

## **REDEPLOYMENT OF THE DENTAL WORKFORCE IN WALES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

**Background:** This document describes the key considerations, principles and processes underlying redeployment of the clinical dental workforce in Wales. It has been prepared by the Welsh Government (Dental Branch) working in conjunction with Health Education and Improvement Wales. Given the need for flexibility in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this document will be updated regularly.

**Version:** 1.0 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Changes from previous version:** None

**Principles of the Welsh model:** The following describes the principles that underpin the Welsh response to redeployment for dental teams.

1. NHS dental practices across Wales are continuing to maintain remote telephone contact with patients and see triaged patients for urgent care that cannot be delayed involving non-Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGPs);
2. Each Health Board has established Urgent Dental Centres (UDCs) for COVID patients and all patient requiring urgent dental care that cannot be resolved with (Advice Analgesia and/or Antibiotics) and may involve AGPs;
3. This model provides Wales with the flexibility to draw on capacity in the dental workforce to continue to adapt to the changing requirements of the COVID response;
4. *Redeployment for the clinical dental workforce remains voluntary*, given the need to maintain the current service model in the NHS and the capacity to manage surge in UDC support, when required;
5. This model provides flexibility in the NHS response to COVID-19 and will help to mitigate pressures on NHS111, the UDCs and avoid attendance at A&E departments or admissions as hospital in-patients due to severe head/neck/floor of mouth swelling;
6. Prior to volunteering, dental team members from dental practices with NHS contracts should discuss their wish to redeploy with their practice owner. Their discretion should be based on their ability to deliver to the current service model provided across Wales detailed in #1 (this provision should not be put at risk);
7. Volunteers from other sectors and private/mixed dental practices will have sought approval from their line manager, as appropriate, to ensure current levels of service can be maintained (e.g. UDCs);
8. Redeployment of the clinical dental workforce will be managed (locally by their local Health Board). As such, induction, roles, the provision of PPE, contracting and

payment (where usual income is not maintained through NHS contract financial support) will be managed by the Health Board and will remain their responsibility;

9. Members of the dental team who wish to redeploy should make an application via the COVID HUB, which can be found at this URL: [www.covidhubwales.co.uk](http://www.covidhubwales.co.uk) **Please ensure that you tick the appropriate box to describe your current role within the dental practice (e.g. dentist, dental nurse). Due to the limitations in the HUB system, we have only been able to describe four dental team roles: dentist; dental therapist/hygienist; dental nurse and dental practice manager/receptionist. If your role is different, please complete one of the non-dental generic fields.**
10. Those who volunteer must ensure they work to the limits of their competency and training, in accordance with GDC guidance and Health Boards need to ensure that their expectations of the dental workforce appropriately reflect this. The GDC is supportive of dental teams being redeployed and working in non-dental settings during the COVID crisis and further guidance can be found on their website;
11. All redeployed volunteers will be covered by crown immunity, but must have an Honorary contract in place with their local Health Board to facilitate this;
12. It is expected, where NHS contract financial support is maintaining full time income, those who volunteer would not receive any additional payment. Those who work part time and want to increase hours of work to volunteer and/or those from private/mixed practices not receiving support from NHS contact payments should discuss any financial arrangements with the Health Board before commencement of duties; and
13. Redeployed staff can review their own competencies and find on-line training resources from Health Education and Improvement Wales (see <https://heiw.nhs.wales/covid-19/heiw-work-to-support-the-nhs-workforce/> ).