



COPDEND

Summer 2025
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Welcome to the 4th COPDEND Newsletter

In this edition, we're pleased to share updates and insights from postgraduate dental education and training across the UK — highlighting progress, partnerships, and purpose. As we work together to shape a capable, compassionate, and inclusive dental workforce, this newsletter offers a window into the collective efforts advancing our shared priorities.

From curriculum innovation to inclusive workforce development, each feature reflects the dedication and collaboration that define our teams. Whether you're involved in training delivery, strategic leadership, or policy development, we hope these updates inform and support the valuable work you do.

DENTAL FOUNDATION TRAINING (DFT) & DENTAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING (DVT)

Recruitment to DFT/ DVT 25-26		
All graduates from UK Dental Schools have been offered a DFT post.		
England	851	(832 in 2024)
Wales	53	(52 in 2024)
NI	33	(29 in 2024)
Total	937	(913 in 2024)

Although mitigating actions were implemented successfully, the difficulties encountered, and the likelihood of an increased number of applicants for 2026, will require further consideration to ensure we have enough training practices.

NES undertake a separate recruitment process and have now completed recruitment for the 2025-26 Training cycle. 159 Dental Vocational Training places were filled (exceeding baseline recruitment levels), with a significant increase in uptake of rural posts. Exit data from the 2024-25 cohort confirms that 90% of Trainees intend to remain within the workforce in Scotland, the vast majority within NHS General Dental Services.

The Scottish Dental Therapy Vocational Training pilot programme has filled seven of its ten places.

The Dental Foundation Recruitment process for September 2026 start has now opened. The webinar link to guide applicants can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4o7KVAtpEOA>

Further guidance on the application process can be found via <https://dental.hee.nhs.uk/dental-trainee-recruitment/dental-foundation-training/applicant-guide/overview>

Dental Foundation Therapy schemes continue to be a popular choice for therapy graduates with recent formal feedback revealing how valued it was. A new scheme will start in Scotland for September 2025 start.

COPDEND continues to support the varying educational needs for both Educational Supervisors and new graduates. Following on from the successful joint COPDEND initiative with the British Endodontic Society (BES) in which a series of evening webinars were provided for educational supervisors, a further joint collaborative programme has been developed aimed at new graduates. Eight evening webinars will be held for foundation dentists and vocational dentists across the country on a range of endodontic related topics. Leading subject matter experts from BES will provide their insights as well as top tips and answer any queries new graduates have on the topic of endodontics.

DENTAL CORE TRAINING (DCT)

Recruitment to Dental Core Training - 25/26 Cohort

Level	2023	2024	2025
DCT 1	86.2%	87.6%	97.0
DCT 2	78%	78.9 %	94.8
DCT 3	74.7%	79.5%	76.1

Demand has soared: 2 ,096 applications from 30+ countries (Sudan 1,074; Nigeria 238; Egypt 146).

To manage interview capacity, a Situational Judgement Test cutoff was applied, which did not appear to adversely affect the fill rate which was improved overall from previous years

The DCT Advisory Group is rolling out 2-year run-through programmes and changes in OMFS Temporary Registration supervision to boost fill rates and training capacity. They have also undertaken a ground-up review of all DCT training posts to tackle the issues of inaccurate job descriptions and poor post fill rates to improve trainee satisfaction.

Much work has also been undertaken with the GDC in connection with the initial application and supervision requirements for temporary registrants undertaking local service duties in place of DCT posts. This has resulted in a change in policy for temporary registrants working in OMFS posts so that the supervision can be provided by a GMC or GDC registrant – this has made a significant difference and enabled an increase in units who can now accept temporary registrants.

NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF DENTAL CORE EQUIVALENCE (NCDCE)

The NCDCE Year 2 scheme, launched in 2021, successfully helped non-standard pathway dentists progress into specialty training. The process has now been duplicated as a Year 1 certificate, creating a route for those without UK-standard DFT/DCT 1 to apply for DCT 2 posts. This centralised consistent assessment ensures transparency for non-standard UK pathway applicants.

