



Dear Colleague

**DEPUTY CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER  
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**

We are seeking expressions of interest from registered dentists (GDS, PDS, HDS, other) for the position of Deputy Chief Dental Officer at the Scottish Government, with a focus on oral health improvement and reducing inequalities.

The position is available through either a secondment opportunity or a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Scottish Government / current employer.

Those eligible for the role will be fully registered dentists with extensive expertise and experience of oral health improvement and reducing inequalities as well as a proven track record of delivery at Board, regional or national level.

Responsible to the Chief Dental Officer in Scotland, the new Deputy CDO will work closely with the existing Deputy CDO.

The role will require a commitment of 4 days per week, to cover a 2 year period from 1 July 2026.

This is an exciting opportunity at a complex time. The successful individual will have the opportunity to make a substantial contribution to how we reduce oral health inequalities and deliver NHS dental services for the future.

Further information on the position is attached below this letter, including how to submit an expression of interest. The closing date for receipt of expressions of interest is **Wednesday 8 April 2026 at 12 noon.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Gillian Leslie  
Chief Dental Officer**

**From the  
Chief Dental Officer  
Gillian Leslie**

17 March 2026

---

**Addressees**

For action & onward circulation  
Chief Executives, NHS Boards

Directors of Dentistry  
Primary Care Leads in NHS Boards

For Information  
BDA Scotland  
Dental Deans

---

**Enquiries and applications to:**

Elizabeth McLear:  
[Elizabeth.McLear@gov.scot](mailto:Elizabeth.McLear@gov.scot)

---

## **DEPUTY CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**

### **Secondment Opportunity/Service Level Agreement**

#### **Preamble**

1. An opportunity has arisen for the role of Deputy Chief Dental Officer to the Chief Dental Officer in Scotland, within the Scottish Government for a two year period from 1 July 2026.
2. The position that is available requires an experienced clinical or public health dentist from any aspect of the service, with knowledge and detailed understanding/experience of the dynamics of oral health improvement, prevention, working with vulnerable groups and reducing inequalities. A proven track record of delivery at Board, regional or national level is also required. The detail of the portfolio will be determined according to the skills and experience of the confirmed individual, who will work closely with the other DCDO.
3. This is an exciting time to work in Scottish Government. The Oral Health Improvement Plan, published in 2018, provided the service blueprint for the next generation of patients, and signalled a step change in how we deliver oral health care in the future with a more preventive focus. This was augmented by significant reform of the dental payment system from November 2023, that considerably strengthened GDS services. These developments underpin further whole-systems policy planning approaches for the future of dental care, aligned with the national Population Health Strategy, Service Renewal Framework and Operational Improvement Plan.

#### **Role of Deputy Chief Dental Officer (DCDO)**

4. The DCDOs are an integral part of the Government's network of senior clinical advisers, which includes the Chief Dental Officer, the Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Nursing Officer and the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer.
5. The DCDOs support the Chief Dental Officer in ensuring that Ministers and Senior Officials receive appropriate professional advice on all matters related to dental policy and oral health improvement. They also have a visible role liaising with stakeholder groups from across all dental professions and supporting the Chief Dental Officer in shaping strategic developments.
6. Specific duties include:
  - Ensuring Ministers and Senior Officials receive appropriate professional advice on dental policy and oral health promotion, including deputising where appropriate for the CDO;
  - Similarly, advising on / leading on aspects of oral health improvement and other policy developments, including deputising where appropriate for the CDO;
  - Ensuring appropriate clinical governance of dental care and systems, both NHS and private;
  - Liaising as appropriate with NHS Boards and other public and partner bodies to optimise the delivery of high quality of care;

- Maintaining an effective professional network across Scotland, including with independent GDPs;
- Negotiating and consulting with trade unions representing dental professionals as appropriate;
- Maintaining an effective working relationship with the General Dental Council;
- Supporting meaningful workforce planning of the dental workforce;
- Ensuring dental policy features in cross-cutting policy change within the Health and Social Care Directorates and wider health policy environment;
- Supporting civil service colleagues in answering Ministerial correspondence, Parliamentary correspondence, briefing and other enquiries, including media.
- Any other roles and responsibilities agreed with the Chief Dental Officer.

