



DERS - NHS ENGLAND SOUTH EAST

Increasing pressures on hospital dental services. In many cases, patients were referred to inappropriate settings. Referrals were delayed and became expensive to manage. Healthcare activity information was sparse and arriving too late to be of use. Local pathways for referral had been produced but were complex paper documents, too time consuming to use. It was impossible to tell if and when they were used.

What was done

NHS England (South East) commissioned an automated decision support service for [dental referrals](#). A team of clinicians worked with [Vantage Health](#) to agree best practice pathways. These were then built into the Rego - AI decision support service. This means that referrals are checked immediately on completion and the referrer chooses from the right list of services.

As Rego talks to most GP and dental patient systems, Rego creates part completed referrals directly from the local clinical system.

Once completed, a referral is checked, triaged and a list of services appears. On selecting a service the referral goes directly to e-RS and on to the provider. If the service is not on eRS it is sent directly offering a solution for every type of healthcare provider.

Three local [referral management](#) centres were decommissioned saving the NHS over £500,000 per year.

All dental practices across Kent, Surrey & Sussex are now sending electronic referrals via Rego.

Reports are keeping commissioners up-to-date with patient flow and areas of peak demand. These reports are informing service re-configuration and well as local educational initiatives.

The result

- Savings in excess of £0.5 million per year by decommissioning referral management centres
- Six to seven figure savings per year by redirecting care to appropriate services
- Over 30% reductions in hospital referrals
- Improved patient satisfaction through quicker and more local referrals
- Real time reporting on patient flows
- Fewer rejected or queried referrals
- More accurate commissioning of services to areas of need