Scotland’s Oral Health Plan
Scottish Government Consultation on the Future of Oral Health

1. Background

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Scotland’s Oral Health Plan. Please find below our response, which includes commentary from the Scottish Health Council, part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

We are one organisation with many parts and one purpose - to drive improvements that support the highest possible quality of care for the people of Scotland.

We work with services and the public to make seven key contributions to health and social care:

- supporting people to have a meaningful say in how services are designed, delivered and experienced
- providing independent quality assurance that gives people confidence in the quality of services and helps providers to improve
- supporting providers to redesign services so that people in Scotland are able to live longer, healthier lives at home or a homely setting
- supporting services to reduce harm, waste and unnecessary variation in practice and outcomes
- providing evidence and knowledge that enables people to get the best out of the services that they use and helps services to improve
- supporting the use of data and information to help services to improve
- supporting leaders to create the conditions where quality will flourish.

The Scottish Health Council was established in April 2005 to promote improvements in the quality and extent of public involvement in the NHS in Scotland. It supports and monitors work carried out by NHS Boards to involve patients and the public in the planning and development of health services and in decisions that affect the running of those services. The Scottish Health Council has a network of 14 local offices across Scotland (one in each health board area) and a National Office in Glasgow.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is currently running an 18 month pilot improvement collaborative across dentistry in primary care settings. It is an exciting and unique opportunity for dental practice teams to take part in a ground-breaking project to test interventions and tools.
2. Introduction

In terms of the consultation questions provided, we have chosen to respond specifically to those in chapter 5: Professional Leadership, Quality Improvement and Scrutiny (questions 17-21).

We have also provided a response from the Scottish Health Council which relates particularly to its expertise and interest in patient related issues and public involvement.

3. Responses to questions on chapter 5: Professional Leadership, Quality Improvement and Scrutiny

17. There should be a Director of Dentistry with oversight of all aspects of dental services and oral health improvement at Board level. Agree or Disagree?

☐ Agree
☐ Disagree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree

Comments
Strong dental leadership within Health Board and/or Health and Social Care Partnerships will help to support quality improvement and assurance in general dental practice.

18. The Scottish Government proposes to review the remit of the Scottish Dental Practice Board. In your view should the SDPB be:

☐ Tasked with a revised remit
☐ Placed within a different host organisation
☐ Abolished and its functions subsumed elsewhere
☐ Retain the existing remit
☐ Other

Comments
Healthcare Improvement Scotland acknowledges the work of the Scottish Dental Practice Board. We have an opportunity through the Healthcare Improvement Scotland commitment to Driving and Supporting Improvement in Primary Care 2016-2020 to work more closely with other national organisations to support and improve the quality of care in general dental practice.

19. In view of the proposal to introduce a new preventive care pathway, a new 'enhanced' Clinical Quality Monitoring Service for patients would be required. Agree or Disagree?
Agree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree

20. The Scottish Government proposes developing, and rolling out across Scotland, a national database of key indicators of quality. Agree or Disagree?

Agree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree

Comments
Healthcare Improvement Scotland is committed to stronger engagement with the dentistry profession. We will scope how we can support them to implement evidence informed care, embed quality assurance mechanisms and develop improvement knowledge and skills. A national database of key indicators might be one of the mechanisms used by staff to agree priority areas for improvement and support.

21. The Scottish Government proposes the development of a process that will make protected learning time available for dentists and practice staff. Agree or Disagree?

Agree  Disagree  Neither agree nor disagree

Comment
Protected Learning Time in General Medical Practice has proven successful and it would be envisaged that resourcing a similar system in General Dental Practice would support quality improvement activities.
4. Response from the Scottish Health Council

Introduction

The Scottish Health Council welcomes the Scottish Government’s consultation on Scotland’s Oral Health Plan. We also welcome involvement in the process and the opportunity for our local offices to gather public views across Scotland on some of the consultation proposals. We look forward to seeing how public feedback will be used to shape and inform the Oral Health Action Plan which will be developed to take NHS dentistry forward for the next 10 years.

Comments

1. The Scottish Health Council welcomes the commitments contained in the consultation document which aim to streamline existing processes for patients. These include, for example:

- improved governance arrangements to ensure cognisance of the principles of quality - namely safe, effective and person centred care
- the introduction of a new Clinical Quality Monitoring Service that will monitor the preventative care pathway for those patients who require to maintain their good oral health status
- further development of dental practice inspections
- commitments to improve access to dental care, especially for older people and those which allow patients to receive more complex treatments closer to home and reduce the need to attend hospital.

