

## Interim NHS People Plan: the future dental workforce

### Our vision

The aim of the Future Dental Workforce Group is to ensure our NHS dental workforce has the appropriate knowledge and skills to care for patients in the rapidly changing and complex healthcare environment of the future, by creating a capable and motivated multidisciplinary dental workforce, of a sufficient size, distributed across England to meet population health needs.

To achieve this, we will focus on three themes that have emerged for NHS oral healthcare:

- Reforming dental care contracts: enabling dental care teams to support patient care pathways, with a focus on preventing dental disease and meeting wider population health needs.
- Reviewing the training of dental professionals: developing flexible training models at all stages of their careers, support recruitment and retention, and optimise clinicians' scope of practice.
- Promoting a working environment that fosters clinical leadership and the integration of dental teams into all levels of place-based decision making, joining up services across health and social care.

We will develop our interim plans further as part of the full People Plan later this year.

### Key features of this vision:

- retention of dentists and dental care professionals (DCPs) at all stages of their careers
- creation of delivery models that reflect the needs of patient groups
- improved working experience and wellbeing
- greater flexibility in undergraduate and postgraduate training
- addressing imbalances in the distribution of dentists and DCPs across geographical areas and clinical specialties.

## Supporting the dental team

Work will continue on the Advancing Dental Care programme, led by Health Education England, so that we have the data and mechanisms to support future workforce planning. Our goal is to create a road map for the implementation of innovative training opportunities, enhance recruitment and retention, develop multidisciplinary skill mix models and address identified areas of need. We will also help develop more flexible dental training pathways to support workforce retention and improve working lives, including enabling less-than-full-time and part-time training for dental professionals.

To improve patient access to NHS dental care, we will continue to develop a suite of approved commissioning standards with a focus on addressing the oral health inequalities outlined in the *NHS Long Term Plan*. We will also work to develop local dental networks and dental clinical leadership within integrated care systems and primary care networks. Our aim is to ensure that dental and oral health services are effectively integrated, connected and commissioned – and to help address geographical shortages of dental professionals.

We will support the business case for Public Health England's National Adult Oral Health survey. We will jointly produce a business case for the England National Dental Workforce survey to take account of workforce factors in managing future national oral health needs.