

Update of the Inter-professional Dysphagia Framework (IDF)

Project Outline

Background

The IDF is an assessable competency framework which was developed in partnership to clearly set out the knowledge and skills required by healthcare professionals and staff working in dysphagia management in different professional settings across the UK.

Since the publication of the IDF in 2006, the healthcare system in which Allied Health Professionals, medical professionals and other healthcare staff operate has undergone significant changes:

- there is an increase in the number of referrals for dysphagia
- there is a greater recognition that dysphagia is a significant corollary of other medical conditions, eg head and neck cancer
- there is an increasing awareness that dysphagia has significant impact at the end of life – the wider healthcare team need to improve their expertise in the management of dysphagia, as the person's difficulties may alter over a 24 hour period
- practice has changed, with speech and language therapists moving to a more consultative role within the healthcare team. This requires the wider healthcare team to have the knowledge and skills to support the person clinically.

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists has received funding from Health Education England and Public Health Agency Northern Ireland to update the Inter-professional Dysphagia Framework (IDF).

Aim

To review and update the Inter-professional Dysphagia Framework (IDF) to ensure that it reflects the current healthcare system which has gone through significant changes since the current version was published.

Objectives

1. To create an updated IDF that:
 - sets out the knowledge and skills needed to screen, assess and support patients with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties
 - provides the flexibility that meets the needs of different working environments, e.g. hospitals and care homes
 - enables the embedment of best practice into resources
 - enables the wider healthcare workforce to improve early identification of dysphagia in patients with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties
 - defines the roles of regulated and non-regulated healthcare staff more clearly
 - improves standards of care
 - promotes consistency in the approach to dysphagia management.
2. To produce a resource that is useful to the dysphagia workforce.

Approach

The update of the framework is being led by the framework's original authors and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT).

The consultation draft has been developed with support from an expert group of speech and language therapists and using feedback collated over the years from professionals involved in dysphagia management.

The consultation draft updated IDF has undergone the following changes/updates:

- updated language/terminology to reflect current use
- changed the names of the levels to list them numerically
- changed structure of skills and knowledge underpinning each Level of Dysphagia Competence
- changed structure of introductory text
- addition of Level 3 to bridge the gap between Level 2 and Level 4 (previously ‘Assistant Dysphagia Practitioner’ and ‘Foundation Dysphagia Practitioner’)

A stakeholder consultation will be conducted to inform further changes to the framework and endorsement will be sought from key stakeholder organisations later in 2019.

Timeline

Activity	Timeframes
Project initiation	Mid 2018
Author to prepare consultation draft	October 2018 – January 2019
Workshop on existing resources with stakeholders	December 2018
Stakeholder consultation survey	4 – 31 March 2019
Author to update draft	April / May 2019
Review and edit draft	June / July 2019
Seek endorsement from key stakeholder organisations	July / August 2019
Publication of updated IDF	September 2019
Implementation activities, resources and support	From September 2019 – TBC

How can you be involved?

Visit the [project webpage](#) to find out more information about the project, how to take part in the consultation and to read the latest draft.

If you have any questions about the IDF or this consultation, please contact Louise Borjes, RCSLT Project Co-ordinator, at louise.borjes@rcslt.org.

Resources to support implementation

We are looking for resources which are currently being used to support the implementation of the IDF that could be shared with others. Please do share these when you complete the consultation survey or by contacting louise.borjes@rcslt.org.