

DENTAL TRIBUNE

The World's Dental Newspaper • United Kingdom Edition

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News in Brief

Dental practice investment

The chief dental officer has highlighted in his *CDO update* that under the new system, "PCTs can make investments in NHS dental services in return for an agreement related to improving the quality and possibly the quantity of NHS services." Dr Cockcroft added: "A convenient way to do this is through an amortised loan, and we have published a contract template agreement on the NHS Primary Care Commissioning (PCC) website to make it easier for both parties to do this, where they have agreed that it is desirable and there are funds available." See: www.pcc.nhs.uk/conditional-grant-agreements

DCP national survey

Dental care professionals are being asked to take part in a national survey being carried out by the Dental Programme Board of NHS Medical Education England. One of the primary aims of the review is to assess the contribution that dental care professionals (DCPs) can make to the efficient and effective delivery of primary care services. Information submitted in response to this survey will create a profile of how the broad skill mix of dentists and dental care professionals is currently used, and will provide an evidence base for the working group's report, to be published later in 2010. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and the closing date is 30 April. For more information and to complete the survey, please go to: www.surveymonkey.com/s/skillmix

Election site

Campaigning charity The King's Fund has launched a web micro site highlighting the political parties and their policies concerning healthcare to coincide with the recently announced election. The King's Fund is a charity that seeks to understand how the health system in England can be improved. Using that insight, the charity helps to shape policy, transform services and bring about behaviour change. To help demonstrate the different parties' approach to healthcare, the charity has developed the 'Your election check up' interactive game. The game is a means of demonstrating the different approaches to health and social care from the three main political parties and acts as a gateway to the wider election coverage on the micro site. To play, go to www.kingsfund.org.uk/general_election_2010/

www.dental-tribune.co.uk



Lucky The Lion

Schools initiative in Oxfordshire gets lion's share of interest

▶ page 2

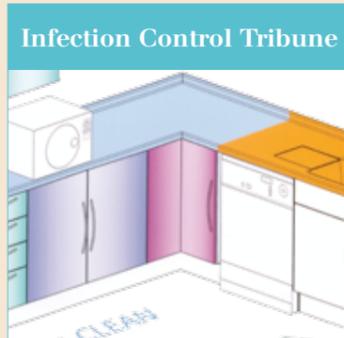


Infection Control Tribune

Eliminating risk

Kathy Porter shares ideas for Infection Control Best Practice

▶ pages 14-15



Infection Control Tribune

Implementing IC systems

Dave Gibson looks at creating a completely decontaminated environment in the surgery

▶ pages 19-20



DCPs

Survey shocks

BADN's Pam Swain reveals the latest salary survey figures for dental nurses

▶ page 25

Dentistry hits headlines early in election campaign

NHS dental services become an early key election topic as the political parties draw battle lines in Reading West constituency



NHs dentistry hit the headlines early in the official election campaign trail as NHS dental services are highlighted in a trip to Reading West.

Conservative Shadow Health Secretary Andrew Lansley (*pictured*) visited the constituency, tipped to be one of the more hotly contested seats in May's General Election, at the local Castle Hill Dental Clinic. The aim of the visit, in conjunction with Tory local candidate Alok Sharma, was to hear firsthand the views of patients and practitioners about NHS dental provision in the area.

Speaking at Castle Hill, Mr Lansley said: "It has been made clear that access to dentistry is one of the things people in Reading West are particularly concerned about.

We are very aware that if we get the right kind of relationship with a dentist where we focus on good dental health and prevention... we can end up with dentists being able to look after more people."

Labour candidate Naz Sarkar commented that if he won the seat in May he would scrutinise dentistry in the area to make sure no-one was missing out, regardless of their financial situation.

"The Labour Party must not get complacent over the issue of NHS Dentistry. I don't think dental services are that bad here. Most people are catered for well, but there are pockets that we need to look at."

The Liberal Democrat Party candidate Daisy Benson said she was more concerned

about tooth decay among children in the Reading West area rather than a lack of capacity. She commented: "When I have put the question to the authorities they say there are enough dentists and places for NHS patients.

"But they need to work much more closely with the council to advertise properly and help peo-

ple get to see these dentists."

Adrian Windisch, candidate for the Green Party, said: "The idea of the NHS was that all dental health would be free, but that is not the case.

"We would bring back free dentists for all by saving money on scrapping things like nuclear weapons." **DT**



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Open wide with Lucky

Lucky the Lion launched a major schools initiative by The Midcounties Co-operative in Oxfordshire to encourage children to look after their teeth. The 6ft cuddly character joined in the fun in a pilot scheme which started at Pegasus Primary School in Blackbird Leys, Oxford.



