



British Association of Dental Therapists

Scottish Branch of The British Association of Dental Therapists.

Eric Gray,
Primary care Division,
SEHD,
St Andrew's House,
Regent Road,
Edinburgh, EH1 3DG.

21st March 2004

Dear Mr Gray,

BADT Scottish Branch response to the consultation document: 'Modernising NHS Dental Services in Scotland'

The British Association of Dental Therapists in Scotland is pleased to be able to comment and influence the document 'Modernising NHS Dentistry in Scotland'. There are a number of issues which we would like to address and to offer possible solutions to the caries problems we are facing in Scotland.

Restrictions to our practice.

For Therapists to be properly utilised in Scotland 2 restrictions to our practice need to be addressed:

- The requirement that a dentist should be on the premises while we administer inferior dental blocks.
- That diagnosis and treatment planning are out-with our remit. It is a contradiction in terms that we know how to treat caries without being able to diagnose it.

BADT concerns

Our concerns to date for therapists in practice include:

- Inconsistencies in the level of knowledge of GDP's with regard to our duties and as a result Therapists being asked to undertake procedures out-with our remit.
- Compromising work – through lack of time to treat patients especially when just 'returning to work'.
- Financial – generally.
- Undertaking Private patient care on a low salaried rate.

Employment

It is felt by this group that The Scottish Executive are in a position to set the criteria which should be met by Therapists in Practice.

- Which patients to target.
- To place an emphasis on prevention and treatment and to be able to approach patient care in a holistic manner.
- To be able to place clinicians in areas of greatest need, for example, centres which could employ a number of Therapists, and the expansion of the mobile dental services. We envisage a mobile practice facility for remote and rural areas as well as this provision in city centres focused on paediatric dentistry.
- BADT would like Therapists to deliver care for those who qualify for NHS treatment wherever they live and where the need is greatest.
- PCD qualify from courses as highly specialised clinicians in restorative and preventive dentistry and therefore are invaluable members of a future workforce
 - but – they are restricted.They are unable to carry out the full range of treatment alone in areas which are remote because firstly, they require a dentist on the premises in order to give an ID block. And secondly they must be able to diagnose the treatment they are required to give in these remote areas.
- 40% of the population do not access NHS dentistry and we would like to take the service to them. This proves impossible with such restrictions in place.

Recommended models

1. A mobile dental system.
2. Therapists contracted out into practice to address unmet treatment needs.
3. Provision for those patients who cannot access NHS dentistry.

Financial

BADT would request that the Scottish Executive carefully revise our payment schemes to avoid us having to go out fighting for GDP places with conflicting salary scales. The association feel that it is in the best interests of Therapists that a salaried service should be available, and, that this would be more advantageous than individual arrangements with practices in which the Therapist may have fewer guidelines and less security. There should be parity with other health care workers for pay; equivalency to Health Visitor / District Nurses where they are paid by the Scottish Executive but are contracted to one or multiple practices would be appropriate.

Present concerns can be identified as:

- Variable hourly rates.
- An hourly rate which is not commensurate to the quality and quantity of work being undertaken.
- There is perceived to be a danger of treatment needs being left unmet if Therapists were to choose to work in Private Practice where the financial reward is greater.

While Therapists can now practice in all areas of dentistry The Scottish Executive are in a position to make it more attractive for Therapists to come and work within this system. This system already works very well for Health Visitors and District Nurses who are employed by the NHS and are contracted out to GMP's.

To address the issue of 'unmet treatment need' an offer of good remuneration, security and a career structure will entice Therapists to NHS Scottish Executive rather than choosing an alternative. We would suggest a salary of £25,000 - £30,000 depending on experience.

BADT emphasises that we all want to address the unmet treatment needs but must not be seen as a 'cheap' way of providing dental treatment. Therapists should be valued for what they do and will endeavour to fulfil the expectations, and confidence that has been placed in us with the provision of the new training schools specifically for Scotland.

BADT also feel strongly on the following issues:

- 'Golden Hello'/ Remote Areas allowance.
- Enhanced Return to work Scheme.
- Conversion courses.
- V.T.

'Golden Hello' / Remote Areas allowance.

Clinical PCD should have the same incentives made available to them, using the same criteria, as those for dentists, and as these are in place for dentists already the same consideration should be afforded to PCD without further discussion.

Enhanced Return to Work Scheme

This scheme should also apply to PCD, immediately. At present we have a possible 6 Therapists returning to the workforce.

Conversion courses

There is a shortage of manpower to treat caries.

There is a large potential of manpower in the form of Dental Hygienists who, given the appropriate training (a minimum of 1 year full time), could be in place in NHS practices in a very short period of time. This valuable source would provide this service at a very high skill level, quickly.

In order for this to be viable it is necessary to find Hygienists willing to give up their salary to extend their skills. They would require compensation and remuneration for doing so.

V.T.

This should be the same as for dentists.

Finally, BADT would also recommend appropriate remuneration for the educators of Therapists and Hygienists.

Yours sincerely,

Linda M'Chlery EDT.

Miss Linda McChlery.

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