



## Job Description

### 1. Job Identification

Job Title:	Dental Therapist
Responsible to:	Dental Director
Department(s):	Public Dental Service
Directorate:	Community Health and Social Care
Last Update:	June 2018

### 2. Job Purpose

The post holder will be an essential member of NHS Shetland Public Dental Service working as part of a team of clinicians providing Dental Care. They will perform the full range of activities deemed to be within the scope of practice of a dental therapist, but with a wide spectrum of responsibilities:

General Dental Service (GDS). The post holder will undertake a wide range of prescribed preventive/restorative/surgical procedures (e.g. fillings, extractions) as well as providing more advanced preventative and specialist treatment services where required for adults and children. These patients will be treated under GDS Terms and Conditions and the Statement of Dental Remuneration.

Special care. The post holder will have an opportunity to work with patients with special clinical and support needs, and their carers. There will also be opportunities to provide care under general anaesthetic and conscious sedation via the regular community lists in the Gilbert Bain Hospital.

Community Care. The post holder will be required to work in a community setting including domiciliary visits, care homes mobile dental units and satellite clinics, on a wide range of patient groups for routine and special care.

Public Health. The post holder will be expected to promote and provide oral health education to individual patients and to various groups. There will also be an annual opportunity to participate in the National Dental Inspection Programme (NDIP) at educational establishments across Shetland

Education. The post holder will be expected to support the development of all staff related to dental provision in Shetland. This includes support teaching of undergraduate students,

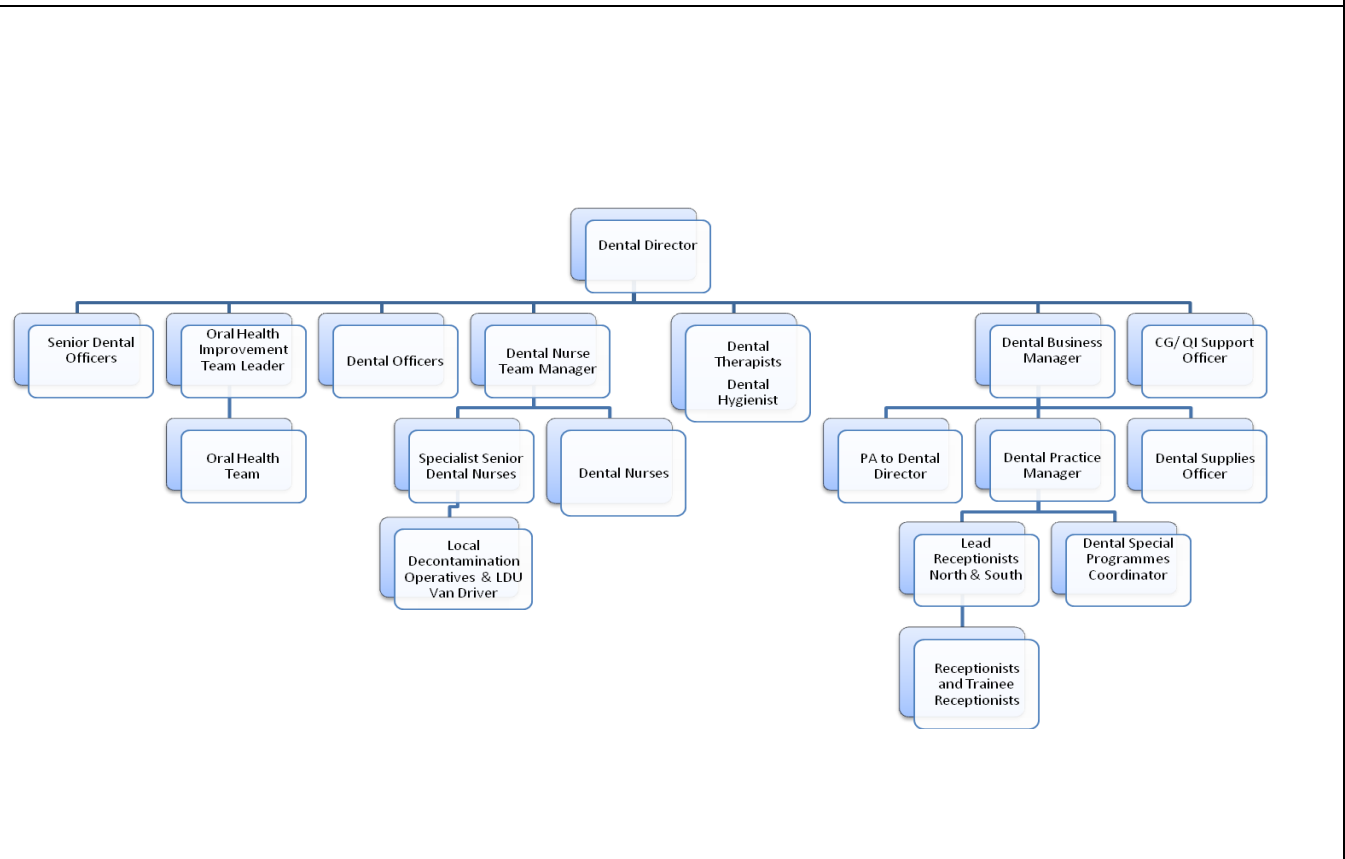
dental nurses, health and social care staff and other health professionals. The post holder will also have an opportunity to develop and work within consultant led teams.

