



# Ed's letter



Sixty-one thousand and forty-four dental nurses (61,044) were registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) in May 2023. That's 1.4 dental nurses per dentist registered – which sounds like a decent number – and 6.7 dental nurses per dental hygienist registered, if they're looking for [and are able to secure] dental nurse support. If we split the dental nurses between the number of clinical dental technicians (408) you're going to max out the Christmas party budget this year... but I digress. The UK has a lot of dental nurses, and Rebecca Silver can't understand why conference goers and social media folk continue to gossip that there is a shortage. Why can't practices recruit the dental nurses they need? How can they best retain and nurture staff? What needs to change? Two years after her original article on the subject, Rebecca takes another look this June, hot on the heels of her most recent article 'Why do some dental nurses stay in unsatisfactory jobs?' I'd love to hear your feedback on any of these – join the debate!

Ever-positive Caroline Holland offers helpful tips on creating a happy and rewarding workplace this month – great advice where employee retention is concerned.

As you may have noticed, the cover of this issue is focused on dental professionals on the other side of the big pond: US dental therapists. I still can't believe there are only 200 dental therapists in the USA (I double-checked this wasn't a typo) and yet the work they are doing in underserved communities is inspirational and they have a number of well-established organisations promoting and supporting their work. It was lovely to virtually meet dental therapist Sarah Chagnon from LaConner, Washington. Sarah and her family travelled five days on a ferry to Alaska in pursuit of her career ambitions. I've not heard of anything similar taking place via the Thames, or the Norfolk broads.

Here in hot Surrey this June evening, there are at least 6.7 midges or mosquitoes per members of my family buzzing in via our patio doors. So I'll leave it there. Do read on!

*Kate*  
 Kate Quinlan  
 Editor  
 k.quinlan@nature.com



<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41407-023-1899-x>



## THE TEAM

**Cover**  
 ©eclipse\_images/E+/Getty Images Plus

**Editor-in-Chief**  
 Stephen Hancocks OBE

**Editor**  
 Kate Quinlan

**Production**  
 Art Editor: Melissa Cassem  
 Production Editor: Sandra Murrell

**Advertising**  
**Account Manager:**  
 Paul Darragh, +44 (0)20 7014 4122  
 paul.darragh@springernature.com

**Publishing**  
**Publisher: Rebecca Shreeve**  
**British Dental Journal**  
 The Campus  
 4 Crinan Street  
 London N1 9XW

any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the British Dental Journal.

*The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the British Dental Association or the editor. Appearance of an advertisement does not indicate BDA approval of the product or service.*

© British Dental Association 2023. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by