Further information is available via the following links:

[Dental - National Certificate of Dental Core Equivalence 1 \(NCDCE1\)](#)

[Dental - National Certificate of Dental Core Equivalence 2 \(NCDCE2\)](#)

Key dates for NCDCE 1 and NCDCE 2

- Opens: Mon 7 July, 10:00 am
- Closes: Mon 1 September, 11:59 pm

NCDCE awards to date:

	Nov-21	Feb-22	Sep-22	Sep-23	Sep-24
Total Number of Applications	16	75	48	70	114
Total Number of Submitted Applications	6	41	28	45	70
Re-Applicants	0	0	5	3	1
Successfully Awarded NCDCE	4	21	17	35	35
Unsuccessful	2	20	11	10	35
Appealed	2	5	1	4	15
Successful Appeal	0	0	0	2	5
Unsuccessful Appeal	2	5	1	2	10

DENTAL SPECIALTY TRAINING (DST)

2025 Recruitment

Specialty	Posts	Offers accepted	Fill rate
Dental Public Health ST1	1-2	0	0%
Orthodontics ST1	29	29	100%
Orthodontics ST4	16	16	100%
Oral Surgery ST1	18	18	100%
Paediatrics ST1	12	12	100%
Paediatrics ST4	5	5	100%

Restorative Dentistry ST1	9	9	100%
Special Care Dentistry ST1	13	10	77%
Dental & Maxillofacial Radiology ST1	1	1	100%
Oral Medicine ST1	5	5	100%
Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology ST1	1	1	100%

The issues affecting recruitment into Dental Public Health training and Special Care Dentistry are a cause for concern considering future workforce needs. These are being considered by COPDEND in conjunction with the individual specialties to find solutions

DST CURRICULA & ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The revised GDC curricula were introduced in September 2024 and their introduction, together with the transition of current trainees onto these, has gone relatively smoothly with very few problems encountered. Trainees and trainers are becoming familiar with new curriculum requirements and assessment strategies. The introduction

of the generic curriculum has proved a challenge in ensuring consistency of progress recording but, through the Dental Specialty Advisory Group, all associate deans are working closely together to ensure that a consistent approach is used. Paediatric Dentistry SAC considered their training structure and following wide consultation decided that a single 4 year training programme would best serve their specialty and patients. In close collaboration with the GDC and COPDEND, the necessary curriculum changes were made and transition arrangements for trainees agreed. These have been implemented with no issues for trainees encountered

DENTAL GOLD GUIDE 5

The Dental Gold Guide has been updated to now incorporate the “Dental Blue Guide” which previously covered Dental Foundation Training. This will be in place for all trainees starting in September 2025 and ensures that there is consistency in how all trainees are managed across Dental Foundation, Core and Specialty Training.

NATIONAL IDT PROCESS

To ensure consistency of approach a national Inter Deanery Transfer process has been established. There will be two windows for applications in February and August. The details are available through the link below, including eligibility criteria and to promote consistency the panel will have consistent membership.

<https://www.copdend.org/postgraduate-training/header-dental-specialty-training/dental-inter-deanery-transfer-idt/>

DENTAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP (DWDAG)

The Dental Workforce Development Advisory Group (DWDAG) convenes regional leads to share and pilot best-practice training strategies—commissioning high-quality, locally tailored upskilling and testing a national model of shared courses and open-access online resources to cut duplication and costs. The group is drafting a four-nation workforce strategy (informed by the Darzi Report and NHS 10-Year Plan) that prioritises improving access, developing skills, shifting toward prevention, and strengthening integrated leadership.

New primary-care referral guidance, especially for orthodontics and oral surgery, will launch next year to address the issue of inappropriate referrals.

