

'Visionary' new standard for commissioning of specialist Restorative Dentistry services

RD-UK, the national association for consultants in restorative dentistry, welcomes the publication of the Commissioning Standard for Restorative Dentistry, describing it as a visionary guide, designed to deliver greater clarity for NHS commissioners, in the interests of patients and for the dental profession.

This is the latest in a line of specialist standards to be published by NHS England and to serve as a handbook for dental commissioners. Compiling this Standard for restorative dentistry has been challenging, given that it also encompasses the sub-specialties of endodontics, periodontics and prosthodontics, involving consultation with numerous stakeholders.

Professor Martin Ashley, Chairman of RD-UK, said he was very proud of the way representatives of all the stakeholder

groups came together to produce a document which would help NHS England commission services with clear pathways and responsibilities. 'I am optimistic that the document heralds a new era for patients and for our specialty.'

For too long, he said, there had been inconsistencies and uncertainty around the management of patients needing specialist restorative dentistry treatments in this country. Now, he said, it was the responsibility of the developing Managed Clinical Networks (MCNs) – the consultant led group for each specialty in each area of the country – to move forward using the new Standard as a guide for developing clear patient pathways. It will be MCNs which decide, through efficient triaging of patients, where and from whom patients can receive dental care. There will

also be much more equality of access to specialist restorative dentistry services across the country.

Professor Ashley said the current system needed to evolve and key to this was to define three levels of teams who provide dental care, starting with

dentists in general practice, progressing to dentists with enhanced or specialist skills in primary care with the third level being services led by consultants in restorative dentistry, usually delivering care within multi-disciplinary teams, in a hospital setting.

Most routine dental care will always be delivered by the clinical teams working in the general practice setting, at Level One. Those patients who require more complex restorative dental treatment, can be referred within the MCN and may then receive the appropriate dental care by another clinical team, either at Level Two or Level Three. It is recognised that currently few functioning Managed Clinical Networks (MCNs) for restorative dentistry exist and the important further development of the workforce, particularly at Level Two, will need to be incremental.

'We want to make sure that patients receive the right care, provided by the right person in the right place. By working collaboratively, we will improve the quality of the care and the effectiveness of the service.'

'We now have a document to form the basis of our discussions with commissioners, to allow development of really effective MCNs across the country. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the support team at NHS England as well as all of my colleagues who contributed to the development of this guide. We had to work to a tight timeframe and I am proud that we could all come together to achieve what I believe to be a visionary document.'



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Pensions tax – we need you!

In response to members facing large tax charges, the BDA has been campaigning for greater flexibility within the NHS Pension Scheme.

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) is now consulting on proposals to introduce flexibility, and we are gathering dentists' views on your experience of pensions tax. A BDA member survey has

been launched and the results of this survey will be used to frame our response to DHSC.

Members should receive an email outlining how you can complete this online survey, and responses are invited until the survey closes on Friday 27 September 2019.

If you do not receive details of this survey, or if you wish to discuss any aspect of pensions and their taxation, you

can contact BDA Pensions Team at 020 7563 4161/6897 or via email at: advice.enquiries@bda.org.

If you wish to read the consultation, you can do so at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818911/nhs-pension-flexibility-consultation-document.pdf.