



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

# Needs Assessment – does one size fit all?

British Orthodontic Society Commissioning day  
24<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Paul Harwood Consultant Dental Public Health SW PHE Centre

# Summary

- What do we mean by need?
- Framing a needs assessment
- Needs assessment process
- Common problems

# What is a needs assessment

## Definition

*Health needs assessment is the systematic approach to ensuring that the health service uses its resources to improve the health of the population in the most efficient way \**

## Components of needs assessment

- Need – The capacity to benefit from an intervention
- Supply – The available health care to provide the intervention
- Demand - The expressed need for intervention

\* Wright, Williams and Wilkinson BMJ1998;316:1310-1313

# Bradshaw's Taxonomy

**Normative:** need which is identified according to a norm (or standard), usually set by experts.

- E.g IOTN 3(6-10)/4 /5

**Felt:** need which people feel - that is, need from the perspective of the people who have it

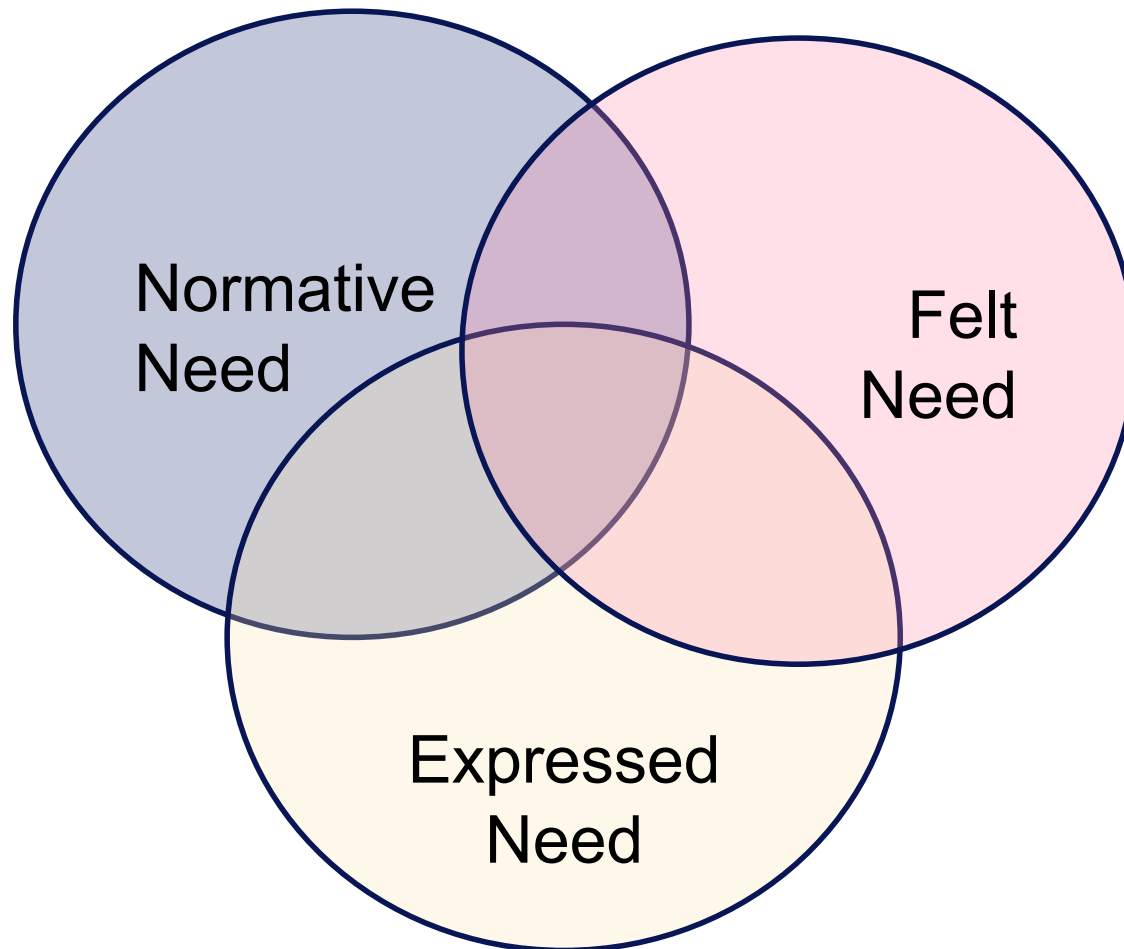
**Expressed:** need which people say they have (Demand)

**Comparative:** problems which emerge by comparison with others

- Health inequalities
- Competing priorities for scarce resources

Bradshaw J. A taxonomy of social need. New Society 1972; 640-3.