### 3. Dimensions

NHS Shetland's Public Dental Service employs over 60 wte staff supporting 14 individual dental surgeries. There are 9 surgeries in Lerwick: 4 in the Montfield Dental Clinic, 2 in the Gilbert Bain Hospital Dental Suite, and 3 in the St Olaf Street Clinic. Brae in the North of Shetland has 3 surgeries. There is a single chair practice on the Islands of Yell, which also provides dental services for the residents of the Isles of Unst and Fetlar. Whalsay, an island to the East of mainland Shetland also has a single chair practice to supports its residents. Occasional visits are carried out to other outer islands including Fair Isle and Foula.

The post holder may be required to work in any of the Board's Dental Clinics.

### 4. Organisational Position



### 5. Role of Department

The Public Dental Service assists NHS Shetland in the maintenance and improvement of the

oral health of local communities within the area through:

- Delivery of routine and emergency dental services to local communities
- Delivery of the epidemiological function through the National Dental Inspection Programme
- Delivery of National Childsmile and Caring for Smiles Programmes
- Delivery of Comprehensive Dental Service for Older People
- Delivery of various health improvement initiatives
- Delivery of specialist services (e.g. general anaesthetics & sedation, orthodontics)
- Delivery of care in a variety of settings (e.g. domiciliary care & care from mobile surgeries)

## 6. Key Result Areas

- Providing a personal clinical service in patient treatment sessions, treating a wide variety of patients including GDP referred, nurse and doctor referrals.
- Oral hygiene instruction including toothbrushing, interdental cleaning, oral hygiene with regard to appliances, e.g. dentures, orthodontic appliances, dietary advice and fluoride therapy.
- The use of local infiltration analgesia and regional block analgesia.
- Instrumentation of the teeth including the safe use of sharp instruments.
- Full range of basic and complex periodontal treatment, including periodontal charting, recording of indices, scaling and polishing, root surface instrumentation, and antimicrobial therapy.
- Removal of cement/overhangs or other plaque retentive areas.
- The application of medicaments including fluoride, desensitizing agents and sedative dressings.
- Caries removal using handpieces and burs, and hand instruments.
- Applying linings and dressings to teeth as appropriate and at own discretion relative to: amount of pain/discomfort patient is experiencing; size of cavity; whether tooth is vital or non-vital.
- Placement of temporary dressings as appropriate.
- Impression taking.
- Temporary recementation of crowns and bridges.
- Placement of Hall Technique Crowns.
- Permanent restoration of teeth with a variety of materials including dental amalgam, resin composites and glass ionomers.
- Paediatric dentistry including restorations, fissure sealants, pulp therapy and extractions.
- The taking, processing and interpretation of radiographs.
- Provide oral health education at chairside, including dietary, oral hygiene and smoking cessation advice to improve the patient's and carers knowledge and enable them to make choices to improve their own oral health and that of the family.
- Plan the appropriate order of treatment, implement, interpret / refine as treatment progresses to final discharge.
- There is a continual requirement to reconsider treatment options as work progresses e.g. a tooth requiring a different treatment than was predicted, problems with patient

co-operation.