## Skills and Qualifications

7. The position of DCDO is part of the Dentistry & Optometry Team within the Scottish Government. We are looking for a clinical colleague to work closely with the other DCDO already in post, and who will bring extensive expertise and experience of oral health improvement and reducing inequalities, and working with vulnerable groups or people with chaotic lifestyles. The successful individual will have a full understanding of the various dental systems in Scotland eg SDR, out of hours' care systems and whole system patient flows. The role requires an excellent team player, who is able to work collegiately in a team environment. We specifically value people with leadership credentials, with a proven track record of influencing new ways of working at Board, regional or national level: a self-starter able to take a lead role developing and leading policy change in dentistry in Scotland.

### 8. Essential Criteria

- Fully registered dentist with current registration and be working within NHS primary, PDS, hospital or public health dentistry;
- Knowledgeable about the range of systems, processes and patient flows across dentistry in Scotland;
- Knowledgeable about oral health improvement work, prevention messaging and opportunities for supporting positive oral health and wellbeing of people living in vulnerable circumstances;
- Able to demonstrate presence and credibility to key stakeholders and the dental community in Scotland;
- Proven track record of delivery at Board, Regional or National level.
- Confident and assured, able to advise Ministers;
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to influence others;
- Able to work collaboratively with a range of people including other dental professionals, civil servants and other specialist staff;
- Adaptive and resilient, able to respond to a changing fast-paced working environment.

### 9. Desirable Criteria

- Analytical skills, the ability to analyse complex information.

10. Success Profiles Behaviours: (For more information regarding Success Profiles please see here - [Success profiles: candidate guide - gov.scot](#))

- *Communicating and influencing* - Communicating purpose and direction with clarity, integrity and enthusiasm. Respecting the needs, responses and opinions of others.
- *Leadership* - Showing pride and passion for public service. Creating and engaging others in delivering a shared vision. Valuing difference, diversity and inclusion, ensuring fairness and opportunity for all.
- *Changing and improving* - Seeking out opportunities to create effective change and suggesting innovative ideas for improvement. Reviewing ways of working, including seeking and providing feedback.
- *Delivering at pace* - Taking responsibility for delivering timely and quality results with focus and drive.

## Further Information on the Position

11. The position will be offered either through a secondment opportunity or Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Scottish Government and your employer. The successful individual will continue to be an employee of their current employer; current terms and conditions of service apply.

12. The arrangement will be for a two year period from 1 July 2026.

13. The time commitment for role will determined by mutual agreement, and is likely to be four days per week.

14. It is anticipated that the successful individual will continue aspects of their existing clinical or professional commitments.

15. The successful Deputy will be expected to have a regular presence in Edinburgh, as well as travelling to different parts of Scotland as required. However, the remaining commitment may be undertaken through homeworking, in line with the Scottish Government's hybrid working policy.

## How to Apply

16. The closing date for applications is **Wednesday 8 April 2026 at 12 noon**.

17. Expressions of interest should be submitted by emailing a covering letter along with the following documents to [Elizabeth.McLear@gov.scot](mailto:Elizabeth.McLear@gov.scot)

- **Statement of Intent** - This should be no more than 2 sides of A4 and should explain how your knowledge, skills and experience meet the requirements of the role.
- **Curriculum Vitae** - Please provide a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae which must include details of your qualifications, career history, relevant experience and areas of expertise. Please confirm that you are currently GDC registered; you may be asked to provide evidence of this at a later date.
- **Letter of Support** - This should be accompanied a short statement of support from the Director of Dentistry, line manager or other senior representative of your employer.

18. Please contact [Elizabeth.McLear@gov.scot](mailto:Elizabeth.McLear@gov.scot) with any specific enquiries or requests for an informal discussion.

### **Selection Process**

19. The individuals who are considered to have the skills and experience will be invited to an informal interview with the Chief Dental Officer and other panel members. These conversations will be held in Edinburgh, although, under special circumstances, a Teams video-call may be considered instead.

### **Security checks**

20. The successful candidate must complete the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), before they can be appointed. BPSS is comprised of four main pre-employment checks – Identity, Right to work, Employment History and a Criminal Record check (unspent convictions).

You can find out more about BPSS on the [UK Government website](#), or read about the different levels of security checks in our [Candidate Guide](#).

### **Equality statement**

21. We are committed to equality and inclusion and we aim to recruit a diverse workforce that reflects the population of our nation.

Find out more about our commitment to [diversity](#) and how we offer and support [recruitment adjustments](#) for anyone who needs them.