Lucky the Lion at Pegasus Primary School in Oxford

Some 130 pupils aged five seven learned about the importance of brushing their teeth regularly and the need to reduce sugary snacks and to eat the right foods.

Each child received a special information pack which included a funky toothbrush, toothpaste and a wooden toothbrush holder. The youngsters also decorated the holder, which has a two minute timer, so they know how long to brush their teeth each time.

Lucky the Lion took part in demonstrations, which also featured a giant toothbrush and a huge pair of teeth, to get the message across.

Barbara Dunne, community co-ordinator for The Midcounties Co-operative, said: "We are a trusted retailer which believes in giving back to the communities we serve. We have developed this project in partnership with the Oxfordshire PCT to encourage children in a fun and

effective way to look after their teeth.

"We hope parents will reinforce that message at home. The information packs we provide include a toothbrush chart for the children to draw a smiley face on a calendar each day if they have brushed their teeth once in the morning and last thing before bed."

Pegasus headteacher Jill Hudson said: "The children really enjoyed the sessions and meeting Lucky. The project complemented what they learn in school as part of the curriculum for personal, social and health education."

Nicky Wadely, lead for Dental Commissioning for Oxfordshire PCT, said: "We were happy to give our support when Midcounties approached us with this initiative. There are obvious benefits if children understand what they need to do to keep their teeth healthy and strong, including seeing a dentist for check-ups." DT

New GDC Council member

The Appointments Commission has confirmed that David Murphy (pictured) has been appointed to the Council of the General Dental Council (GDC) with immediate effect. David is a returning lay member of the Council, having previously been on the Council between 2005 and 2009. He is one of 24 members, 12 lay and 12 professional. David is currently Deputy Secretary of NILGOSC, the

Northern Ireland Local Government Pension Scheme and previously held positions with Methodist College, Grant Thornton, and Queen's University Belfast. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

He has held a number of public appointments and is currently a member of the General Chiropractic Council, a Board member of Helm Housing and a lay Member of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal for Northern Ireland. DT



Dental practice wins Small Enterprise of the Year

A dental practice in Buckinghamshire has won the Small Enterprise of the Year award.

Smile Design Dental Practice won the Small Enterprise of the Year category at this year's Buckinghamshire Ambassadors Awards.

Dr Komal Suri and her team (pictured) were presented with the award at the event by Formula One champion, Damon Hill.

Dr Suri said: "We are delighted to have won this award, particularly as it is a team award and recognises the efforts we all put in to make this a successful practice from a patient, employee and business perspective."

Smile Design Dental Practice is recognised as one of the country's leading practices for cosmetic and restorative dental care, but it is also very much a local practice providing general dental care for residents in south Buckinghamshire.

Dr Suri bought the practice in 2002 and over the past eight years she has updated the building and invested heavily in state of the art equipment and training to enable them to offer patients a complete care package.

She said: "The key to our success has been the strength

of our practice-patient relationships. We spend a great deal of time with our patients to ensure they are educated about their mouths and have all clinical findings explained fully before embarking on any treatments or programmes.

"The level of training for all our

team is extremely high with most of our clinical team considered among the leaders in their profession."

The Bucks Enterprise Awards were created by the Buckinghamshire Ambassadors who formed just five years ago. The awards event was organised by Buckinghamshire Economic & Learning Partnership (BELP) which aims to promote the sustainable economic development of Buckinghamshire. DT



Keep your business records in order – before the tax inspector does it for you

Specialist dental accountants are warning dental practitioners to ensure their business records are in order.

The warning comes after an announcement by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that it is cracking down on dentists and other medical practitioners, tracking down those who have not declared their full income.

The Association of Specialist Providers to Dentists (ASPD),

have set out some of the HMRC's basic record keeping guidelines for dentists.

These are:

- Don't throw away business records - keep business records for at least five years and ten months after the end of the tax year the records relate to. Failure to do so could result in a fine of up to £3,000.
- Keep business and home life separate - business records and personal records are kept sepa-

rate, with the help of a separate business bank account.

• Sorry, sir. The dog ate it... - if your business records are lost or destroyed, unfortunately they will have to be recreated.

Practitioners looking to stay in HMRC's good books should enlist the help of a specialist accountant for dentists who is well versed in the preparation of tax returns and submitting them to the Inland Revenue, said the ASPD. DT

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Editorial comment

Election fever – there is no cure!

