

APPLY FOR THE CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER ENGLAND'S CLINICAL FELLOW SCHEME

Managed by the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management (FMLM), the Chief Dental Officer England's Clinical Fellow Scheme is designed to accelerate and support dentists and dental care professionals to develop as leaders of the future.

Established in 2017, the year-long scheme provides a unique opportunity in a national healthcare-affiliated organisation

outside of dental clinical practice to develop skills in leadership, management, strategy, project management and healthcare policy.

Candidates may apply for a place on the scheme during the recruitment period each year. Shortlisted candidates are interviewed, and successful applicants are seconded from their current employer to take up a fellowship role for 12 months, starting 1 September 2024.

Applications for the 2024/25 Fellowship year are now open! Testimonials from previous Fellows are available in the Chief Dental Officer England's Clinical Fellow Scheme 2024/25 information pack: <https://go.nature.com/3VYfqBG>.

Guidance for employers 2024/25 provides detail of the scheme for both individuals and employers: <https://go.nature.com/3W3q40O>.

NEW POWERS FOR DENTAL HYGIENISTS AND THERAPISTS ANNOUNCED BY GOVERNMENT

On 28 March 2024, Primary Care Minister Andrea Leadsom announced that patients will have faster, simpler and fairer access to primary care as the government gives new powers to pharmacy technicians, dental hygienists and dental therapists to supply and administer medicines.

The move follows two public consultations run by the government, which found widespread support for giving new powers to these staff to cut bureaucracy and support more efficient patient care.

Dental hygienists and dental therapists will be able to give patients certain types of medicines – including pain relief and fluoride – without sign off from a dentist.

The move will also free up dentists' time, allowing them to deliver more patient-facing clinical services and improving access to primary care services for patients.

The announcement in March was part of the latest series of measures the government has brought forward to cut waiting lists and improve access to primary care, which includes the publication of the dental recovery plan, which aims to free up 2.5 million more appointments this year.

There are currently 9,733 dental hygienists and 6,198 dental therapists registered with the General Dental Council in the UK.

Primary Care Minister Andrea Leadsom said: 'We want to give patients faster, simpler and fairer access to the care they need, when they need it – and giving these powers to pharmacy technicians, dental therapists and hygienists will do just that.'

'Today's announcement shows we are continuing to deliver on our promises made to improve access to primary care for all, building on the government's long term

ambitions, including through the dental recovery plan [...].

'We want to ensure our fantastic staff are recognised for the vital work that they do, working to their full scope of practice and delivering for everyone who walks through their doors.'

Miranda Steeples, President of the British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy, said: 'BSDHT welcomes plans to enable our professions to work to the full extent of their skillset and give them new powers that enable them to offer patients the care they need.'

'Everyone will benefit from an oral healthcare team that runs more smoothly and uses its time effectively.'

The public consultations ran in 2023 and received overwhelming support, with 97% of respondents agreeing that dental hygienists and therapists should be given new powers. Respondents commenting on both sets of proposals included members of the public, NHS and health service delivery bodies, and private and not-for-profit organisations.

The changes fall under the government and NHS's primary care recovery plan, which sets out the vision to ensure the NHS can deliver at the very maximum of its capability, utilising all its professional staff and contractors, including in pharmacies and dental practices.

Dental therapists and hygienists are currently able to administer medicines, including local anaesthetic



and high-strength fluoride, but they need a prescription from a dentist. This means breaking from the patient and interrupting the dentist's own work to get the prescription signed. The proposed exemptions will enable dental therapists and hygienists to supply or administer specific medicines on their own authority, making the process more efficient for patients and practices.

Dr Fiona Sandom, Chair of the British Association of Dental Therapists, said: 'The British Association of Dental Therapists is delighted that dental therapists and dental hygienists will soon be able to supply and administer certain prescription only medicines to patients without a need for a patient specific direction (PSD) or a patient group direction (PGD).'

'This will allow dental therapists and dental hygienists to use their full scope of practice and deliver the care they have been trained and educated to deliver.'

As outlined in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, the specified aim is to deliver 15% of dental activity through dental therapists and dental hygienists, as opposed to the current estimate of 5%.