Concurrently, GDC CPD changes (no more registration numbers or mandatory signatures, grace periods at cycle end, and ELfH's move to the free NHS Learning Hub) simplify certification and resource access for dental professionals.

Over the past year, our Dental Workforce Development programmes have reached impressive scale, delivering over 1,850 courses nationwide. Our DWD teams have commissioned more than 26,500 hours of education involving over 39,000 delegates.

From Scotland to the South West, teams across the UK are accessing high-quality learning opportunities. These numbers reflect the strong appetite for professional growth and the collective commitment to upskilling our dental workforce.

DENTAL TEAM ADVISORY GROUP (DTAG)

Purpose and Scope

DTAG operates under COPDEND to establish consistent practice standards across dental team training programmes, recognising that ultimate accountability often lies with higher education institutions and awarding bodies with varying regulatory oversight. The growing emphasis on skill-mix within the dental team underscores the need for this forum to align approaches and address shared challenges.

The fifth DTAG meeting convened representatives from all UK regions alongside a General Dental Council (GDC) delegate. Attendees reviewed the Terms of Reference, discussed key priorities, and acknowledged the complexity and diversity of training routes across the wider dental team.

Key Discussion Themes

- Overseas Dentists in Hygienist and Therapist Roles
 - Continued dialogue on supporting overseas-trained dentists working as dental hygienists and therapists.
 - Several deaneries have implemented DTFT-style courses for registered overseas graduates.
 - GDC representation at DTAG ensures regulator awareness of these support initiatives.
 - Dental Nurse Training and Retention
 - Recognition of dental nurse retention as a pressing concern.
 - Regions presented local upskilling schemes aimed at improving job satisfaction.
 - Rising interest in Oral Health Practitioner (OHP) apprenticeships, aligning with NHS England's prevention focus.
 - Apprenticeships in England
 - Most programmes updated to meet revised GDC learning outcomes.
 - Dental Hygienist apprenticeship approved; three universities have expressed interest; funding arrangements pending.
 - Dental Practice Manager apprenticeship discontinued, with training shifting to the Level 5 Operations Manager apprenticeship.
 - Emphasis on the importance of the Orthodontic Therapy apprenticeship for patient care.
 - Career Pathways for CDT and DT
 - England has agreed a CDT preceptorship, awaiting funding approval; national delivery expected.
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- Dental Technician training funding increased to £22,000, yet GDC registrations continue to decline.
- Goal to attract digitally proficient entrants to meet evolving technical demands.

This summary captures DTAG's recent efforts to harmonise training standards, address workforce challenges, and expand career development pathways across the dental team.

NATION UPDATES

NORTHERN IRELAND

- The department of health and Social care have published Health and Social Care NI reset plan in July 2025 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-reset-plan>
- Allocation of foundation dentists to practices is now informed using a model successfully piloted in 24/25. The new distribution model reflects the relative density of health service practices across Northern Ireland.

SCOTLAND

- David Felix officially retired from NES in his role as Postgraduate Dental Dean on 31 March 2025. Lee Savarrio his successor joined NES on 1 January 2025.
- We are at the preliminary stage of an organisational change programme within the Dental Directorate of NES.
- Longitudinal Dental Foundation Training (LDFT) pilot is on track to launch in September 2026.
- Interviews took place for a Clinical Lecturer with NTN in Periodontics in the University of Glasgow with a preferred candidate identified.
- The NES Reducing Inequalities team is redesigning NES's OHIP education programme to address oral health inequalities.
- CDO Scotland has tasked NES with developing a new pre-registration education programme for dental technicians, aligned with NHS Scotland's workforce needs and leading to GDC registration, with early-stage stakeholder engagement and exploratory work currently underway
- A draft update of the SDCEP Antibiotic Prophylaxis Against Infective Endocarditis implementation is currently under review.