So, election fever has finally gripped the country as the ‘UK’s worst kept secret’ of a May 6th General Election has been announced by Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

process as Tory Shadow Health Secretary Andrew Lansley visited a dental practice in Reading West, a hotly contested seat – and gave the Tory view on dental provision.

With this campaign being one the most publicly fought

election in the UK, thanks to our 24/7 need-to-know-all society of news channels and social media, it’s going to be hard to get away from all aspects of the election (although I’ll be giving it a good go – I’m in Tanzania with B2A for two weeks before the elec-

tion!). I’m sure that NHS dentistry will remain at the forefront of the campaign trail, and I hope that after its all over, nothing but good will come out of it for practitioners and patients.

And at least it’ll give us something else to concentrate on than a certain striker’s ankle and an upcoming football event... **DT**

Do you have an opinion or something to say on any Dental Tribune UK article? Or would you like to write your own opinion for our guest comment page?

If so don’t hesitate to write to: The Editor, Dental Tribune UK Ltd, 4th Floor, Treasure House, 19-21 Hatton Garden, London, EC1 8BA

Or email: lisa@dentaltribuneuk.com

Surprisingly, NHS dentistry has hit the headlines early in the

Newsletter

Education and training provider, Smile-on, offers busy dental professionals an easy way to keep their finger on the pulse through its online newsletter.

By signing up for the free Smile-on newsletter, you will receive regular updates on training, healthcare news and also any special offers that will help build your Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

A spokeswoman for Smile-on said: “The Smile-on newsletter will also advise on upcoming webinars. A breakthrough in education, a webinar is an interactive online tutorial from some of the most highly regarded dental professionals in their field. Utilising this technology, you can learn from the very best in your own time, anywhere in the world.



Keep your finger on the pulse with the Smile-on newsletter

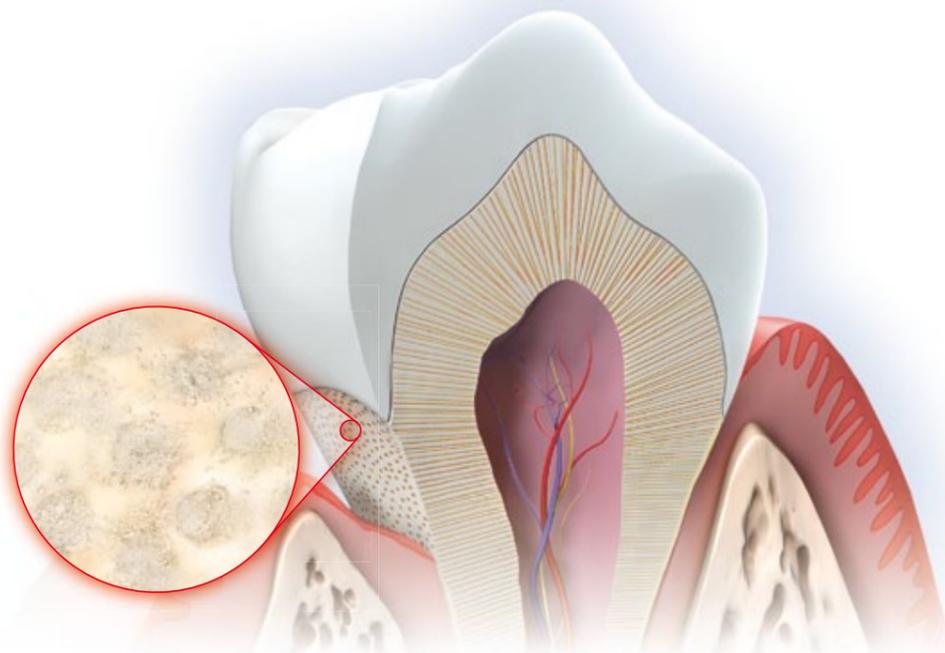
“Registered users on the Smile-on website can also track their CPD and explore the vast array of flexible training programmes from Smile-on.”

She added: “Smile-on is dedicated to the dental industry by promoting excellent patient care and career satisfaction through education and training. The expert team from Smile-on are also on hand to offer guidance on the learning material so busy professionals can meet their industry obligations, build their CPD and advance their skills within dentistry.”

