients. We welcome the Government's intention to consult on the new contract and look forward to seeing more detail in due course.

Education and training

The FGDP(UK) welcomes the intention to lead education commissioning, both locally and nationally, through Medical Education England (MEE). We are also pleased with the proposals set out in the White paper for the profession to have a leading role in deciding the structure, content and quality of training.

The FGDP(UK) has an important role in setting quality standards in postgraduate education and training, and, as such, is well positioned to assist in defining quality assurance mechanisms and indicators. The MJDF examination, which assesses for the acquisition of competencies set out in the dental foundation training curriculum, is one key example of where the FGDP(UK), along with the Faculty of Dental Surgery at the RCS, has developed markers of knowledge and skills to support the provision of quality-assured dental healthcare. We would welcome the opportunity to share our

expertise in supporting MEE in strategies for appropriate and relevant education commissioning, and also to support the work of the Care Quality Commission in establishing robust frameworks for high standards of quality and patient safety.

It is essential that any strategy for education and training should be aligned with future requirements for revalidation. The FGDP(UK) has begun work in this area and, along with relevant stakeholders, is planning the development of appropriate support mechanisms for the profession to meet the necessary requirements once revalidation is introduced. We look forward to further engagement with Government and for full details of the proposals in the upcoming consultation on education and training.

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About the FGDP(UK)

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) is the academic home for general dental practitioners (GDPs) and dental care professionals (DCPs) in the UK. Based at The Royal College of Surgeons of England, its mission is to enable all members of the primary dental care team to achieve and maintain the highest standards of patient care by encouraging involvement in postgraduate training and assessment, education and research. The FGDP(UK) supports the career development of both GDPs and DCPs and recognises the value of an integrated dental team in modern dentistry.