# Bradshaw's Taxonomy



# Comparative Need

Compare capacity to benefit between different population groups

Geographic areas

Deprivation quintiles

Ethnicity

Gender

Compare population capacity to benefit from different interventions

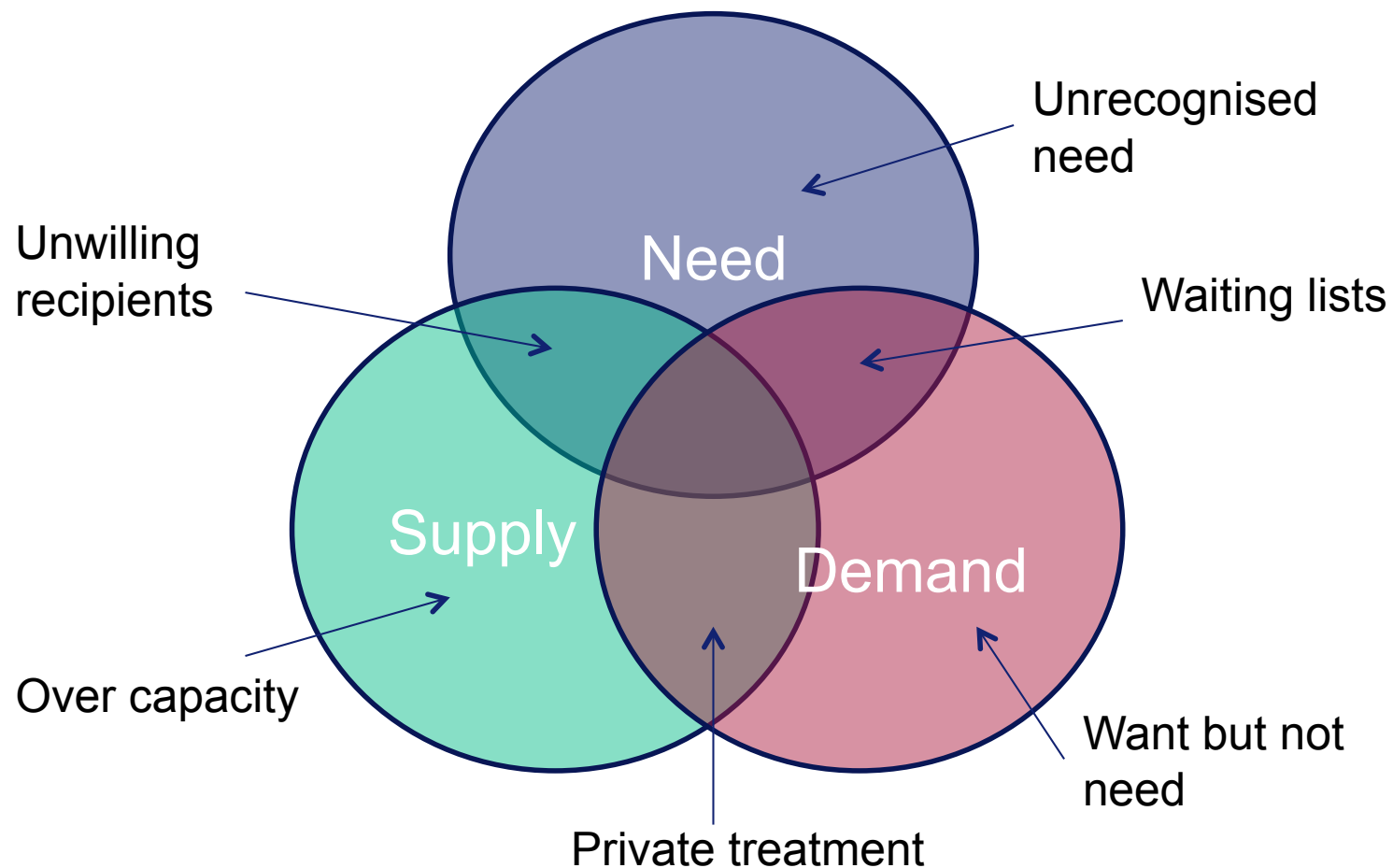
Orthodontics

Special care dentistry

Oral surgery

Restorative care

# Components of needs assessment



# Framing the needs assessment

## Questions from commissioners?

- How should we allocate scarce resources?
- Are we buying enough X to meet the populations needs?
- Are the services in the right place?
- Why have we got huge waiting times for treatment?
- What are the resource implications of meeting population need?

## Questions for commissioners

- What perspective
- How are we defining need?
- What standards are we measuring need against?



