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Chief Executives

21 November 2025

Dear Colleague,

National Primary Care Clinicians Database (NPCCD) – Dental Module

My purpose in writing is to ensure NHS Boards (boards) are making the necessary preparations for the roll out of the NPCCD dental module in March 2026.

I recognise that it has taken some time to reach this stage. That aside, the benefits of having a national, modern, fit for purpose database are now in view. You may be aware that NPCCD has, for some considerable time, hosted both medical and ophthalmic modules with success, and this now brings dentistry into line. We will have a centralised system of information that boards are obligated to hold, and the data migration cleansing process will improve accuracy and efficiency, also enabling better governance processes. Ultimately, the introduction of this module ensures that boards comply with the regulations¹ and requirements to prepare and maintain their dental list.

I am therefore most anxious that boards ensure that they are best prepared to make the most of the module functionality available to them, and for it to be embedded as their main dental listing information system. The data migration process has highlighted the limitations and fragility of existing local information systems making the transfer to NPCCD even more important. To that end can I ask Chief Executives to cascade this letter to appropriate primary care teams to ensure that relevant personnel are aware of the need to continue to engage with Sword in this final period of development. This includes ensuring attendance at the project's regular dental spoke meetings to keep abreast of progress and the actions required in order to have accurate data to migrate into the preview system. Boards have been asked to look at cleansing their data retained at local level and to undertake opportunistic data capture of fields they were unable to provide to Sword for the initial migration to the test system.

Presently, the module's core functionality testing is nearing completion by Sword's internal teams and will be released into the test environment for the board test group to access and provide meaningful feedback on any user issues and how intuitive it is to the listing process. Thereafter the data extracts that have been provided by the boards will be deployed into a preview environment, allowing all board users to manipulate the system with the benefit of

¹ The National Health Service (General Dental Services) (Scotland) Regulations 2010, as amended

using their own data rather than the generated data in the test environment, providing any final feedback to Sword to allow fine tuning before the system go live date.

Prior to go live boards will be invited to attend a preview workshop that will provide a system overview of the functionality and reports available to users. To reinforce, it is very important, given the variance of local board dental list systems, that adequate staff resource and time is made available to local implementation of this new national system. Ultimately NPCCD will save boards time and resource, but in this transitional phase we do need your support. Whilst the workshop is crucial for users of the system the invitation will allow other colleagues with an interest in it to attend.

I also take this opportunity to address suggestions that have been put to us around further augmentation of the core NPCCD dental product. At this stage I am mindful that we need to prioritise the real world testing of the core product given that there was no legacy system. Around 12 months following the launch date of March 2026 our intention is to review developments in policy and possible interactions with other systems to gather intelligence that will, in turn, inform possible further system advancements, subject to the availability of funds required to support any such project.

I trust this letter is helpful.

Kind regards,



Tom Ferris,
Chief Dental Officer