

Gateway reference: 18199



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To: All current dental contract pilots

CC: Pilot PCTs

5 October 2012

Dear colleague,

### **Reform of the NHS Dental Contract in England – next phase of piloting**

I am writing to bring to your attention proposals, published today, for the next phase of piloting in the dental contract reform programme.

As you know, the government is committed to improving oral health and increasing access. Introducing a new national NHS dental contract based on registration, capitation and quality is a key part of the programme to deliver on these goals. The dental contract will be structured to reward dentists on a capitation basis for the continuity and quality of care provided to patients, as opposed to simply reimbursing them for activity. The government committed to piloting any changes, and we currently have 70 pilots testing aspects of the reform programme in three pilot types. These pilots started in the summer of 2011, and were extended earlier this year to run until March 2013.

Ministers have today announced their proposals for the next phase of the NHS dental contract reform pilots. This phase will take the total number of pilots to around 90 -95, test in more depth how the elements of any new contract work most effectively together and extend piloting to include some salaried services. The proposals are accompanied by a report on the early learning from the pilots authored by the NHS dental contract pilots evidence and learning reference group chaired by Professor Jimmy Steele. We have also published a report from ICM Research that summarises the findings from focus groups and surveys conducted with patients and staff from the current pilot practices. The proposals and accompanying reports are available at [www.dh.gov.uk/dentistry](http://www.dh.gov.uk/dentistry).

In the second phase of piloting, current pilots will be invited to sign up to continuing in the programme when it begins on April 1 2013. In addition, we are inviting applications from other dental practices in England with an NHS

contract, from which we will select approximately 20-25 pilots. Applications for the next phase will also be open to salaried dental services.

For your existing pilot practices, you will have the opportunity to sign a new contract variation for the next phase of piloting, provided that you still meet the eligibility criteria and subject to agreement from your commissioner and the central programme. We will contact you shortly to advise on the process for confirming whether in principle you wish to continue as a pilot. There is a separate online process for new practices wishing to join the programme.

**You do not need to complete the online application process for your existing pilot practice(s) but you do need to follow this process if you have other practices not currently in the programme you would like to be considered.** Details about the application process are available at <http://dentalpilots.pcc.nhs.uk>, as well as further information and FAQs relevant to both current and prospective pilots are available from PCC at <http://dentalpilots.pcc.nhs.uk>.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the valuable contribution you have made to the programme so far, and I very much hope you will continue to work in the pilot programme next year.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. J. Lynam', written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth Lynam

**Director of the dental contract reform programme**