# Orthodontic Data Sources

## Population data

- Office National Statistics and projections
- Local Authority population modelling

## Normative need data - population prevalence estimates

- 'Rule of thirds'
- Survey data

## Treatment Need in 12 year old children in England

Year	Source	In Treatment %	Need Treatment %	Total 'need' %
2003	CDHS	8	35	43
2008/09	Survey 12 YO	8	32	40
2013	CDHS	20	N/A	

# Orthodontic Data Sources

## **Felt need**

### Survey data

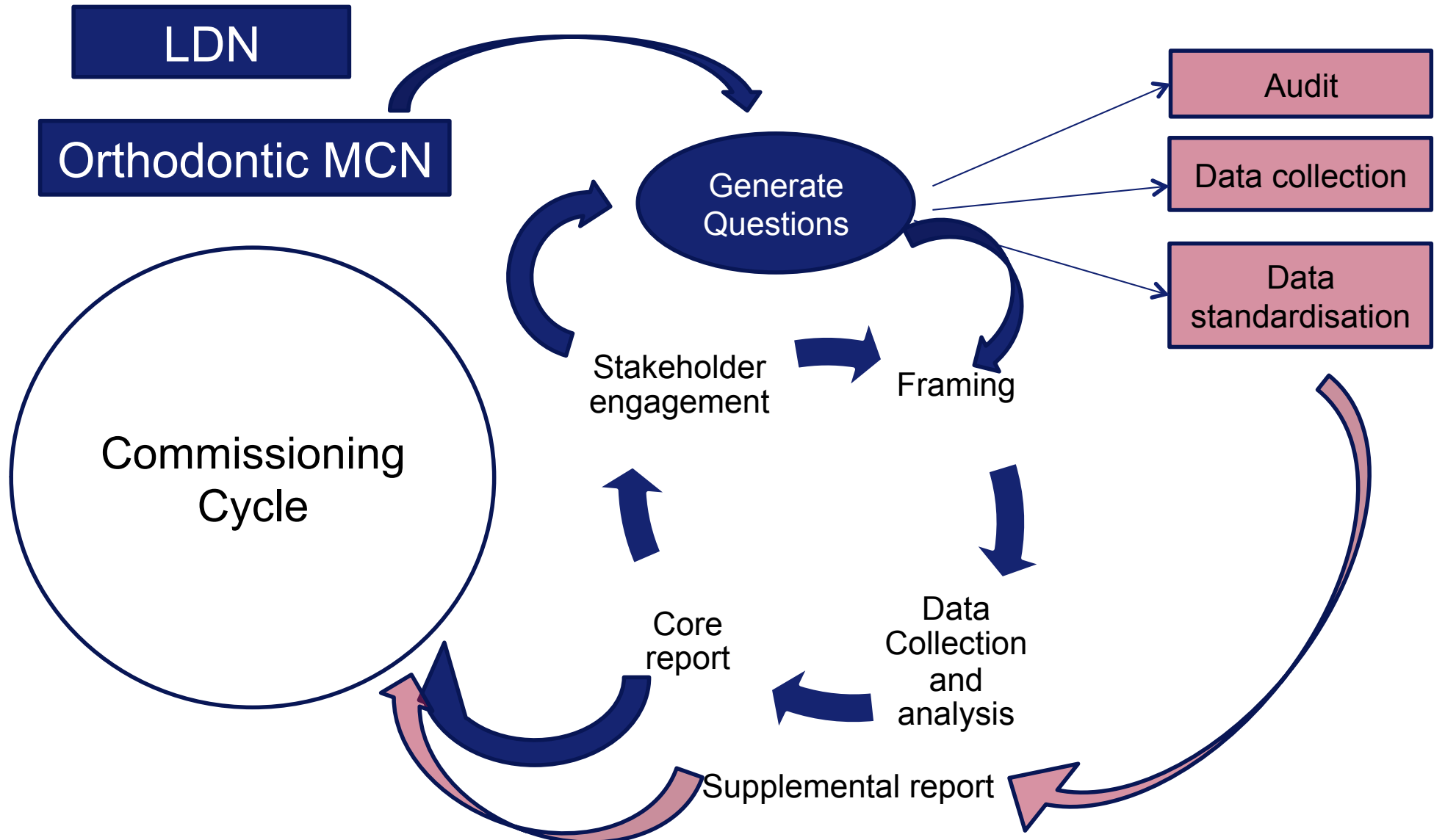
Child dental Health Survey

2008/09 Survey of 12 year olds oral health

## **Activity Data (Supply and Demand)**

- Business Services Authority data
  - Dental Assurance Framework reports
- Hospital data
- Waiting list data.

# Needs assessment cycle



# Common criticisms of needs assessments

The data is wrong

- Population
- Epidemiology
- Activity
- waiting list

Data is out of date

Data is not comparable

- Primary v Secondary activity data

Does not include X item of interest

# Does one size fit all?

Benefits to identifying core elements across a large geography

- Economies of scale
- Common methodology
- Easy to up date
- Relatively quick
- Start the discussion

Needs assessments need to be responsive and flexible to address specific local issues

A core needs assessment can be the jumping off point for valuable local work.

# Conclusion

- Needs assessment should be an iterative process rather than a single time bound product
- Often messy , only as good as the questions posed and the data available
- Intrinsically linked to Contract management and Quality improvement activity



Thank you

Questions?