WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR

Issue Date: 7th February 2007

Title:
Dental Vocational Training in Wales and Arrangements for Determination of Vocational Training Equivalence - Role of the Department of Postgraduate Dental Education

For Action by:
Chief Executives Local Health Boards
Director of the Dental Payment Division of the NHS Business Services Agency
Director of Dental Postgraduate Education Wales

Action required See paragraph(s): 3, Page 3

For Information to: see attached list

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Summary

1. Dental Vocational Training in Wales is a centrally funded NHS programme providing up to 65 training places. We have been through the biggest period of reform in dentistry for 50 years. It is only now the impact of these changes can begin to be assessed. The Dental Vocational Training programme has been reviewed in this context.

2. Representations from VT trainers highlight concerns about current methods of payment processing, reporting and monitoring Vocational Dental Practitioners clinical and educational activity. This has led to problems with trainer recruitment. These concerns have been discussed with key stakeholders and this circular introduces changes to address these issues.

3. It is essential to ensure strong VT structures remain in place to provide the base for future development of modernising dental careers and a two-year foundation programme for dentistry in Wales. LHBs attention is invited to the potential long-term recruitment to their dental workforces vocational dental practitioners represent.

4. The attached guidance provides information on funding, levels of remuneration, allocations, payment mechanisms, the management and governance of dental vocational training in Wales. This circular supersedes all previous Welsh Health Circulars on dental vocational training and VT Equivalence.

5. The Dental Practice Division of the NHS Business Services Agency have created a 'stand alone' element in payments on-line (POL) system to facilitate the changes outlined in the circular and are preparing instructions for the LHBs and Business Service Centres.

Action

6. Chief Executives of LHBs, the Managing Director of the Dental Payment Division of the NHS Business Services Agency and the Director of Dental Postgraduate Education Wales are asked to ensure that arrangements are established to implement these changes.

Yours sincerely

John Sweeney
Director of Community, Primary Care & Health Services Policy Directorate
Health & Social Care Department
Dental Vocational Training in Wales

Introduction

1. In April 2006, following introduction of new contractual arrangements for primary care dentistry, the Welsh Assembly Government retained Dental Vocational Training in Wales as a centrally funded, administered and governed programme providing for 65 training places. Local Health Boards may fund additional vocational training posts if they wish.

2. We have been through the biggest period of reform in dentistry for 50 years. It is only now the impact of these changes can begin to be assessed. The Dental Vocational Training programme has been reviewed in this context.

3. A vocational training scheme is an arrangement to provide, normally through one year's full-time employment or an equivalent period of part-time employment, training during which a dentist is employed by an approved trainer under a contract of service to provide a wide range of NHS dental care and to attend such study days as the contract provides. Normally the training practice will provide primary dental services under a general dental services contract or personal dental service arrangement but in some cases other NHS arrangements.

4. Vocational training in Wales will be conducted in accordance with the relevant:
   - General Dental Service Contracts, Personal Dental Service Agreements and Performer Lists Regulations pertaining to Wales
   - General Dental Council Guidance
   - Guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government
   - Guidance from the Department of Dental Postgraduate Education

Overall Aim

5. To enhance clinical and administrative competence and promote high standards through relevant postgraduate training to meet the needs of general dental practice and in particular:

   (a) enable the dentist to practise and improve their skills;
   (b) introduce the dentist to dental practise in primary care;
   (c) identify the dentist’s personal strengths and weaknesses and balance them through a planned programme of training;
(d) promote oral health of and quality dental care for patients;
(e) further develop and implement peer review and reflective practice, and promote awareness of the need for professional education, training and audit as a continuing process; and

(f) enable the dentist to-
   (i) make competent and confident professional decisions including referrals to other services,
   (ii) demonstrate they are working within the guidelines regarding the ethics and confidentiality of dental practice
   (iii) implement regulations and guidelines for delivery of safe practice,
   (iv) know how to obtain appropriate advice on, and practical experience of, legal and financial aspects of practice, and demonstrate he has acquired skill and knowledge in the psychology of care of patients and can work successfully as a member of a practice team.

6. The Department of Dental Postgraduate Education will set up appropriate procedures:
   • for appointing Trainers
   • development of VT curriculum (under the scrutiny the Committee for Vocational Training and with due reference to VT and GPT developments at the wider UK level)
   • for assessing the performance of Vocational Dental Practitioners throughout the training period
   • for Quality Assuring VT in Wales (under the scrutiny the Committee for Vocational Training)
Funding, Allocation and Payment Mechanisms

7. We recognise, since April 2006, the new VT payment system has been a difficult one for practices and LHBs to operate. As a result recruitment of VT trainers has proved more difficult. Although the situation improved during the year we will introduce changes to address these problems and better align systems with our philosophy for vocational training.