- Discuss specific treatment plans, if appropriate, analyse patient information and adapt for individual needs.
- Use of communication and interpersonal skills to ensure that consent has been obtained, the patient has full understanding of the treatment options and that they understand the role of the dental therapist.
- Analyse patient information and adapt treatment if appropriate.
- Refer patients to other dental professionals as treatment determines.
- Assess, monitor and adapt clinical needs as required to meet needs and capabilities of individual patients. Raise awareness of patient's own responsibility regarding treatment outcome and long term benefits.
- Treat patient groups including children and adults and those with multiple complex needs.
- Understand the needs of patients with anxiety and disabilities and carry out their treatment accordingly.
- Decide how to implement the overall treatment plan, taking into account the medical and psychological needs of the patient.

### **7a. Equipment and Machinery**

- Responsible for the safe use of complex equipment, e.g. dental units, computer and digital technological hardware.
- Daily use of high speed rotary instruments and sharp instruments which the potential for inflicting severe bodily injury to the operator/patient/staff.
- The use of emergency equipment as and when required e.g. oxygen, defibrillator.

### **7b. Systems**

- Awareness of Health and Safety at Work legislation and how it relates to self and staff.
- Completion of Datix reporting maintaining Clinical Governance.
- Putting into effect Occupational Health Systems for nurses e.g. sharps injuries
- Use of R4 Clinical Plus, PACS, DBS Win and Sci Gateway for clinical IT management.
- Understand and aware of the issues surrounding confidentiality and Caldicott

### **8. Assignment and Review of Work**

- Work will be assigned by Dental Director, Senior Dental Officers and Dental Officers.
- Work will be reviewed by the Lead Clinician.
- Ensure CPD needs are met by actively participating in the PDP annual review using same as a basis for discussion to identify training needs.
- Identify own training needs and how best to achieve these. Ensuring Continuing Professional Development is updated and mandatory training is undertaken and recorded.

### **9. Decisions and Judgements**

#### Clinical:

- Interpreting and managing a treatment plan

- Judgments regarding the type, quality and quantity of oral care to patients presenting with dental caries, periodontal disease and tooth wear
- Recognition, decision making and appropriate treatment of oral manifestations of systemic disease
- Constantly working under time pressure.
- Maintain contemporaneous clinical notes including medical/social histories.
- To provide appropriate clinical, restorative and preventive interventions commensurate with qualifications, GDC regulations and personal experience, to patients attending the Board's Public Dental Service at various sites, on referral from dental practitioners within the Service.
- Assess individual risk factors and identify level of approach required in accordance of stage of attitude, compliance to behaviour change. For example, advice on smoking cessation or alcohol consumption etc.
- Refer to other health professionals as required, allowing for optimum support and success in improving health and well-being.

#### Dental caries

- Judgments regarding salivary contamination and tooth isolation before, during and after procedures e.g. rubber dam, varnishes
- Judgments regarding the clinical appearance of the carious lesion, taking into account the causative factors, location and extent of lesion
- Decision making regarding the removal of diseased tissue and analysis of pulp vitality and the viability of residual tooth tissue
- Appropriate choice of intra-oral equipment (types and sizes of hand-pieces and burs)
- Protection of the dental pulp
- Whether to administer therapeutic medicaments, and which techniques to use
- Decision making regarding the indications and contra-indications in restoring the carious lesion:
  - Replacement of lost tissue – e.g. amalgam, resin composite
  - Whether or not therapeutic agents are needed and which type – e.g. for lining deep cavities, or for dressings (sedative or temporary)
- The adhesive quality/bonding mechanisms of materials related to tooth quality -  
Contraindications regarding the compatibility between various dental materials, the tooth tissue, the patient and the operator
- Occlusal adjustment – analysis of correct occlusion (bite relationship) before and after the restoration

