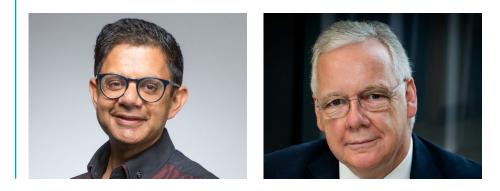**PERSPECTIVE**

Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (ACFF) UK Chapter meeting summary

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Key points

- The ACFF UK Chapter met to create actionable plans to further progress its advocacy aims through implementation of *Delivering better oral health* version 4.
- Experts from across the UK and the wide spectrum of oral health were brought together for a holistic discussion.
- The meeting discussed the Chapter's three central themes and how IT solutions could help implement and facilitate the plans.

On 2/3 November 2022, the Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (ACFF) UK Chapter met for the first time since its launch in October 2021. The UK Chapter Co-Chairs, Professor Avijit Banerjee and Professor Nigel Pitts, structured the meeting, with the aim of creating actionable plans to further progress its advocacy aims in confronting and reducing the caries disease burden through prevention across the UK, through implementation of the *Delivering better oral health* version 4 (DBOHv4) publication from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities earlier in the year. At the launch meeting, the UK Chapter agreed on three themes of DBOHv4 implementation in caries management:

- Caries in everyday dental practice (clinical practice implementation in primary care)
- Caries in health and social care curricula (education of all primary healthcare stakeholders)
- Caries and the vulnerable across the life course (clinical practice of vulnerable, high-needs patient groups).

IT solutions to help implement and facilitate the progress of each theme were also included in the remit for discussions for all themes. All the Chapter members are agreed that, as an independent advocacy charity, the ACFF is in a unique position to progress these themes in the national/international caries prevention and management arena.

The Chapter members were divided into three working groups, each tasked with developing an appropriate, effective and pragmatic plan for their assigned theme. Summary details of the plans follow below.

> 'The ACFF is in a unique position to progress these themes in the national/international caries prevention and management arena.'

Theme 1 – caries in everyday dental practice
Russ Ladwa (Theme Lead), Patrick Fee, Ben Atkins, Miranda Steeples

- Acknowledgement of the problem among the oral health workforce regarding motivation and retention, which has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Creation of a 'how-to guide' for oral healthcare teams to empower them, encourage cross-professional teamwork and try to reorientate care delivery. It will also show that working ▸▸

◀◀   on prevention and minimum intervention caries care can be a viable and rewarding primary care business option
- Digital social media engagement is necessary to positively steer the image of oral healthcare professionals, both by the public and the professionals
- There is work to be done to control the narrative with positive messaging to/from all stakeholders but also with an emphasis on the importance of general and oral health and wellbeing.

Theme 2 – caries in health and social care curricula
Chris Deery (Theme Lead), Gail Douglas, Tim Newton, Fiona Sandom, Fiona Ellwood
- The wider oral healthcare team was divided into subgroups, including allied health professionals. The creation of a curriculum framework would outline the suggested content, resources and incentives for each subgroup:
  - For content – what would each allied profession need to know?
  - For resources – how can they be supported in learning and application?
  - For incentives – how do we incentivise implementing change in the curricula?
- While the ACFF would provide the framework, the Chapter will work closely with partner organisations to ensure that proposals are orientated correctly for the target audience. All of the frameworks will be gathered on a website and app so that it is easily accessible by professional stakeholders during their work
- Getting dental schools and educational systems to implement the frameworks would be the next challenge and the Chapter will need to work closely with the relevant stakeholders.

Theme 3 – caries in the vulnerable across the life course
Rakhee Patel (Theme Lead), Maria Morgan, Gerry Mckenna, James Coughlan, Chris Vernazza
- Defining what makes someone vulnerable and then prioritising these groups accordingly
- This requires collaboration with partner organisations, patient groups and relevant charities from across the UK to ensure the right groups are targeted, while also being sensitive to differences across the UK
- Co-production of resources embedded across partner organisation and patient group websites where they would be most easily accessed. Ease of access was highlighted as a crucial part in ensuring that the right messages and information are disseminated and social media will once again play its role in this
- As with the other three themes, the right incentives and catalysts for positive behaviours will be crucial to success. With this in mind, the Chapter will be looking into incentives such as continuing professional development courses, practice awards and other ways of rewarding positive change and success.

The Chapter Co-Chairs would like to thank all members of the ACFF UK Chapter for volunteering their time and energy in pursuing a cavity-free future. ■