White Paper reshares NHS

PCTs and SHAs scrapped as GPs take over healthcare; dentistry reverts to centralised control by NHS Commissioning Board

The Coalition Government has set out its reforms for the NHS in a White Paper entitled Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS.

In a radical shakeup of the way the NHS is currently run, the White Paper proposes that most of the mainstream health-care services currently looked after by primary Care Trusts will become the responsibility of GP Consortia, which will assess and commission services.

Dentistry will not fall under this remit however, as there will be an independent NHS Commissioning Board who will be responsible for services such as pharmacy and ophthalmology as well as dentistry. The will see a return to centralised control for dental services, as PCTs and SHAs will fall by the wayside in the proposed reforms.

Consistency

Commenting on the proposals, Health Minister, Lord Howe said: “The White Paper proposes that a new NHS Commissioning Board should take over from PCTs the responsibility for commissioning dentistry in order to improve the quality of care for patients and consistency of commissioning.

“The transition to the new system will require careful management at every stage. This will be a challenge, but I have every confidence in the NHS’s ability to manage this successfully.

“We recently published a consultation seeking views on commissioning for patients and the implementation of the NHS Commissioning Board and now we want to hear the views of healthcare professionals on how the new system should work.

The Way Forward

The White Paper also reiterates the Coalition Government’s commitment to introduce a new ‘Family Dental Contract’ following consultation and trials. The White Paper will be designed in the context of the new commissioning arrangements. I am having ongoing meetings with key representatives of the profession to discuss the way forward.”

Impact

Peter Bateman, chair of the British Dental Association’s Salaries and Reimbursement Committee, commented on the potential impact of the White Paper on salaried dental services.

He said: “It is essential that special care dentistry and other salaried dental services are included in same dental commissioning arrangements as for general practice otherwise there is a risk that the budget for community services could be lost to dentistry.”

Hospital loses dental services

NHS Barnet has axed dental services from Edgware Community Hospital in North London due to ‘financial pressures’. More than 60 patients with ongoing treatment have had to find alternative treatment after the closure of the Dental Access Centre due to ‘financial pressures’ on NHS Barnet. It claims the Dental Access Centre has been closed because there is spare capacity at the 71 other NHS surgeries in Barnet. A statement from the Trust said: “In this time of economic downturn, financial pressures on the local NHS is increasing significantly more than experienced and appropriately. These patients, along with all previous patients who accessed dental services at this site, have been notified and arrangements are being made for their treatment to continue at an alternative dental clinic nearby. In and around the Edgware area there are 15 dental practices that provide NHS dental services and are available for the patient to use.”

GDPs not ready

GDPs are not ready for registration with the Care Qualifyers Project. To recent research conducted by Software of Excellence, a practice management software company. With only six months to go, 22 per cent of those surveyed said they were not prepared for registration, whilst a further 19 per cent did not know what CQC meant. The procedure for registration needs to allow time for processing, meaning that administration needs to allow time for the public to use.

Sonicare For Kids

The Sonicare For Kids toothbrush has been accredited by the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF). An independent panel of dental academics drawn together by the BDHF assessed the basis for claims made by Philips about the Sonicare For Kids and approved them. These claims include: Sonicare For Kids removes significantly more plaque than a manual toothbrush, Sonicare For Kids is safe and gentle on your child’s gums and children brush significantly longer with Sonicare For Kids than with a manual toothbrush.

The BDHF accreditation logo will soon be appearing on Sonicare For Kids packaging and practice and patient literature.