#### Radiology

- Identifying and interpreting pathological features on radiographs
- Decisions/judgments re: hazards of ionizing radiation and regulation including radiation protection and dose reduction
- Assessment of image quality
- Decision making regarding alternative imaging

#### Medical Emergencies

- Prompt identification and decision making regarding the immediate management of anaphylactic reaction, hypoglycaemia, upper respiratory obstruction, cardiac arrest, fits, vasovagal attack, inhalation or ingestion of foreign bodies and haemorrhage, often working as team leader, with ultimate responsibility for patient welfare – e.g.

just dental nurse and post holder on premises.

#### Review and recall

- Decision making regarding:
  - The recall period for each patient
  - The review period – e.g. for early resolution of the condition
  - The need for continued treatment or course of treatment
  - Whether to defer treatment on the grounds of patient compliance, medical history changes etc.
- The provision of clinical, restorative and preventive interventions, care and advice to the housebound on a domiciliary basis under the direction of a dentist.
- The provision of dental interventions and preventive care and advice to those attending day centres, schools for children with special needs, residential care centres etc. under the direction of a dentist.
- Supervision of the clinical site and staff when acting as the sole practitioner ensuring efficient and effective management of resources.
- Participate in the development of, and ensure compliance with, all clinical protocols, e.g. infection control, health and safety

#### Special Care

- Working with the older population, those with special care needs – medically compromised, learning difficulties, mental health issues, physical disabilities and phobic patients.
- The provision of clinical, restorative and preventive interventions to paediatric patients on referral from a dentist. This may include patients who suffer from dental anxiety.
- Discuss and review patient treatment plans/needs with the prescribing clinician/patient and others e.g. supervise information given to patients by other members of staff
- Give advice and reassurance to all patient groups, for example patients who have been treated for cancer or who have had complex treatment plans.
- Prompt communication with relevant practitioners to enable appropriate intervention as required by individual needs.

#### Management

- Act as role model in clinical standards for best practice and encourage other members of the dental team to follow.
- Provide support and encouragement to dental team members in their development and progress.
- Responsible for dealing with problems, which may arise within the daily, clinical sessions, and ensuring these are resolved with the minimum disruption to patient care.
- Maintaining standards relating to General Dental Council professional guidelines, patient consent, confidentiality as well as those relating to infection control and risk management.

### **10. Most Challenging/Difficult Parts of the Job**

- Working in cramped or confined space in some clinics, mobile dental units and in domiciliary settings.
- The orientation of partners to the evolving health improvement agenda and health promotion approaches around reducing dental problems, locally and nationally.
- Working with a diverse and broad range of patient types under different systems (ie

GDS work and PDS work).

- Demarcation of professional boundaries and personal space in a remote and rural community.
- Treating patients with a high level of anxiety; severely challenging behaviour; or physical, medical or mental disability.
- Negotiating with patients on sensitive topics to break down barriers to acceptance of treatment or poor lifestyle that has impacted on dental/gum health.
- Dealing with patient complaints, and facing hostility.
- Working with professionals on engaging hard to reach populations in order to reduce health inequalities.
- Ensuring and maintaining up to date specialist knowledge professionally and strategically within a dynamic healthcare environment, whilst working in a remote and rural area.
- Managing challenging and unpredictable discussions within group settings
- Delivery of treatment to patients (especially children) who may be living in relative deprivation and with high disease levels.
- Protection of vulnerable children and adults liaising with other sectors.
- Treating patients who may be anxious or aggressive.