For more information or to sign up for the Smile-on newsletter, email info@smile-on.com or visit www.smile-on.com. **DT**

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1 Nathoo S et al J Clin Dent 2009; 20 (Spec Iss): 123-130
2 Ayad F et al J Clin Dent 2009; 20 (Spec Iss): 115-122
3 Schiff T et al J Clin Dent 2009; 20 (Spec Iss): 131-136

4 Docimo R et al J Clin Dent 2009; 20 (Spec Iss): 17-22
5 Ayad F et al J Clin Dent 2009; 20 (Spec Iss): 10-16
6 Docimo R et al J Clin Dent 2009; 20 (Spec Iss): 137-143

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Cuts to dental school budgets

Cuts in dental school budgets could affect the training of dental students, impacting on the skills and quality of new dentists, according to the British Dental Association.

The British Dental Association's (BDA's) warning follows the recent announcement by

the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) that funding allocations for universities and higher education colleges for 2010-11 will be reduced.

Prof Paul Wright, chair of the BDA's Central Committee for Dental Academic Staff (CCDAS), writing in the lat-

est edition of the *British Dental Journal (BDJ)*, claimed that cuts to posts in dental schools would exacerbate the inadequate staff resources that institutions are already confronting.

He argued that every extra student in a clinical session without a concomitant increase in supervision means risking a

reduction in the quality of care for patients that can be assured.

Prof Wright also warned the way dental academia is funded, with money coming from both the HEFCE and the NHS, means that schools are at risk of a far greater cut to their finances than might be anticipated or intended.

Prof Wright said: "We recognise that the public purse faces

a challenging time. We also recognise that academics in many disciplines will be making their cases for the preservation of their particular subject areas. Dentistry really is in a unique position though; in the way it is funded, the already stretched position it is in, and the value to society of the graduates it produces."

He added: "Cuts to dental schools' budgets threaten the high quality of both the dentists and the research that UK institutions produce. We urge extreme caution by universities as they absorb HEFCE's announcement."

The BDA will be submitting evidence to the Independent Higher Education and Student Finance Review. The review has been tasked with looking at the higher education system in its entirety. [DT](#)

New editor for FGDP journal

John Stanfield has been made the new editor of *Team in Practice*, the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)'s journal for dental care professionals.

Mr Stanfield, a dental hygienist, replaces Professor Ken Eaton who has held the post of editor since the journal was launched in 2004.

Team in Practice is a continuing professional development journal, written by dental care professionals (DCPs), with a focus on peer learning and best practice.

The journal aims to update all members of the dental team on issues affecting everyday working practice, including analyses of how and why problems arise and ways to improve outcomes.

Mr Stanfield has served on the editorial board of *Team in Practice* for the last three years and has represented dental hygienists on the FGDP (UK) Board since 2006.

He is also an assessor in key skills for DCPs and is vice chair of the Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP) (UK)'s DCP Committee.

He called it a 'great honour' and said: "*Team in Practice* offers readers a great opportunity to learn from the practical experiences of colleagues and read the latest evidence for best practice. I hope to see the journal go from strength to strength in supporting the dental team to achieve excellence in their work." [DT](#)



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DIO Professional Implant Education

Following the success of the UK's first public live theatre at the Dentistry Show, DIO Implant continues to boldly progress with its mission to change the face of the UK implant market for the better of everyone. DIO's Managing Director explains, "For most patients, dental implants are a necessity. At DIO, we aim to bring the benefits DIO provides in overseas markets to the UK." He continues, "Dental implant treatment should be accessible by any patient who needs it, without compromising on quality of treatment or jeopardising the livelihoods of our valued UK implantologists".

The next stage of their roadmap is to introduce a dedicated educational programme, designed especially for dentists wishing to provide the highest standard of care to their patients.

The format of the course addresses both the requirements of practitioners looking to start providing dental implants as well as those who are already placing implants from other manufacturers.

For non-implant dentists, the introduction days lead on to a one-year, hands-on and distance learning certificated course, equivalent to approximately 120 hours of verifiable CPD. The course, directed by Sam Mohamed of Smile Lincs, aims to impart everything a qualified dentist needs to know in order to confidently provide dental implants to their patients.



Introductory two-day course

During an initial two-day course practitioners are given an overview of the evolution of dental implants and how they can be integrated into a normal dentistry practice in the most cost-effective way. The course looks at the basics of dental implantology, discussing osteointegration, treatment planning principles, radiographic techniques and restorative techniques. It also covers more practical aspects of dental implantology such as practice setup and marketing and introduces patients to implantology to ensure a good return on investment.