8. The current payment system for VT schemes that started August 06 will continue until August 2007 and for February 06 starts until February 2007.

**Monthly**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trainer Grant</td>
<td>£809.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee Salary</td>
<td>£2,466.15 plus Employer's NI contribution £188.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Costs</td>
<td>£4,553.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annually**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trainer Grant</td>
<td>£9,709.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee Salary</td>
<td>£29,593.80 plus Employer's NI £2,259.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Costs</td>
<td>£54,637.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£96,200.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n.b. All will be subject to any DDRB recommendations

In addition, LHBs will receive allocations to cover the Employers Superannuation costs of the:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trainer Grant</td>
<td>£113.27 per month (14% of £809.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee Salary</td>
<td>£345.26 per month (14% of £2,466.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Costs</td>
<td>£279.83 per month (£4,553.12 @ 43.9% @ 14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. The scheme starting February 2007 and all other VT schemes commencing after that date will be managed under the revised system described below. The number of UDAs delivered by a VDP during a training year under the revised system will be reduced in line with the general level applied in England to 1820. Otherwise, the rates above continue to apply.

10. Under this revised system the allocation to cover VT service costs will be added directly to the practice contract value pro rata for length of financial year that applies. The 1820 VT UDAs are likewise to be added to the general practice contract pro rata for length of financial year that applies. This simplifies the previous arrangements. It allows the practice greater managerial and clinical freedom as to who does what treatment within the practice. This will allow the VDP to experience a wider range of treatments in the training year. It also simplifies the LHBs monitoring role which will now only need to monitor the service performance of the practice as a whole i.e. there will no longer be a need to track the VDP UDAs separately.
11. The DPD have created a ‘stand alone’ element in payments on-line (POL) system, flagged as ‘Vocational Performer (VDPs)’. The BSC/LHB then add the salary/ERNIC and trainers grant under this heading. The service costs and contracted activity (1820 UDA’s) will be added to the total contract value and total contract activity for the surgery. There will be no need for monthly adjustments during the length of the VT year unless for exceptional cases.

12. The dental postgraduate department will monitor the training aspect not in terms of VDP UDAs but whether a suitable range of treatments and practice experience is being provided. This will be done through VDP activity logs. This will ensure that for each individual VDP the appropriate mix of treatments and caseload are undertaken to provide development of clinical, professional and practice management skills.

13. The patient charge will be collected by the practice against their increased contact value.

14. The VDP Salary and the Trainer Grant and related ERNIC will continue to be processed via the POL. The Trainer Grant payment will appear on the practice schedule as a specific entry. The VDP Salary element will appear on a separate schedule for the VDP. The LHB will need to make the necessary amendment to the training practices POL entry. The Dental Practice Division of the NHS Business Services Agency has made necessary amendments to the POL system to facilitate these changes.

15. The various payments listed above will only continue if assessments of both trainer and VDP performance and conduct are satisfactory.

16. The LHB will be allocated VT dental funding related to any VDP appointed to a training practice in its area i.e. the service cost element. The LHBs will receive this VT allocation directly from the Welsh Assembly Government following the appointment of a VDP to a training practice within their area. This allocation is non-recurrent ceasing at completion of the training period. The VT allocation will be separate from its main primary dental service allocation. The Dental Postgraduate Department will alert LHBs one month in advance of the end of a VDPs training period so they can make the necessary amendment to the training practices POL entry.

17. The VDP will become a performer within the contract between the LHB and the contractor/provider. This represents a variation in that contractual agreement and therefore processes of due notice and agreement between the contractor and the commissioning LHB will be required.

18. The DPD will process monthly payments related to the service costs to training practices, to the amount stated in paragraph 8 above, net of the patients charges collected by the practice in the previous month. Via the Payments Online system, the DPD will pay the training practice (trainer) on the LHBs behalf - the LHB is recharged, the money coming from the central budget. In the month after the VDP finishes, the
LHB and practice will need to ensure that a mechanism is in place to resolve outstanding patient charge issues.

19. Transitional issues
   • There being 2 start dates to the VT year, practices involved in the February 2007 start will move into the new arrangements from that date. All other training practices will continue under the old payment system until the end of their VT year in July 2007. Practices involved in the August 2007 start will be subject to the new arrangements.

20. It is important for trainers to realise that they will receive monthly payments net of patient charges and it will be the responsibility of the training practice to collect the appropriate patient charges.

21. At the end of the VT year funding will continue for practices that take on another VDP for the following year, but will cease for practices that do not.

