01 May 2012

Dear Colleague

Health Technical Memorandum 01- 05: ‘Decontamination in primary care dental practices’ (Welsh Edition) - Compliance with essential requirements

In my letter of 28 March 2011 (CDO(2011)1), I informed you of the publication of the guidance document HTM 01-05 Welsh Edition which aimed to progressively raise the quality of decontamination work in primary dental care. The document introduces a specific benchmark of 12 months (from initial publication) for dental facilities to comply with essential requirements specified in the document.

Local Health Boards (LHBs) are responsible for ensuring that all clinical governance standards are met. Compliance of the essential requirements can be monitored using a number of mechanisms. These include use of the annual online QAS self-assessment administered by Public Health Wales and the results of routine inspections carried out by the Dental Reference Service.

In addition the Welsh Government is working with all key stakeholders to produce an all-Wales audit of decontamination in primary dental care. The aim of the audit will be to test compliance with essential requirements and identify barriers to the implementation of best practice. The audit will be developed by the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) and will be available later this year.

I am aware that there has been some debate by colleagues about specific areas relating to essential requirements. Annex 1 contains a detailed summary of the essential requirements contained within HTM01-05 (Welsh Edition). I hope that this will clarify those issues of debate.

Electronic versions of the document are available on the Chief Dental officer’s website at:

www.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/ocmo/professionals/dental/publication/information/?lang=en

From the Chief Dental Officer

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The Welsh Government will continue to work closely with the Department of Health on this issue. We will participate in a review of this guidance within the next two years to reflect emerging evidence. Future revisions of this document will be made on the web-based version available on the Chief Dental Officer's Webpage.

Mr David Thomas
Chief Dental Officer (Wales)
ANNEX 1: LIST OF ESSENTIAL QUALITY REQUIREMENTS FOR HTM 01-05 (Welsh Edition)

The information précised here should be read in conjunction with the document (in particular, pages 11-16)

POLICIES AND PLANS

All practices should have a nominated decontamination lead and a written infection control policy. The policy should include guidelines and procedures that:

a. minimise risk of blood borne virus transmission. This includes how to deal with sharp injuries and should include arrangements for occupational health advice;
b. decontamination processes and storage including reusable instruments;
c. detailed procedures for cleaning, disinfecting and items of instruments;
d. outline the management and disposal of clinical waste;
e. describe hand hygiene and use of PPE;
f. identify the recommended disinfectants to be used, applied, stored and disposed of;
g. details of environmental cleaning protocols;
h. ensure appropriate Legionella management including a risk assessment
i. documented training protocol with individual training records for staff. A written plan on what the practice needs achieve to meet best practice requirements.

APPLICATION OF POLICIES

Overview

1. Use of validated decontamination process – including washing (cleaning) and steam steriliser.
2. Storage, preparation and use of materials, particularly decontamination chemicals.
3. Dedicated hand washing facilities.
4. Defined procedures for single and reusable instruments.

Cleaning and Inspection

1. Use of a covered ultrasonic bath or manual cleaning may be used. The approach to manual cleaning is described in detail on p59-60. Two sinks or two bowls incorporated into a single unit are recommended however, (Note: In the interim, two bowls will be considered to meet essential criteria if space or facilities cannot accommodate change.) These sinks/bowls should not be used for hand washing.
2. Inspection processes should ensure that the standards of cleaning are visually satisfactory – free from particulate contamination and discolouration.

INSTRUMENT REPROCESSING PROCEDURES

1. Regard all instruments set out for each patient (i.e. unwrapped) as contaminated whether or not they have been used.
2. Decontamination equipment including steriliser should be located in a designated area separate from clinical facilities. The layout should reflect progression from dirty to clean *area may be in or adjacent to clinical facilities. Reprocessing should be undertaken using dedicated equipment including the use of a steam steriliser. Detailed advice on procurement, installation and maintenance of this equipment is available on p45-58 of the document.
3. Equipment should be commissioned, maintained and tested by a competent person and records of maintenance should be kept.
Storage and Movement of Instruments

1. It is recommended that where packaging is not applied, instruments may be stored on covered trays and used within a treatment session.
2. Alternatively wrapped instruments can be stored for 1 month (type N) or 2 months (type B/or S).
3. Simple record keeping will be required to make these measures effective.
4. Practice should have safe procedures for segregation and transfer of contaminated and sterilised instruments. Detailed guidance available on p13.

TRAINING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

1. A documented training protocol should be in operation with individual training records available for each member of staff involved in decontamination.
2. Current immunisation status for Hepatitis B (for all staff involved in decontamination should be documented).
3. Dental practices are required to establish and operate a quality assurance system that covers decontamination processes. *This has to be demonstrated by practice completion of the online QAS process.
4. Audit of decontamination processes should be carried out on a quarterly basis (this is separate to the QAS process). *NLIAH will be developing a national audit process that will be available to all dental practices shortly.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES RELATING TO ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Waste Disposal.

- A key aspect of risk control is the appropriate and controlled disposal of waste. Appendix 1 of HTM01-05 provides comprehensive details.

Hand Hygiene.

- Training in hand hygiene should be part of staff induction and provided throughout the year.

Decontamination of Treatment Areas.

- Patient treatment area should be cleaned after every session using disposable cloths or clean microfibre materials
- Areas and equipment local to the dental chair need to be cleaned between each patient.

Water Systems. Detailed guidance is available in Section 19 (p64)

- All premises are required to have a written scheme and Legionella risk assessment. The assessment should be carried out by a competent person.