Day 1 is aimed at providing non-implant dentists with an introduction to implant procedures. Practitioners will leave knowing whether dental implants are both right for them as an individual and a feasible business proposition for their practice. DIO is also welcoming existing implant practitioners on the introduction day, which DIO claim exposes them to a new perspective and allows for non-biased discussions and a healthy propagation of expertise to all attending.

Day 2 focuses on the clinical and restorative aspects of DIO Implants in more depth and is therefore applicable to both new and existing implantologists alike.

Once the introductory course is complete, practitioners can confidently decide whether to sign up for the year-long modular course to expand their knowledge and become implantologists. Mr Forster states, "Dr Mohamed and I struck a chord – we both have the interests of UK dentists at heart. Sam has extensive expertise and relentless enthusiasm. Combine these qualities with a genuine desire to help individuals achieve at the highest level and you have the ingredients for success."

Modular Course

The year-long modular course aims to provide dentists with everything they need to know to become knowledgeable and confident implantologists. The course includes ten in-depth modules, both theoretical and practical, covering:

- Osteointegration
- Biomaterial in relation to bone orientation and membranes
- How to select suitable dental implant patients

- Treatment planning
- Radiographic techniques in implant dentistry
- Surgical techniques
- Surgical kit orientation
- Possible surgical complications
- Restorative techniques
- CT scanning and computer guided surgery
- Marketing and promoting your new service

Dentists are mentored throughout the course by Dr. Sam Mohamed and his team. Dr. Mohamed is a highly trained dental implant surgeon. Having trained with some of the world leaders in implant dentistry, including Dr. Hilt Tatum Jr., the former president of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID), and Prof. Manuel Chanavaz, the Head of Oral and Maxillofacial Implantology Department at the University of Lille2, Dr Mohamed has been placing implants for over 15 years. He is a member of both the Association of Dental Implantologists (U.K) and the AAID.

Dr. Mohamed said, "Practitioners will attend our purpose built once a month to perform implant surgery under close supervision. This will give them real, hands-on experience and will quickly build their confidence in their own skills." To supplement the hands-on training, Dr Mohamed is providing distance-learning facilities via the Internet.



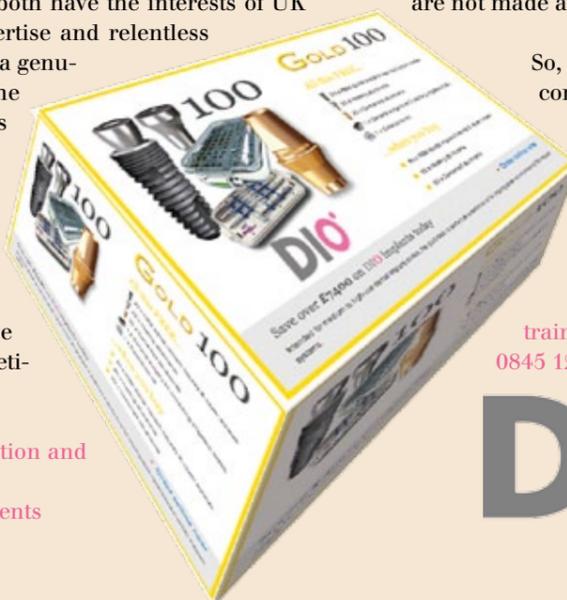
Once the course has been completed practitioners will be awarded a certificate and logbook showing the number of patients they have treated and the individual details of each case. Most importantly though, dentists completing the course will have all of the skills they need to effectively place implants and treat most patient cases. However, the professional support doesn't stop there. Successful implantologists are supported by Dr Mohamed's "Continuing in Excellence" mentor program.

Marketing Assistance

DIO is very much aware that it's all very well for dentists to learn new skills and develop new products, but the effort is useless if their patients are not made aware of the services that are on offer.

So, to help dentists promote their new techniques the company is providing advice and guidance on marketing techniques that dentists can employ to spread the word. These can include help with local PR, website design, brochure and leaflet design and production, Search Engine Optimisation, the use of social networking, etc.

For more information on DIO implants and their training programmes visit www.DIOUK.com or call 0845 125 5996.



Specialist Care Dentistry deadline approaches



The General Dental Council (GDC) website www.gdc-uk.org

The deadline for joining the Specialist Care Dentistry List is fast approaching. The General Dental Council's (GDC) Specialist Care Dentistry list opened on 1 October 2008 and the transitional period will close on 30 September 2010.

There are now only six months until the end of the transitional period for joining the Specialist Care Dentistry list.

After this date, UK applicants will need to hold a Certificate of Completion in Specialist Training to join the list. Registered dentists can currently apply to

join the list on the basis of the relevant specialist training, qualifications and experience they have acquired to date.