2. The Scottish Health Council recommends that patients and the public are involved in further development of each of the above proposals. In relation to practice inspections, we would welcome the opportunity to share our experience of involving members of the public in inspections and further discussions about how we may provide support to inspection teams (as well as public members) to ensure their input is productive and meaningful.

3. We particularly welcome the Scottish Government’s proposal to improve its engagement with parents, communities and those Third Sector organisations that help support people with special care needs.

As part of our role to promote quality public engagement across Scotland, the Scottish Health Council has been actively promoting the importance of involving the public within general practice. We do this by sharing approaches, tools and techniques for engagement with practice staff and encouraging them to consider establishing Patient Participation Groups where they do not already exist. More recently, the Scottish Health Council has brought together a number of Groups in
some areas so they can learn from each other and share practice through peer support. We also plan to deliver capacity training to Group members to ensure they can be meaningfully involved.

More information about Patient Participation Groups is included in the Appendix which also illustrates the range of activities they are involved in and the benefits and practical support they can bring. Going forward, the Scottish Health Council advocates for increased patient participation within dental practices across Scotland and would welcome the opportunity to work alongside dental practice colleagues to support that.

4. More generally, the Scottish Health Council in conjunction with other key partners is involved in taking forward Our Voice. This is based on a vision where people who use health and care services, carers and the public will be enabled to engage purposefully with health and social care providers to continuously improve and transform services. People will be provided with feedback on the impact of their engagement, or a demonstration of how their views have been considered.

The Scottish Health Council would very much like the opportunity brought about through the Oral Health consultation to ensure that the principles of Our Voice shape and focus public involvement in the emerging Dental Health Action Plan.

**Website links**

For further information about specific topics mentioned in our response please refer to the following links:

Our Voice  Scottish Health Council  Patient Participation Groups
Appendix

Public involvement in general practice
Examples of Patient Participation Groups’ Activities

1 Introduction

1.1 As part of its role to promote public engagement across Scotland, the Scottish Health Council has been specifically promoting the importance of involving the public within general practice. We do this by sharing approaches, tools and techniques for engagement with health centre staff and encouraging them to consider establishing Patient Participation Groups where they do not already exist. Through this work, the Scottish Health Council has increased and developed links with existing Patient Participation Groups to promote awareness of the Scottish Health Council and its role to support and ‘champion’ public involvement.

1.2 A Patient Participation Group is a patient-led group which is linked to a local general practice or health centre. Ideally, it is made up of a group of patients with a variety of social and economic backgrounds, genders and ages. Patient Participation Groups work alongside general practitioners and practice staff to provide a patient perspective on the healthcare services that are offered to the community.

1.3 This report captures some of the activities which Patient Participation Groups are involved in across Scotland and describes the variety of benefits to having such a Group. The examples contained in this report are based on the knowledge of the Scottish Health Council’s local offices and are highlighted to provide a snapshot of activities. Through these examples, the Scottish Health Council hopes to demonstrate the benefits that Patient Participation Groups can bring and encourage other practices to consider establishing a Group where they do not already exist.

2 Making use of technology

Video stories

Some Patient Participation Groups have worked closely with the Scottish Health Council to produce a number of video stories which describe their activities. These videos, which are available on the Scottish Health Council’s website, typically feature Group members and a General Practitioner describing how the work of the Group benefits the practice and their local community.

Videos are currently available for Patient Participation Groups attached to practices located in:
- Inverkeithing Medical Group, Fife
- Stonehaven Practice, Grampian
- Barns Medical Practice, Ayr
- Danestone Medical Practice, Aberdeen
- Laurencekirk Health Centre, Aberdeenshire
- Tranent Medical Practice, East Lothian

The videos themselves have been used in a variety of ways, for example:

- shown on a continuous loop on a screen in practice waiting areas to encourage feedback and recruitment to existing groups
- to support a training event for practice managers to promote the benefits of having a Patient Participation Group
- more generally to demonstrate the benefits of public involvement in primary care.

The Scottish Health Council also uses the videos to promote awareness of Patient Participation Groups and to demonstrate the benefits they can bring.

**Social media**

The Scottish Health Council’s local offices are aware of some Patient Participation Groups which have developed Facebook pages and Twitter accounts to promote their work and to share information with other patients of the practice; this ranges from dates of meetings to details of events and practice opening hours.

**Online surveys and Wi-Fi**

At least one Patient Participation Group has worked with its practice to gather feedback from patients using a Survey Monkey© questionnaire. A tablet PC was provided by the practice and was used to carry out an online survey with patients in the waiting room. The Patient Participation Group also undertook some fundraising to pay for the installation of wi-fi which benefits the Group, practice staff and patients themselves. More recently the Group has developed an “Information Hub” for its practice population and a grant has been obtained to purchase a printer that can be used by patients to print information.

