

Form for responding to the Department of Health consultation on the future of the Standing Dental Advisory Committee

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If responding on behalf of an organisation please state the name and address of the company/organisation etc and address if different

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Comments and views should be sent by 31 January 2008 to

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Questions:

In addition to the ways in which the Ministers and senior officials of the Department of Health currently receive professional advice on dentistry and oral health, is there a need for an additional advisory function?

The Council of Heads and Deans of Dental Schools is of the view that the SDAC serves a valuable function in providing advice to Ministers as a statutory non-Departmental Public Body. It is acknowledged that the DH and WAG has an increasing number of other sources of advice, but typically in respect of specific aspects of dentistry identified by DH and WAG officers and officials. In the interests of “checks and balances”, let alone openness, it is considered important that Ministers avail themselves of advice a non-departmental body considers important to policy and the provision of services.

If you believe there is an additional advisory function, is the Standing Dental Advisory Committee the body best able to fulfil that function?

The SDAC, as acknowledged in the consultation document, has proved its worth as a useful source of professional advice. Notwithstanding the need to review the membership of the Committee to take account of changes in dentistry and the provision of oral health care, it is suggested that there would be merit in retaining the tried and tested nature and general structure of the SDAC.

What would be the adverse effects, if any, of abolishing the Standing Dental Advisory Committee?

The adverse effects of abolishing the SDAC may include:

- the loss of a useful source of professional advice
- the loss of a valuable channel of communication between Ministers and the profession
- the loss of a statutory non-Departmental body capable of providing wide ranging advice on trends and the impact of policy on oral healthcare provision and related matters.