Special care dentistry is concerned with improving the oral health of individuals and groups in society who have a physical, sensory, intellectual, mental, medical, emotional or social impairment or disability, or a combination of these.

In particular, this area of dentistry focuses on adults and adolescents requiring special care.

A spokeswoman for the GDC

said: "Since the list opened in October 2008, 119 dentists have joined it. But we would strongly encourage other appropriately trained, qualified and experienced dentists who wish to join the list to submit their applications as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delays or missing the deadline of the transitional period on 30 September."

Dentists wishing to join the list can download an application pack from the GDC website www.gdc-uk.org or contact the GDC registration team by email assessments@gdc-uk.org or by phone on 020 7544 3741.

Eastman paediatric dentist wins prestigious award

The UCL Eastman Dental Institute (EDI) would like to congratulate Purvi Shah, an SpR in Paediatric Dentistry at the Eastman Dental Hospital (EDH) on winning the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) Poster Prize at the National meeting in September 2009.

The prize is awarded annually to a BSPD member for the best poster presentation of the conference. Entitled *Double teeth: A review of cases at the Eastman Dental Hospital*, the poster was based on work she undertook as part of her training.

The prize-winning project had been su-

pervised by Dr Paul Ashley of UCL Eastman Dental Institute, Mr Joe Noar and Mrs Prabhleen Anand of EDH, who were all co-authors of the poster.

The Eastman Dental Hospital is part of University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

For more information on taught or research programmes, please contact the Admissions Officer on 020 7915 1092 or academic@eastman.ucl.ac.uk.



Image from left to right: Paul Ashley, Prabhleen Anand, Purvi Shah and Joe Noar.

New President for British Dental Health Foundation

Daniel Davis has been elected as the 19th President of the British Dental Health Foundation.

The news was announced at the Foundation's Annual General Meeting, held on March 24 at the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health in London.

Daniel, Operations director at dental supplier Plandent

Limited, follows in his father's footsteps, John Davis, who was instrumental in setting up the Foundation back in 1971 and became the first non-dentist Chairman in 1989.

After the ceremony Daniel began his two-year term by thanking predecessor Chris Potts and said he was looking forward to moving the Foundation forward during his presidency.

He commented: "The coming years see an exciting challenge for the Foundation both in the United Kingdom and internationally. The audience to which we are promoting good oral health messages to is growing all the time and with the implementation of newer and more efficient strategies I hope this trend will continue.

As President, Daniel will

lead the trustee board and act as a figurehead for the British Dental Health Foundation.

The charity has been working hard to improve the public's oral health, raising awareness and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Daniel added: "I would like to thank the board and Foundation's members for electing me and hope 2010 will prove a great success?"



19th BDHF President Daniel Davis





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GDP UK round-up

The GDP UK online community is always keen to air and share its views, and this month sees the launch of its new exhibition review section, says Tony Jacobs

This has been another busy month on GDP UK, with the launch of our Dental Show Reviews site www.dental-showreviews.co.uk. This new part of the site is like 'Trip Advisor' for the present proliferation of dental exhibitions. It allows dentists, their teams and the dental trade, the exhibitors who pay for the shows, to rate events themselves, and thus provide mutual feedback. This in turn will help colleagues, and perhaps the trade, to decide which show is best for them to visit.

On a more serious note, some exclusive news has already been published on the site concerning a GDC meeting held in camera, when it is usually open to the public. As secrecy was maintained, rumours concerning what was discussed began to circulate, culminating in someone resigning from the GDC, and that there was a financial problem and a potential rise in the ARF. The truth in these matters is yet to be clarified, but as you can imagine this provided grist to the GDP UK mill.

Surprisingly to me, the NHS dentistry pay cut announced by the Government in mid March was met with little comment on the forum. There was no rush to man the barricades. How can this be analysed?

Strange but true?

Of course GDP UK wouldn't be the same without its range of little anecdotal snippets floating around its cyberspaces. For example, one asked whether silicone impression material could be removed from one's clothing. Another raised the topic concerning the difficulty in sometimes identifying an implant

from the radiograph, suggesting that a national register would help. Therefore, in say 20 years, one could go there and see the

make and type of implant placed. Especially amusing was the story of a patient (aged 84!) who took revenge on a dentist by leaving a home-made bomb outside the practice.

