

Further information on the Quality Assurance Self-assessment (QAS)

What is the QAS?

The QAS is a self-assessment toolkit that supports the General/Personal Dental Service (GDS/PDS) providers to identify areas for Quality and Safety improvement. The QAS also adds information to the Health Boards' 'Dental Data Pool' to identify any issues that need to be addressed to improve Quality and Safety in primary care dentistry.

What do the dental regulations require?

The Regulations require the contractor to establish and operate a practice-based quality assurance and improvement system which should ensure that:

- All legal requirements relating to health and safety in the workplace are satisfied
- Mechanisms are in place to continuously monitor and improve quality and patient safety
- Effective measures of infection control are used
- All legal requirements relating to radiological protection are satisfied (Failure to comply with IRMER regulations is a criminal offence and may be referred to the GDC)
- All staff have the required vaccinations
- Any requirements of the General Dental Council in respect of continuing professional development of dental practitioners are up to date

The QAS supports the GDS/PDS providers to satisfy this contractual requirement.

How does the QAS support the GDS/PDS providers?

The annual QAS process supports providers:

- To identify those areas where the practice is doing well and areas which need to be improved and to formulate an action plan to make improvements
- By signposting to legislation, guidance, sources of advice and support
- To be prepared for the HIW practice inspection

Although the Health Boards only require the GDS/PDS providers to self-assess annually, practices could utilise the QAS toolkit to identify areas for improvement on an ongoing basis.

Who co-ordinates the QAS?

The Dental Public Health Team of Public Health Wales co-ordinates the all-Wales Quality Assurance Self-assessment (QAS) process.

Who prepares the QAS report and action plan?

Following a self-assessment, dental practices should be able to identify areas for improvement and develop an 'in-house' improvement plan. Practices are encouraged to discuss the self-assessment in their team meetings.

- The Dental Practice Advisers (DPAs) employed by your Health Board will collate and scrutinise the returns, and compile reports and any action plans for the LHBs.
- The Health Board will then contact the provider to complete the action plan, if any, within a specified timeframe.

Who has access to my QAS?

- Your document can be viewed by yourself, the Local Health Board (LHB) Primary Care Team and the Dental Practice Adviser, and members of the Dental Public Health Team, Public Health Wales.
- **Your Health Board may provide your annual QAS report to Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) to inform their practice inspection process.**

What are the duties of the Health Boards and how does the QAS support them?

- It is the duty of your Health Board to have in place arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of health care provision in their area including the services they commission.
- The annual QAS helps Health Boards to monitor compliance of dental services with the relevant regulations, standards and evidence-based practice/best practice.

What are the other uses of the data collected through the QAS?

Databases generated through the QAS also assist NHS Wales to:

- Map healthcare services
- Support service planning
- Support research and development (R&D) projects formally approved by the NHS R&D and/or Research Ethics Committee, Wales
- Help the Dental Deanery (and its successor organisation) to identify topics for CPD sessions/Quality Improvement projects.

Is any advice or support on Quality Improvement (QI) available to dental teams in Wales?

Health Boards' dental practice advisors should be able to offer you advice and support. Additionally, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) employs quality improvement tutors/practitioners who can be contacted for advice and support on quality improvement.

Further queries

The Introduction section on the online form provides information that will help you to complete the QAS.

Further support

- **If you have any queries about the QAS Toolkit, please contact your Dental Practice Adviser at the LHB in the first instance.**
- If required, you can also contact the Public Health Wales team for advice and support via email kate.eyre@wales.nhs.uk

Please note:

1. Completion and submission of your QAS also helps you to comply with your NHS General/Personal Dental Service (GDS/PDS) contractual requirement.
2. Failure to do so may result in your Health Board serving a notice of breach of contract.
3. The QAS form will be available online from 14 December 2020.
4. The QAS form can be accessed at <https://formbuildertwo.wales.nhs.uk/>
5. The contract holder needs to verify the accuracy of the answers on the form before submission.
6. The deadline for the completion and submission of the form is Sunday 28 February 2021, 23:59 (GMT).