Public Services Delivery Scotland
Dental Clinical Effectiveness
Workforce survey to develop education & training opportunities for the dental team
Summary report

This report describes the findings from a workforce survey conducted by Public Services Delivery Scotland's (PSDS) Dental Clinical Effectiveness workstream legacy NHS Education for Scotland (NES) in 2023.

Key Points

- The survey was carried out in March - April 2023.
- The survey was emailed to all dental team members with an NES Portal account.
- Responses were anonymous and collected via Questback.
- There were 178 responses comprising of 96 (54%) dentists and 82 (46%) dental care professionals (DCPs).
- Responses were received from General Dental Service (GDS) 69%, Public Dental Service (PDS) 25% and Hospital Dental Service (HDS) 6%.
- Most responders (76%) provided fully or mostly NHS care.
- The most frequent specialty selected to refer for was orthodontics.
- For all specialties the most frequent reason for referring patients was that a specialist was required.
- The most frequently selected specialty by dentists where they would like further education and training in was oral medicine.
- The most frequently selected dental area by DCPs that they would like further education and training in was prevention.
- Face-to-face training was the preferred method of training most selected.
- Verifiable CPD and an increased confidence was what the workforce most wanted to achieve from training.

Background

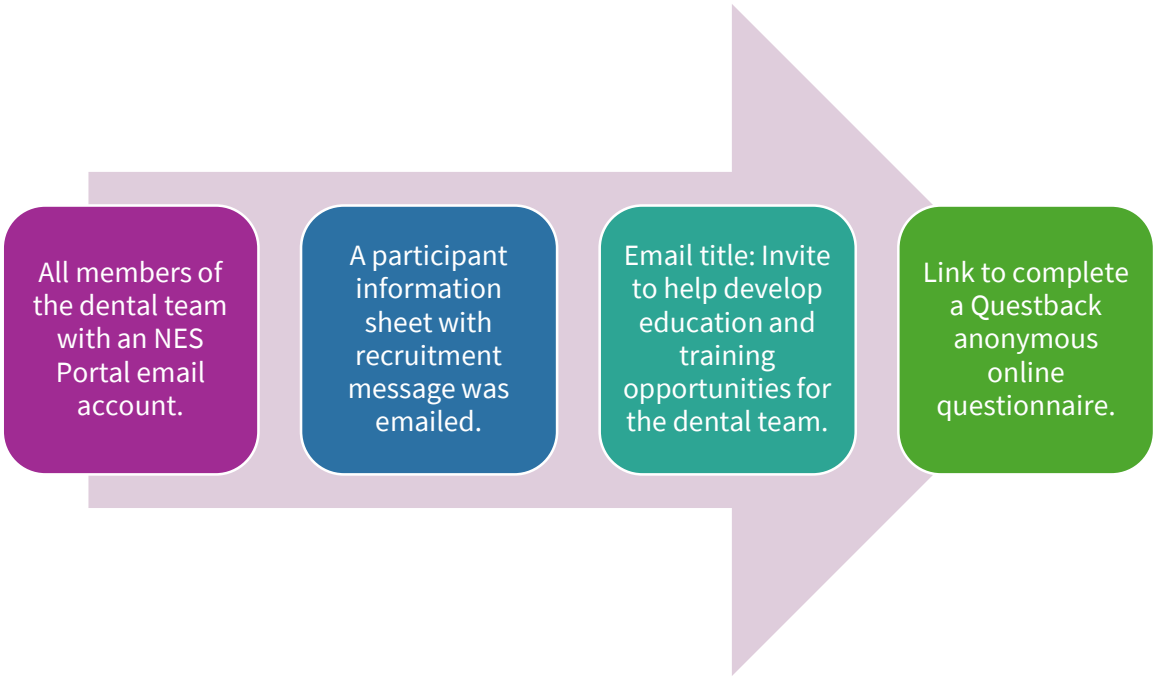
The purpose of the survey was to seek the thoughts and opinions of all members of the dental team about the commonest referrals to secondary care, the reasons for these referrals, to identify which areas in dentistry the dental team would want opportunities to gain additional education and training and the ways in how they would like this to be provided.

Aim

The aim of this survey was to help inform the development of an initiative to provide new education and training opportunities for enriching the skills of the dental team.

Methods

Recruitment



Data collection

Data were collected via anonymous online questionnaire combining open-ended questions with free-text response boxes, and close-ended questions comprising multiple-choice items and five-point Likert scale.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. Qualitative data from the free text boxes were analysed to identify recurring patterns and key themes[1].

Governance

Permission was granted by legacy NES Dental Directorate to conduct this questionnaire. Data collected from questionnaires were anonymous and managed according to PSDS information governance policies and procedures[1].

Results

There were 178 respondents to the workforce survey comprising dentists 54% and DCPs 46%. Responders worked 69% in General Dental Services (GDS), 25% in Public Dental Services (PDS), 6% in Hospital Dental Services (HDS) and 1% selected other noting orthodontic practice and emergency dental service. The working clinical time of the responders were fully NHS 35% mostly NHS 41%, equal split of NHS/Private 9%, mostly private 15% and one responder selected fully private.

The dental specialities/scenarios their practice routinely refer to other clinicians were orthodontics 58%, complex oral surgery 51% and oral medicine 50%. The most frequent reason for referring to other clinicians with 75% selecting always (37%) or usually (38%) was that a specialist was required.

Upskilling interest was collected for a range of different dental areas on a Likert scale of very interested, moderately interested, slightly interested, not at all interested and no response. For reporting, very and moderately interested responses were combined as a positive response.

The reactions from dentists were most positive in the following areas;

- oral medicine (61%)
- prosthodontics (59%)
- endodontics (59%)
- oral surgery (58%).

The reactions from DCPs were most positive in the following areas;

- prevention (65%)
- quality improvement (57%)
- reduced inequalities (52%)
- oral surgery (51%).

When asked to select all the different options of how they would like education and training delivered results were; face-to-face hands on (83%), webinars (71%), course work (51%), mentor (44%), shadowing (39%) and group work (30%). At the completion of training the verifiable CPD (96%) and an increased confidence (87%) were identified as what they would want to achieve from training.

Themes identified as barriers to undertaking training were financial, time, location of training and employer/manager resistance and potential solutions to these barriers were funding for courses or low/no cost courses, courses planned well in advance, flexibility or courses and recognised/valued, protected learning time.

Discussion

Analysis of this workforce survey is informing development of future education and training programmes to focus learning content, methods and outcomes to be based on the requests of the members of the dental team.

Reference

1. Clarke V & Braun V (2017) Thematic analysis, The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12:3, 297-298, DOI: 10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613 To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613

2. **https://publicservicesdelivery.scot/legal-and-site-information/privacy**

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