As always, there are many topics lifting the spirits of those involved in the thread. One of these is the story of concerning the consolidation of the hundreds of thousands of messages on GDP UK. As part of this

project, a colleague will collect and collate the 100,000 messages posted on Yahoo groups, so that other colleagues can turn it into a searchable database, which will eventually be part of the present GDP UK.com site. Hopefully, this project will probably be complete by the time you read this. One colleague is determined the British Library shall be able to access the data for future historians to consult on the way trends in UK dentistry unfolded. 



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About the author



Tony Jacobs, 52 is a GDP in the suburbs of Manchester, in practice with partner Steve Lazarus at 406Dental (www.406dental.com). He has had roles in his LDC, local BDA and with the annual conference of LDCs, and is a local dental adviser for Dental Protection. Nowadays, he concentrates on GDP UK, the web group for UK dentists to discuss their profession online, www.gdpuk.com. Tony founded this group in 1997 which now has around 7,000 unique visitors per month, who make 55,000 visits and generate more than a million pages on the site per month. Tony is sure GDP UK.com is the liveliest and most topical UK dental website.



Bukumbi Bound

With the trip to Tanzania only days away, *Dental Tribune* details recent fundraising efforts and a growing sense of panic!

It's one week to go before the trip, and I'm getting in a right flap about everything! What to pack, what not to pack, remembering any of the Swahili phrases which might come in

handy, sourcing my malaria tablets... you name it, I'm flapping about it!

Of course, all of this flapping is covering up my anxiety about

the trip. Don't get me wrong, I'm extremely excited, but you can't help worrying about whether or not you're up to the task or if you'll cope in the heat. However, I know that

when we get out there all the worrying will be in vain as I know that we will be a very motivated and committed team and will throw ourselves into the experience.

Speaking of committed, or needing to be, four intrepid fundraisers stepped out very early into the Kent countryside to complete a marathon hike around Bewl Water, the perimeter of which is 17miles. Having endured all the 'jokes' about walking around Bluewater, which for those not living in the Southeast is a shopping complex (and believe me by the end of it I was wishing it was Bluewater!!) it was time for Schulke UK's Andrew Thurston, Anne Harris, Jacqui Entwistle and myself to follow the picturesque Round Bewl Water walk. This name is a bit of a misnomer, as for long stretches of the walk we couldn't even see the water! However, it was a beautiful place to trek for miles, we were extremely lucky with the weather as it was a lovely sunny Spring day with just enough breeze to stop us from overheating and we were suitably exhausted at the finish to regret any plans more energetic than sitting in a warm bath that we had made for the rest of the weekend!

'This easy way of helping us raise money for this worthy cause goes straight to the charity, and allows you to add Gift Aid to your donation'

A big congratulations to the team for completing the walk and keeping their enthusiasm and spirits up, even in the face of Andrew's terrible jokes (it'll be a long two weeks in Tanzania if that was his best material...); even bigger congrats to Jacqui who did the majority of the walk with an extremely painful blister on her foot and who by the end was barely able to hobble.

Another fundraising effort from a member of the team going to Bukumbi was led recently by Henry Schein Minerva's Len Camporeale, who with some members of the HSM team (Louie (Marketing) and Wayne (Warehouse)) camped in the car park of the company's UK head office and asked the TSMs to donate a day or a week's commuting expense to the project. From all accounts, it was more comfortable than some of the hotels the team had stayed in!

To support these fundraising efforts, go to www.justgiving.com/bukumbibound and donate. This easy way of helping us raise money for this cause goes straight to the charity, and allows you to add Gift Aid to your donation if you are eligible so the taxman has to help us too! **DT**

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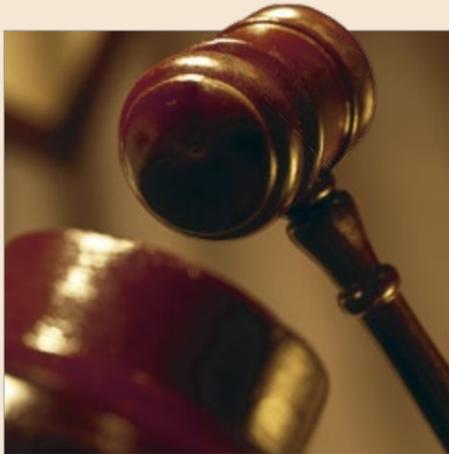
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Commentary on “Facing the judge and jury”

Chris Morris comments on *DT’s* article *Facing the Judge and Jury* published in Volume 4, No. 5 of *Dental Tribune*

I have spent nearly 20 years defending hundreds of dentists before the various Committees of the General Dental Council (GDC) and so read Mr Goodwin’s article with interest. Unfortunately, I fear that in a number of respects I found the article confusing and I hope you will permit me to offer some observations for the benefit of readers of the *Dental Tribune*.



