Developing a Quality Assurance Framework for Dental CPD: Results from a National Consultation Exercise

Linda Prescott-Clements [4] Jonathan Cowpe [1] Helen Falcon [2], Tony Anderson [3]

Wales Deanery, PGMDE, Cardiff University, UK[1] . Health Education Thames Valley, UK[2] . NHS Education for Scotland, UK[3] . Northumbria University, UK[4]

Introduction: The UK Committee of Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors (COPDEND) plays a major role in promoting best practice in education & training of dentists and allied professionals, including continuing professional development (CPD). Quality Assurance (QA) processes for Dental CPD activities need strengthening. This was identified through the DentCPD project (www.DentCPD.org)
.

Aim: To describe the process, results and outcomes of a national stakeholder consultation exercise to validate the COPDEND '*Quality Assurance Framework for Dental CPD*'.

Results:
32 responses were submitted by a range of 'Provider' stakeholders. These included; Educational Institutions; Dental Faculties/Surgical Royal Colleges; NHS providers; General Dental Council; British Dental Association; Private Providers; CPD 'Users'

Is the format of the '*QA Framework*' such that it will be usable by, and useful for, both CPD 'users' and 'providers? – there were separate 'User' and 'Provider' versions. CPD was classified as bronze, silver or gold level. (Figure 1)
- Majority of responses regarding the format were positive - welcomed by a range of 'Users', 'Providers' and other stakeholder organisations.
- Number of respondents noted that the '*QA Framework*' was lengthy and potentially too complex, particularly for 'Users', - more effective if simplified.
- Positive comments and concerns expressed regarding the three tier proposals for Bronze, Silver and Gold.
- Concerns that the '*QA Framework*' would increase the administrative burden and staff requirements for some 'Providers', and costs would be passed on to CPD 'Users'.

How should the '*QA Framework*' for Dental CPD be implemented?
- Support for implementation via a robust pilot or pilots, to identify issues prior to implementing the '*QA Framework*' on a larger scale.
- Mechanisms in place to ensure the '*QA Framework*' is implemented consistently which would need to be endorsed by the regulatory body.
- Appropriate regulation, ease of format and sufficient time to embed the '*QA Framework*' across providers.

What are the potential barriers to this '*QA Framework*' becoming a mechanism to drive up standards of Dental CPD in the UK?
- Costs; Time; Need for a 'Body' to govern the process and maintain standards.

Conclusions:
- '*QA Framework*' defines criteria that practitioners ('Users') & CPD 'Providers' should consider in relation to a variety of activities that constitute Dental CPD.
- Can be widely applied to education and training of multi-professional dental teams.
- In evidencing compliance with this '*QA Framework*', it is hoped that reflection will identify the impact of CPD activities on dental clinical and professional practice.

Materials & Methods:
1. The Draft '*QA Framework*' was developed following a review of the international health professions' literature on the quality of dental CPD
2. An audit of the QA processes within the Framework was undertaken using >50 UK CPD 'Providers'
3. An Expert Advisory Group, of key stakeholders, was set up
4. Dental CPD 'Provider' stakeholders were identified by the Expert Advisory Group and by searching private CPD provider networks and websites
5. A personal invitation email was circulated as well as contacts through social media including 'twitter'
6. Responses were collected using Fluidsurvey software or via email

Figure 1: Proportion of positive / negative responses to the question "**Is the format of the '*QA Framework*' such that it will be usable by, and helpful for, both CPD 'Users' and 'Providers'?**"
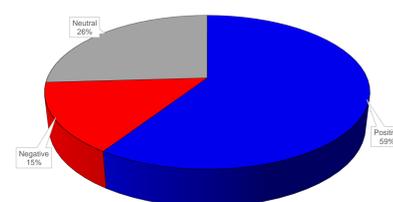

Figure 2: Proportion of positive / negative responses to the question "**Do you think the '*QA Framework*' will support CPD 'Providers' in the development, delivery and maintenance of high quality, effective CPD?**".
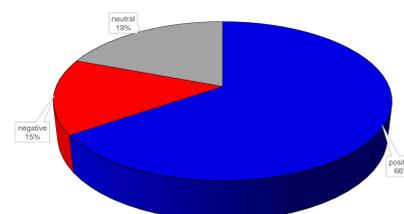
Do you think the '*QA Framework*' will support CPD 'Providers' in the development, delivery and maintenance of high quality, effective CPD? (Figure 2)
- Majority of respondents thought the '*QA Framework*' would support 'Providers' in the development, delivery and maintenance of high quality, effective CPD.
- Respondents felt that this was timely, although stakeholder engagement would be key.
- Some concerns expressed around the potential for the '*QA Framework*' to apply across different modes of CPD, and 'Provider' types,
- Implementation may increase the administrative burden on some 'Providers' within the industry

Main Messages:

Majority Welcomed the CPD 'QA Framework'

Most suggestions for change related to format and implementation across the sector

Further revision led to the launch of the 'QA Framework' consisting of four interrelating CPD commitments

COPDEND

QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR DENTAL CPD

The sections within the framework are as follows:

1. **CPD Planning & Development**
   1.1. Educational aims & learning outcomes
   1.2. Educational design & development
2. **CPD Delivery**
   2.1. Teachers & trainers
   2.2. Delivery methods
   2.3. Assessment of participants' learning
3. **CPD Evaluation**
4. **CPD Administration**
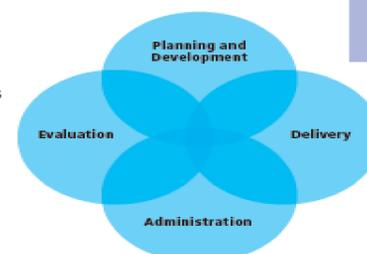
Two levels of quality are described within the framework:
"Expected standard" and "Enhanced provision".