

NWORTH dental studies form basis of restructuring dental workforce & NHS contracts

NWORTH has made a difference at a policy-level in NHS service provision for dental services. Over a three-year period, two separate but interlinked NIHR-funded studies have looked at the impact of paying NHS Dentists differently and whether Dental Care Professionals can manage low risk patients as well as a dentist. This research has informed the development of the All-Wales Faculty of Dental Care Professionals.

Findings have also subsequently informed the development of a new £1.5M per annum Dental Teaching Unit in North Wales (launching in 2021) and the submission of an application for the training of Dental Care Professionals with Health Education and Improvement Wales. This links with the development of new care-pathways for the Dental Contract Reform process in Wales, making greater use of Dental Care Professionals, as alluded to in the results of the NWORTH studies.

The findings were also fed into the Chief Professions Officers' Medicines Mechanisms consultation exercise to lift the current restrictions on Dental Care Professionals' ability to prescribe medicines (another significant finding from our study).