Facing the Judge and Jury

Fitness to Practise Procedures

The Fitness to Practise procedures at the GDC are fairly labyrinthine but Mr Goodwin’s article makes them appear more impenetrable than needs be. Indeed, I am still not sure whether his article intends to refer to the Interim Orders Committee (“IOC”); the Professional Conduct Committee; or the Investigating Committee.

Put simply, all complaints and convictions notified to the Fitness to Practise Department at the GDC (other than those screened out at an early stage) are referred to an Investigating Committee for consideration. That Committee can decide to take no further action; issue an advice or a warning; or refer the case to one of the Practice Committees. The Practice Committees comprise the Professional Conduct Committee, the Health Committee and the Professional Performance Committee. Their titles are self-explanatory and the Committees deal with conduct, health and performance issues respectively.

A practitioner receiving any correspondence from the Fitness to Practise Department of the GDC would be well advised to seek immediate assistance from his defence organisation (or a suitably experienced lawyer if he does not have defence organisation membership).

The IOC

There is a further strand to the GDC’s Fitness to Practise procedures which is also referred to in Mr Goodwin’s article. This is the IOC. This Committee has the power to impose an Interim Order upon a practitioner’s registration for a period up to 18 months (and thereafter the High Court can extend the Order for longer) if the Committee consider that it is necessary to do so to protect

the safety of the public; or the practitioner; or it is otherwise in the public interest to do so. This Committee decides whether it is necessary to impose an Interim Order usually until such time as the case has been considered by a Practice Committee. It does not make any determination as to whether a practitioner’s fitness to practise is impaired, which is a decision only a Practice Committee can make.

Cases may be referred to the IOC at various stages of the Fitness to Practise procedures including at the outset (ie before the case is even considered by an Investigating Committee); or by the Investigating Committee following its deliberations.

It is right to indicate that time can be quite tight when preparing for an IOC hearing, although this should never be a barrier to a properly prepared case.

In the event that a case is referred to the IOC, the appropriate document to be considered by the dentist and his defence team is entitled *Guidance for the Interim Orders Committee* – the latest version of which was published by the GDC in October 2009 and available on their website at www.gdc-uk.org (and not the document referred to in Mr Goodwin’s article).

Mr Goodwin’s article indicates that a dentist will need to take a number of steps to defend his position in the event of an IOC referral. In reality those steps will be taken on his behalf by his solicitor albeit with very considerable input from the practitioner. These are likely to include the taking of detailed instructions (not necessarily in the form of a statement) – for the eyes of the defence team only; the obtaining of any expert evidence required; the obtaining of

references (if appropriate although they are not frequently used at an IOC hearing); the obtaining of any documentary evidence which may assist to present the dentist’s defence; and a careful consideration of any conditions which might be proposed to the Committee on the dentist’s behalf. It is highly likely that the solicitors will also brief a barrister on a dentist’s behalf who will present the defence case before the Committee at the hearing.

It is important to emphasise that the IOC is required to review its Order every six months which provides an opportunity for the dentist (or the GDC) to apply for amendments to the Order if there has been a change of circumstances (either for the better or worse).

Finally, Mr Goodwin, very openly, accepts that he has not dealt with what he describes as the “appeal procedure” that is available against Interim Orders. It is not, in fact, an “appeal procedure” but an application to set aside an Interim Order, which is made to the High Court. My firm obtained such an Order against the GDC in 2008 in the case of *R (on the application of Shiekh) – v- General Dental Council (2007)* which is now referred to as a benchmark by lawyers in most GDC and GMC Interim Orders hearings. It should be noted that an application of this nature is unlikely to succeed except in unusual circumstances and the practitioner (or his defence organisation) is put to a considerable costs risk if it fails.

My firm has produced a brochure headed “The General Dental Council’s Fitness to Practise Procedures” which I would be delighted to make available to any readers if they would like to contact me at c.morris@hempsons.co.uk (or call me on 020 7839 0278). [DT](#)

About the author

Chris Morris BDS LLM MBA is a partner at Hempsons Solicitors and Head of the Dental Team. He first qualified as a dentist and spent several years in general dental practice before retraining as a solicitor with Hempsons. Chris specialises in all aspects of dental law acting for defence organisations, dental institutions and many individual practitioners. He is the current President of the Dental Law & Ethics Forum.



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