**Websites**

Many Patient Participation Groups have a dedicated section on the practice website. They include minutes of meetings, news items and other information relevant to the work of the Group.
3 Engaging with and working with the community

Traditional surveys

Traditional, paper based surveys or forms have been used by a number of Patient Participation Groups. They are either questionnaires which are left for patients to complete and return or Group members will support patients to complete them. Some surveys are designed by Group members themselves who work closely with practice staff. Survey topics have included:

- patient satisfaction and opinion
- key points from Better Together: Scotland’s Patient Experience Programme
- new appointments systems
- developing new care teams
- consultation on a local pharmacy.

Some Patient Participation Groups have engaged with the wider community to gather views by:

- attending the local secondary school to engage with younger patients
- going along to fitness classes and other similar community based events
- visiting local clubs such as the British Legion (to get feedback from male patients in particular).

Once surveys are complete, most Patient Participation Groups will be involved with the practice in developing actions or recommendations to improve or change services.

Involving young people

The Scottish Health Council is aware that a number of Patient Participation Groups have young people as members. The majority have been recruited via secondary schools who in turn take issues from the Group back to their peers to discuss. Feedback is then shared with the wider Patient Participation Group so views can influence discussion and decisions.

Patient transport schemes

There are examples of Patient Participations Groups which work closely with third sector organisations to provide volunteer patient transport schemes for people with mobility issues. The purpose is to help them attend appointments at the surgery. This has proved especially beneficial in remote and rural areas.

Community outreach and events

A number of Patient Participation Groups have used a variety of methods to improve their community engagement activities, for example by:
• promoting bowel screening in partnership with practice staff in practice waiting areas and local community halls

• organising support groups for patients wishing to maintain a healthy lifestyle (for example through weight management)

• holding meetings in a local care home in order to improve and widen access to the Group.

Some Patient Participation Groups have attended and been involved in organising events in their local community such as gala days, shows and fairs. Group members work closely with practice staff not only to promote various health messages but share information with communities about the work of their Group.

Health themed workshops

Several Patient Participation Groups have helped to organise and support health talks or workshops on a particular theme or a range of themes, such as:

• diabetes
• bowel screening
• winter preparation.

Engaging with other primary care services

Other Patient Participation Groups have worked closely with their local community pharmacist to agree a process of sending out prescriptions by post, free of charge, to those in rural areas who would have difficulty getting their medicines otherwise.

Fundraising and volunteering

A small number of Patient Participation Groups are engaged in fundraising for new initiatives or equipment for the practice, for example one Group has prepared public areas of the practice to display local artists’ work (the artists will pay a small fee for this service) and organised a fundraising coffee morning. Through these fundraising events, the Patient Participation Group also drives up recruitment.

There is an example where a Patient Participation Group provides volunteers for a community garden at their local hospital. As well as group members volunteering, they also encourage other members of the community to visit and encourage them to take up volunteering.

Reviewing patient information

Patient Participation Groups routinely review their practices’ patient information. One Group has been involved in reviewing the practices “Patient Pack” along with practice staff to ensure it is useful to new patients.
Some Patient Participation Groups have taken responsibility for management of notice boards or sections of a notice board within their practices to:

- ensure that information is up to date
- maintain a section dedicated to Group information such as minutes and meeting agendas
- create a “You Said, We Did” section to provide feedback on ideas that the Group has taken forward.

There are also examples of how a Patient Participation Group has worked with patients and practice staff to develop a leaflet to help patients understand how to order prescriptions online. Several Groups produce occasional newsletters which update patients on changes at the practice or upcoming events or clinics.

**Open days**

The Scottish Health Council is aware of a Patient Participation Group which organised an open day for the practice. During the event the Group worked with staff to put on guided tours around the practice. This gave members a chance to highlight the variety of services available to patients within the practice and raised awareness of the roles of staff working there. The event was particularly well received by school children and pupils from a local primary school who visited.

**Annual flu vaccination clinics**

A number of Patient Participation Groups have assisted with flu vaccination clinics. This normally involves members signing people in, making sure people receive their information leaflets and directing them to the correct waiting areas. The support provided by members allowed practice staff to concentrate on their clinical and administrative duties making the whole process much more efficient.

4 **Summary**

In summary, the work of Patient Participation Groups has proved invaluable. It is hoped that this brief description of some of their activities will promote their role and strengths as well as highlight the many advantages of having such an engagement mechanism for both patient and practice. The Scottish Health Council looks forward to continuing the partnership work with both general practices and patients throughout Scotland.