22. Although the UDA requirement has been reduced we are not at this stage reducing the level of the VDP salary. That would be unfair in terms of what VDPs were led to expect. However, before February 2008 we will review VDP salaries in the context of levels applied in England and year 1 of medical foundation programmes. This will not be a cost saving exercise. Any savings made will be channelled into extra training posts providing more opportunities for graduates, practices and recruitment.

VDP commitment

23. A VDP is expected to attend the practice for 48 weeks in the VT training period. This will include approximately 30 educational study days outside the training practice. The VDP is expected to spend the other days in clinical practice with an hour a week of clinical time set aside for an in-practice tutorial. The working week should be 35 hours.

Commitment of training practice to the NHS and Appointment of Trainers

24. The Department of Dental Postgraduate Education will appoint trainers and ensure that this process is fair to the applicant and compliant with all legislation. Generally, to be eligible for appointment a trainer must be a registered dentist and provider of NHS GDS and/or PDS. Time spent on other activities that contribute to the NHS e.g. the work of Primary Care Dental Practice Advisers and various Tutors employed by the Department of Dental Postgraduate Education should be recognised. Trainers must be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of the NHS dental services and normally have had at least 3 years post VT experience and be of sound professional and personal standing. Trainers may be asked to declare their NHS commitment but the Department of Dental Postgraduate Education may also request evidence in confirmation through production of practice accounts. VT is funded from the public
purse and the degree of NHS commitment demonstrated by an applicant to a trainer post should be given due weight in any competitive selection process.

25. In the Welsh Assembly Government’s view, comprehensive vocational training cannot be provided unless the trainee acquires wide-ranging experience of NHS dentistry. The circumstances of a trainer’s practice may change with time, even within a VT year, and early discussions between the trainer and the Department of Dental Postgraduate Education are required in such cases.

**VT scheme advisers**

26. In future, when the Department of Postgraduate Dental Education is setting the eligibility criteria for new appointments of Scheme Advisers the general principles laid out in the section Appointment of Trainers should be applied. Indeed, we consider that as leaders of a publicly funded NHS scheme it is most important that, as VT advisers, they and their practices should be similarly committed to the NHS. However, it will be necessary to recognise time spent on other activities that contribute to the NHS e.g. the work of Primary Care Dental Practice Advisers. The degree of NHS commitment demonstrated by an applicant to an adviser post should be given due weight in any competitive selection process.

27. A VT Adviser will be expected to display a high level of professional conduct and promote the values of the NHS to trainees within the NHS funded VT schemes. The Department of Postgraduate Dental Education will be expected to institute annual performance reviews for VT Advisers that encompass monitoring of these principles.

**Arrangements for determination of VT Equivalence - Role of the Department of Postgraduate Dental Education**

28. From 1 April 2006, under the NHS (Performers Lists) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, provision of primary dental services under a GDS contract, a PDS agreement or by the LHB itself requires the dental performer to be included in the LHB’s Performers List.

29. On 1 April 2006, the Department of Postgraduate Dental Education, on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales, took over role of the abolished Dental Vocational Training Authority in Wales through -

- determination of equivalence
- provision of an appropriate appeals procedure
- maintenance of a VT number list, the Department of Dental Postgraduate Education, Postgraduate School of the University of Cardiff (effectively the “Deanery”) will be responsible for the issue of Welsh Vocational Training numbers and the maintenance of the register in Wales
30. There may be some dentists who are not under a statutory obligation to have undertaken VT, but about whom LHBs may wish to consult the Director of Dental Postgraduate Education on whether the dentists should be invited to agree a programme of CPD to address any deficiencies in their skills and experience.

31. Where an LHB receives an application for entry to its performers list (i.e. applications that they support) from dentists who do not have equivalent experience and are not otherwise exempt from the requirement to undertake VT, they will need to take action as above and contact the Department of Postgraduate Dental Education.

32. The NHS (Performers Lists) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations Wales 2006 provide flexibility in the arrangement of Vocational Training courses permitting the Director of Dental Postgraduate Education to prescribe vocational training of less than one year’s duration or other appropriate training and/or experience. On successful completion of the training, the dentist will be awarded a VT certificate of completion, which will be presented to the Welsh Equivalence Committee in order for a VT number to be issued.

33. A dentist undertaking vocational training may perform any primary care dental services even if his or her name is not included in a dental performers list during the first 2 months of that training.

**Committee for Vocational Training in Wales**

34. The non-statutory Committee for Vocational Training in Wales advises the Chief Dental Officer for Wales on all matters pertaining to Vocational Training. CVTW's role also includes scrutiny of both VT curriculum development and QA of dental VT in Wales.