

DORSET DIABETIC EYE SCREENING PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT – NOVEMBER 2005

Organisation

The Executive Group of the DDESP continues to meet on a monthly basis. The Group is chaired by Mr Denis Elkin, the Project Director. The members are Dr Wendy Gatling, Clinical Director; Mrs Lynne Lacey, Project Manager; Mr Rob Dawson, IT Project Manager; Ms Sandra Roberts, Service Improvement Manager and Mr Steve Taylor, Optometric Advisor, all of whom have been attending the DDESP for at least the past year. A representative of the Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority attends the meeting together with Jo Haxby, the Somerset Project Manager for Eye Screening.

IT

During the spring, the IT Project Manager drew up a detailed Functional Design Document for the software system. All members of the DDESP had input into this document which was the detailed specification against which the two software suppliers, Digital and Orion, were asked to quote. Whilst the contract was out to tender, visits were made to both Orion and Digital secondary care sites where the software was in use. These visits were undertaken in order to ascertain the support that had been provided and had been required by the supplier both pre- and post-installation. Following receipt of the quotations, an evaluation was undertaken and the DDESP Executive Group selected a preferred provider. Contract negotiations have been ongoing during September which resulted in Contracts being sent to the selected provider, Orion Imaging Ltd, in early November. The contracts are standard contracts which are contained within the National Framework Agreement for Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Software Solutions, awarded by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (PASA) and the additional schedules to the contract were completed by the Project Manager and the procurement team. The DDESP continues to work closely with Somerset and both counties have selected the same preferred provider.

As soon as the contracts are signed, the DDESP Executive Group will meet with the software provider to establish an implementation timetable. The IT Project Manager is currently writing a detailed implementation plan for the project and this will be reviewed by the DDESP during November and December. It is anticipated that the server and screening office system will be installed first, followed by secondary care, followed by the optometry practices, starting with those that already have a camera in place. It is provisionally planned for both the server and the screening office to be located at Poole Hospital and discussions are progressing with the Chief Executive and the Head of IT at Poole.

The National Screening Committee has recently issued further guidance regarding patient consent and the Executive Group will be looking at the implications of this with regards to populating the central diabetic register from information taken from diabetic registers in primary and secondary care.

Funding

Capital funding was being held at the SHA for this project and has now been released to North Dorset PCT. Revenue funding of £177,000 has been made available from the SHA to North Dorset for this financial year. This funding was designated as part-year funding and is less than a quarter of the anticipated ongoing annual revenue costs.

Secondary Care

The Clinical Director and Project Manager have met with the Diabetic and Ophthalmology teams at Bournemouth and Dorset County Hospitals to discuss the implications of the screening programme and the effect on secondary care. A Dorset-wide Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) half day meeting is scheduled for December and a further one in June 2006. The meeting will be attended by consultant diabetologists and ophthalmologists from the three acute trusts, retinal screener graders and representatives from the nursing,

business management and clerical teams from the acute trusts. Two optometrists will attend each meeting – one from the east of the county and one from the west – together with a representative from Public Health.

A full time retinal screener grader is in post based at Poole Hospital and a further screener grader will be appointed in the new year. It is planned that the graders will be based and trained at Poole Hospital and will work across the three Dorset acute Trusts.

Phase 1 Optometrists

There are currently cameras installed in four practices in the county, each of which is participating in the interim system as explained below. A further practice is awaiting delivery of a camera in the next month and a further four practices have chosen a camera and will be placing their order as soon as the software contracts are signed and the implementation timetable is in place. Optometrists joining the interim system receive training in image capture and grading. Then, a test set of 6 patients' images are submitted to ensure correct positioning and good quality images.

Interim System pending implementation of the full eye screening IT system

One optometry practice is now using digital imaging for diabetic eye screening and is using an anonymised email system to send the images to Poole Hospital for second disease grading. This has been working successfully since April 2005. Two practices have completed capture and grading training at Poole Hospital and will go live as soon as their set of six test images per optometrist has been transmitted and approved. A further practice has completed the capture training at their practice and will attend for grading training at Poole Hospital in the next month. Since setting up the training system for the interim system, it has become apparent that capture training is better undertaken at the practice with the practice camera but grading training needs to be undertaken at the hospital. Estimated lead-in time from placing the camera order to being fully operational following training and approval of transmitted images is approximately 16 weeks. Regular training sessions will be set up from January 2006 in order to be able to slot in practices to the training within a week or so of taking delivery of their cameras – the optometrist needs to spend a few days becoming familiar with the mechanics of the camera before attending the capture and grading training sessions.

Phase 2 Optometrists

Several optometrists across the county have expressed interest in being involved in Phase 2. During December 2005, the DDESP plans to write to all optometrists and practices currently providing diabetic eye screening in order to ascertain those practices that wish to continue to be involved in the programme using digital imaging when this becomes compulsory from 1 January 2007. Some optometrists may be involved only in capturing images, others in capturing and grading, others in grading only. The DDESP is also considering an option of providing the software on a laptop in order that an optometrist may move from practice to practice to provide the service using cameras installed in individual practices.

Current Screening Coverage

As at 31 March 2005, there were 25,692 people with diabetes in Dorset and, from the figures produced for the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF), these were split across the PCTs as follows:

	31-Mar-05 Bmth PCT	Poole PCT	S&E Dorset	SW Dorset	North	Total
No on diabetic register	5605	6501	6111	4641	2857	25715
No excluded from screening	258	335	251	216	98	1158
No eligible for screening	5347	6166	5860	4425	2759	24557
No screened previous 12m	4741	5581	5249	3886	2486	21943
% screened	87	91	90	88	90	89.35

The Phase one optometrists currently provide screening to approximately 25% of the diabetic population and are spread geographically across the county from east to west and south to north. It is anticipated this percentage will increase as the service changes to completely digital coverage from 1 January 2007 with discontinuation of the current screening programme. There are 12 practices in phase 1 and the planned number of 30 - 40 practices providing the service should, therefore, provide sufficient coverage for the diabetic population.

Patient and Public Involvement

A Stakeholders meeting was held in June 2005 and the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18 January 2006 at 6.30 p.m. at Poole Hospital. Additional patient representatives will be invited to this meeting as the plans about informing all Dorset patients of the changing service will be a key agenda item.

Quality Assurance

This work continues but cannot be fully progressed until the software is in place.

Training

A national accreditation and training system is being implemented. The scheme is being set up at pilot sites and will then be rolled out across the country. The DDESP has been working with local training specialists in order to be able to implement this locally in the future.

A grading handbook has been written jointly by the Clinical Director and Chief Medical Photographer at Poole Hospital and is being provided to all participants in the digital programme.

The non-digital Dorset diabetic eye screening protocol has been updated to reflect the change from fundoscopy to slit lamp biomicroscopy from 1 April 2005 and has been distributed to all practices.

Lynne Lacey
Project Manager
Dorset Diabetic Eye Screening Service