

Dental Newsletter – January 2008

The following information will be of interest to both Providers and Performers and we shall be grateful if Contractors could make sure that all practice dentists and other appropriate staff have access to this newsletter. Please feel free to photocopy as required.

Smoking Cessation Service – A Health Promotion Opportunity for You

As you may be aware, the PCT provides smoking cessation advice and support to local residents via a variety of methods; community groups, clinics, sessions within GP practices and pharmacies etc. The PCT is now looking to work with a number of dental practices to provide this innovative service for which a fee will be paid.

The PCT is willing to provide the necessary training to dentists and/or their nurses, hygienists and therapists to undertake this work.

If you are interested in offering this service to your patients, please contact Shirley Merrett on (01202) 745750 or at shirley.merrett@bp-pct.nhs.uk.

Inappropriate Referrals

Contractors are reminded that a Referral Guidelines booklet, produced under the auspices of the East Dorset Oral Health Advisor Group (OHAG), remains available to assist Performers when making onward referrals for patients.

Please ensure that all Performers have access to this booklet. You can request further copies from the PCT by contacting Sue Norman on (01202) 541667 or at sue.norman@bp-pct.nhs.uk.

NHS Pension Scheme

Please be aware that the PCT acts, in effect, only as an administrator for superannuable contributions collected via the BSA DSD pay schedules? When you inform us that a Performer is superannuable, and confirm what proportion of the total gross contract value is payable to that Performer, the PCT will set the BSA DSD systems to collect the appropriate superannuation contribution. In all cases, Performers should make direct contact with NHS Pensions, to join, leave or amend their membership of the NHS Pension scheme. The PCT do not do this on their behalf; even though we may be, or may cease, collecting superannuation contributions for a particular Performer.

NHS Pensions can be contacted on 01253 774774 or at www.nhspa.gov.uk.

Patient Referrals to the Dental Reference Service

The PCT occasionally receives requests from patients for a 'second opinion'; particularly in circumstances related to disputed NHS treatment plans. In some cases, such disputes can be resolved via a referral of the patient to the NHS Dental Reference Service (DRS) for an independent opinion.

Referrals to the DRS can be generated either by the Performer or the PCT. In practice, a referral by the Performer is preferable since the referral form requires access to clinical information not held by the PCT.

The Dental Reference Service is part of the NHS BSA Dental Services Division and the D7a referral form is available on-line at www.dpb.nhs.uk (click clinical services then practice visits tabs).

Sale of Dental Practice

Contractors are reminded that NHS dental contracts are not transferable or assignable to another party in any circumstances (see clause 12 of both the nGDS and nPDS contract).

Please note that when considering the sale of a dental practice, Contractors are advised to make early contact with the PCT. The PCT will be able to give you an early indication of whether or not it wishes to commission NHS dental services in your locality, the type of dental services (mandatory and/or specialist) it wishes to commission and at what level of activity (UDAs/UOAs).

The PCT is not obliged to offer a new dental contract to any prospective purchaser or to offer the prospective purchasers the same contracted activity level and contract value enjoyed by the existing Contractor. In all cases, the PCT's decision to commission NHS dental services will be informed factors including the assessed oral health need of its population, the need to address oral health inequalities etc.

When a decision has been taken by the PCT to commission, or re-commission, primary dental services to serve a particular locality, the PCT will seek to ensure that it obtains the best possible value for money in return for the NHS resources deployed.

Occupational Health Services

Please note that the provider of Occupational Health services to dental practices, commissioned by the PCT, will change from Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (DHCFT) to IMASS effective from 1 February 2008.

Any existing files held by DHCFT, connected with the provision of Occupational Health services (OHS) to practices and individuals, will be transferred to IMASS.

Effective from 1 February 2008 you should disregard any information contained in the 'purple' OHS binders previously issued to practices and instead contact Dianna Prince at IMASS on (01752) 835900. IMASS will issue all practices with fresh information packs in due course.

Normal Surgery Hours

Each nGDS contract and nPDS agreement held with the PCT notes the contracted 'normal surgery hours'; under clause 75 in nPDS agreements and under Schedule 5 at the rear of nGDS contracts.

Since the 'normal surgery hours' are a contract term, it is not acceptable for either party to unilaterally amend these hours in the absence of the written agreement of both parties.

If you have any reason to wish to amend the contracted 'normal surgery hours' of your practice, either in short term or permanently, you should make a formal written request to the PCT in advance of any change to the practice surgery hours. The PCT will consider each request on its merits with the aim of maintaining the accessibility of dental services to local patients.

Decontamination

Whilst the PCT is aware that the Department of Health are progressing with a review of national guidance on decontamination issues relating to dental surgeries, Contractors are reminded that, at the current time, they are required to ensure the adoption of all guidance set out in the British Dental Association's (BDA) factsheet A12.

The A12 factsheet is available to BDA members and also non-members via www.nhs.gov.uk (enter 'A12' in the 'search this site' field).

Mandatory Services

Contractors will be aware that nGDS and nPDS contracts include definitions of 'mandatory services' to be provided where commissioned by the PCT.

Individual Performers will, by necessity, need to make their own assessment of their ability to successfully provide mandatory services in connection with individual proposed courses of treatment. Since however contractual responsibility to provide mandatory services rests with the Contractor, and not the Performer, an onward referral should not be made until all options to provide the treatment proposed, e.g. by an alternative Performer, have been explored.

In all cases, patients should be advised of **all** available options to have their proposed treatment completed under an NHS contract, either by the practice or by referral.

Please let us know if you have any outstanding general queries relating to the NHS dental regulations. Any issues raised which may be of common interest to all Contractors will be included in future monthly newsletters.



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