WALES

- Foundation Dentist salaries in Wales have been uplifted by Welsh Government.
 - DFT Wales Enhanced Recruitment Offer (WERO) – recruited 15 places for 2025. Working with Health Boards to develop succession planning offers in rural areas and Hywel Dda University Health Board have funded and created two Rural Fellowship posts that HEIW will support educationally.
 - Dentists with Enhanced Skills – Oral Surgery accreditation panels continue and Paediatric dentistry are running the first cohort of a 24 month training programme to upskill the workforce. An accreditation panel for those who already meet the criteria will be held in September. [Dentists with enhanced skills - HEIW](#)
 - Bangor University Diploma in Dental Hygiene programme graduated first cohort – NSS voted best DH programme in UK
 - New 1 year Dental Therapy BSc conversion programme for qualified dental hygienists commissioned in Bangor to enable skills escalation for existing workforce.
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- Welsh Government have consulted on proposed changes to the existing NHS GDS contract. A final set of recommendations will be made in September.

ENGLAND

- Jane Luker, Postgraduate Dental Dean for the South West retired in March 2025 and will be replaced in September by Prof Craig Barclay, who was previously Associate Deal Dean in the North West. James Spencer has taken on the role of Chair of English Dental Deans.
 - With the publication of the 10 Year Health Plan the Plan focus will be on three major shifts to improve healthcare in England: from hospital to community, from analogue to digital, and from sickness to prevention. These shifts aim to deliver better care, more efficiently, and with a greater emphasis on patient well-being and preventative measures.
 - The planned merger of DHSC and NHSE continues to progress but is creating challenges for all those in the delivery of dental education. Yet is unclear where the deaneries will sit in the new structures, although reassuringly there is an absolute commitment to the need for reform and development of the dental workforce.
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LIST OF POSTGRADUATE DENTAL DEANS

REGION/ NATION	NAME	E-MAIL
Yorkshire & Humber	James Spencer (COPDEND Chair)	james.spencer11@nhs.net
Northern Ireland	Brid Hendron (COPDEND Vice Chair)	brid.hendron@hscni.net
Scotland	Lee Savarrio	Lee.savarrio@nhs.scot
Wales	Kirstie Moons (COPDEND Vice Chair)	kirstie.moons@wales.nhs.uk
Defence	Charlotte Winship	charlotte.winship100@mod.gov.uk
East of England	Malcolm Brady	malcolm.brady1@nhs.net
London & Kent, Surrey, Sussex	Sana Movahedi	s.movahedi@nhs.net
Midlands	Mike Foster	mike.foster5@nhs.net
North East	Paul Blaylock	Paul.blaylock3@nhs.net
North West	Donna Holden	donna.holden3@nhs.net
South West	Craig Barclay (start date tbc)	
Thames Valley & Wessex	John Darby	john.darby7@nhs.net

LEAD DEANS FOR WORKSTREAMS

RESPONSIBILITIES	COPDEND REPRESENTATIVE/LEAD DEAN
SAC Lead Dean - Additional Dental Specialties	Brid Hendron
SAC Lead Dean - Dental Public Health	Kirstie Moons (until end Sept 25) Sana Movahedi (from October 25)
SAC Lead Dean - Oral Surgery	Mike Foster
SAC Lead Dean – Orthodontics	Kirstie Moons
SAC Lead Dean - Paediatric Dentistry	Donna Holden
SAC Lead Dean - Restorative Specialties	Malcolm Brady
SAC Lead Dean - Special Care Dentistry	James Spencer
Lead Dean Dental Team Advisory Group	Kirstie Moons and John Darby
Lead Dean - Dental Foundation Training	Sana Movahedi
Lead Dean - Dental Core Training	Mike Foster
Lead Dean - Dental Specialty Training	Lee Savarrio
Lead Dean - Academic Training	James Spencer
Lead Dean - Workforce Development	Malcolm Brady
National Certificate of Dental Core Equivalence (NCDCE)	Paul Blaylock