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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

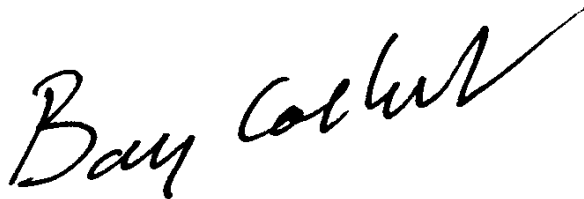
Group chaired by Professor Jimmy Steele. We have also published a report from ICM Research that summarises the findings from focus groups and surveys conducted with patients and staff from the current pilot practices. The proposals and accompanying reports are available at www.dh.gov.uk/dentistry.

In the second phase of piloting, current pilots will be invited to sign up to continuing in the programme from 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. All applicants whether existing pilots or new practices will need the support of their commissioner.

The application process will run from Monday 8 October to 4pm on Thursday 8 November. The online form will be available at <http://dentalpilots.pcc.nhs.uk>, as well as supporting information that sets out the principles and eligibility criteria..

I very much hope you will consider applying if your practice meets the necessary criteria. We will of course continue to keep the dental profession informed as the contract reform programme progresses.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Cockcroft', written in a cursive style.

Barry Cockcroft CBE

Chief Dental Officer for England