## 11. Communications and Relationships

Forms of communication used:

- Written
- Oral
- Face to face
- Electronic

People communicated with:

- Patients
- Students
- Members of dental staff (Dental Director, Senior Dental Officers (SDOs), Dental Officers (DOs), other therapists/hygienists/tutors etc)
- Members of support staff (dental nurses – senior, qualified, trainee)
- Members of administration staff (NHS Board)
- Other health professionals (doctors, nurses, health visitors, speech therapists etc)

Electronic Communication etc:

- Electronic communication via intranet

Direct communication: (Clinical)

- On a one-to-one basis, with patients, carers etc
- Communication in the clinical setting regarding the correct use of confidential information between staff/patient, e.g. medical history, drug history, social history, mental health and family history. Assimilate this information and recognize the impact on treatment planning, and on the overall care of the patient as regards the operator/patient relationship.

- Communicate effectively with children and adults of all ages including those with learning disabilities, phobias, hearing/visual/speech defects – use appropriate resources to improve communication.
- The dental therapist undertakes treatment under the prescription of a registered dentist which is underpinned by a close communication network.
- A major part of a dental therapist's job is to motivate patients to take responsibility for their own oral health. A high level of training and experience in communication skills is therefore required, and as the topic is often sensitive (i.e. personal hygiene), a degree of tact and empathy.

Direct communication: (Non-Clinical)

- Regularly undertake teaching to groups of 20 or more, with the use of computer-aided presentations, visual aids, and practical demonstration. This type of communication (visual aids etc.) is used on Dental Health Education (DHE) exercises, to groups in the community.
- Communicate effectively with professionals in other disciplines such as teachers/health visitors.

Clinical staff:

- Liaising with SDOs and DOs with regard to combined treatment needs of patients.
- Various groups of patients are treated including those with physical disabilities, phobia and dental anxiety, mental illness, behavioural disorders, learning disabilities and complex medical conditions.
- It is the post holder's responsibility to ensure that competent consent has been gained before any dental procedure is initiated. Knowledge of law and ethics is necessary.
- During treatment any changes must be fully explained, any alternatives given and further consent sought e.g. where the severity of disease has been underestimated.
- This requires specialist knowledge of providing clinical interventions for patients with challenging behaviour.
- Record relevant and essential information on patient record cards – this may include current medical history, diagrams and radiographs. In addition there is requirement for recording telephone and e-mail communication.
- 

## 12. Physical, Mental, Emotional and Environmental Demands of the Job

Physical:

- Working in cramped or confined space in some clinics, mobile dental units and in domiciliary settings;
- As some patients cannot be treated in the normal supine position due to ill health or disability, the post holder may have to compromise the ideal working position;
- Highly developed physical and precision skills are required to use instruments safely without causing soft tissue damage;
- Long periods of intricate work requiring a high level of dexterity, movement and stability with leverage a major component – approximately 3.5 hours per time;
- Manual handling of patients with disability;
- Long periods of standing in theatre;

- Weight of equipment to be carried for domiciliary visits;
- Driving.

Mental

- The job requires concentration, empathy and an ability to deal with patients with complex disabilities.

Emotional:

- Daily exposure to noxious odours, saliva, blood, pus due to close proximity, airborne infection etc.
- Daily exposure to hazardous materials
- Frequently treating patients with a high level of anxiety; severely challenging behaviour; or physical, medical or mental disability. This can be very emotionally distressing.
- Dealing with patient complaints, and facing hostility.
- The post holder undertakes to provide domiciliary care (home visits) to elderly and housebound patients.
- Delivery of treatment to patients (especially children) living in relative deprivation and with high disease levels.

### **13. Knowledge, Training and Experience Required To Do the Job**

- Register-able qualification (with the General Dental Council) such as:
  - a diploma in dental therapy (often combined with a diploma in dental hygiene) or
  - a degree in oral health sciences, or dental therapy and dental hygiene.
- Current registration with the General Dental Council
- Evidence of CPD
- Professional indemnity insurance
- Knowledge of current guidelines and policies affecting Oral Health Practitioners including knowledge of any advances in extended duties (as laid down by the General Dental Council), clinical techniques and treatments.
- Up to date knowledge and training in Basic Life Support
- Evidence of IT skills
- A clean driving licence to enable travel across Shetland.

### **14. Job Description Agreement**

A separate job description will need to be signed off by each jobholder to whom the job description applies.

Job Holder's Signature:

Date:

Head of Department Signature:

Date: