

The BDJ News section accepts items that include general news, latest research and diary events that interest our readers. Press releases or articles may be edited, and should include a colour photograph if possible.

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## NORTHERN IRELAND TURNS TO PRIVATE SECTOR TO SOLVE DENTIST SHORTAGE

Northern Ireland is to tender for services from the private sector across the UK to combat a shortage of NHS dentists, health minister Michael McGimpsey has announced.

Speaking in a debate on access to dental services in the Northern Ireland Assembly last month, Mr McGimpsey said 'I have approved a tender for services from the independent sector. While there is limited capacity among our high street dentists to provide additional services, I know there are other interested parties operating in other parts of the UK who could.'

Mr McGimpsey acknowledged that access was becoming increasingly difficult in Northern Ireland, despite the province having the highest number of dentists per capita of all four countries in the UK, because of the 'drift towards private dentistry'. Recruitment of salaried dentists was also difficult. The Western Health and Social Services Board had advertised for salaried dentists at a salary of £53,000 and received no applicants, he said.

Mr McGimpsey said 'I am hopeful that the Department will be in a position to go out to tender in a matter of months.' 'Dental organisations could offer additional dental workforce members here,' he told the Assembly.

Claudette Christie, BDA director for Northern Ireland, applauded the minister's pledge but added 'recruiting extra dentists to some parts could provide a significant challenge, regardless of what body is carrying out the recruitment.'

## TEACHING CENTRE IMPROVES ACCESS

A new academic dental centre in South-end, Essex, has increased access for local people and could attract more dentists to set up practice locally, according to the secretary of Essex Local Dental Committee (LDC).

'This is really great news for patients, superb experience for students and likely to attract more dentists to Essex in the future,' said Tony Clough, secretary of Essex LDC. The centre, staffed by students from Barts and the London, has seen 1,800 patients for free treatment since it opened in January.

South East Essex Primary Care Trust said last month, when the centre was officially opened by Chancellor of London University Princess Anne, that

concerns had been raised about local dentists not meeting their targets if their patients opted for free treatment at the centre. But Mr Clough dismissed this. 'There are no signs of this taking income away from dentists. The centre provides for high needs patients which many practices don't want to take on and students who have a taste of working here are more likely to return later' he said.

Princess Anne is pictured with Kevin Seymour, Senior Clinical Lecturer in dentistry at Barts and the London. The centre, which includes a 20-chair teaching unit and dental skills laboratory, provides a full range of primary care services and is open five days a week.



## CHILDREN-ONLY CONTRACTS LIKELY TO GO, SAYS CDO

Contracts for dentists to provide NHS treatment exclusively for children are likely to be phased out, Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft has suggested.

Speaking at a session at the BDA Conference, Dr Cockcroft said 'I don't see any PCT that sees that as part of their longtime strategy.'



## PATERNALISTIC DENTISTRY SET TO GO, SAYS EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIR

Forward-thinking dentists must adopt business models, work with DCPs and plan ahead, BDA Executive Board Chair Susie Sanderson warned in her opening speech at this month's BDA Conference in Manchester.

Dr Sanderson, a GDP in a mixed family practice in Sheffield, said registration of DCPs, changing patient expectations and the career aspirations of young dentists would all have an impact of dentistry.

'One thing we can be sure about is that the old paternalistic approach is no longer appropriate,' she said. 'Forward-thinking practices across the UK are using a business model, working out strategy and planning with DCPs.'

'Today we can't fix it with a few extra sessions to pay for a cash flow emergency. We have to plan,' she told the conference.

The new contract had caused 'damage, distress and disruption' on an unimagined scale and almost half of dentists had failed to meet their target UDAs

this year, Dr Sanderson said. While some PCTs took a sensitive approach to missed targets others did not.

One dentist in the Wirral felt forced to quit his practice, after many years in the NHS, when asked to pay back £20,000 to a PCT, she said. But she urged NHS dentists to work with the PCTs for the benefit of patients, and their practices. 'Given the right conditions and relationships there will be room for manoeuvre in the new world of commissioning. But those relationships will be the critical factor.'

Dr Sanderson also highlighted the changing demographics of the profession and the aspirations of young dentists.

Women accounted for almost 60 per cent of BDA members under 30, but only 20 per cent of the 56-65 age group, she said. Research has shown that only 20 per cent of young dentists plan to work full time after the age of 65 and both men and women plan to interrupt their career when they start a family.

## POOR PERFORMING PCTS UNDER REVIEW, CDO REVEALS

The 20 PCTs which are providing the poorest access to NHS dentistry are being kept under review, Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft told the conference.

Dr Cockcroft did not list the PCTs but named the Isle of Wight, Devon and Cornwall as having 'major access issues'.

But he was bullish about improvements in access and cited new centres in London's Docklands, Abingdon, Milton Keynes, Oxford and Crewe which, he said, had not been mentioned by the national media. 'The biggest problem on access is perception,' he said.

'There is no shortage of dentists wanting NHS contracts and skill mix is developing rapidly,' he said. 'Outreach is growing and student numbers have increased by 25 per cent.' He also predicted 'significant change in the workforce over the next 20 years' following the registration of DCPs. 'There will be enormous change in orthodontic practices,' he added.

## PUSH YOURSELF THROUGH TOUGH TIMES, URGES CHAMPION

Olympic silver medallist Roger Black urged delegates to ignore their opponents and aim for their personal best, during his keynote speech at the BDA Conference.

Black, who left medical school after a term to concentrate on his athletics career, won a gold medal at the world championships in 1991, and a silver medal for the 400 metres at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. But this was

against a background of injuries, operations and illnesses.

'If you have a desire to reach your full potential you will come through the bad times,' he told the conference. 'Stop worrying about your opponents and focus your energy on what you can influence,' he said, adding that the real feeling of satisfaction came from knowing you had given your 'personal best'.

Black told the conference that he left medicine in favour of athletics 'because I didn't want to be an 'if only person'. He had no regrets, he said.



## INTRODUCE FIVE YEAR CONTRACTS AND BRING BACK REGISTRATION, SAYS TORY HEALTH SPOKESMAN

Dentists' contracts should be for a minimum of five years and practitioners should have the right to 'sell on' the contract if they sold their practice, Tory health spokesman Mike Penning told the conference.

Speaking at a crowded session on dentistry's future, Mr Penning (right), MP for Hemel Hempstead, said 'We must have a registration system and we must have it based on per capita.'

Earlier, Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft told the session: 'There's no shortage of dentists wanting NHS contracts and new services are opening all the time.' He believed access in 2008 was 'relatively stable.'

But Mr Penning was greeted with applause when he told the conference: 'There's a completely different world from what Barry was talking about.'

'Some constituents have never opened their mouths to a dentist,' he said, adding that the Conservatives were keen to work with dentists to improve their situation. 'You will have the right to sell on the contract. It will take a long consultation and a lot of work. But we need get better outcomes for your patients and my constituents,' he told the conference.

Liberal Democrat health spokesman, Norman Lamb, said 'I don't get the feeling

dentists believe any of the objectives of the new contract have been achieved. I don't think access has improved.'

'Are dentists off the treadmill? From everything they tell me they are not,' he said.

MP for North Norfolk, Mr Lamb, a solicitor, described access to dentistry in the East of England as 'very patchy'. He said a constituent who needed emergency dental treatment had been

advised to go to Lowestoft, 50 miles from his home in North Norfolk. One dentist had given up, after many years in the NHS, when he was asked to repay a PCT £25,000 because he had not performed the required number of UDAs, he said.

Mr Lamb said he considered that the contract was 'here to stay,' but told the conference 'we need a system which incentivises quality.' He cited the practice accreditation system proposed by Heart of Birmingham PCT (*BDJ* 2008; 204: 360) as a positive development.



## VOCATIONAL TRAINEES MUST NOT BE USED AS MULES, WARNS CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER

Practices should not expect vocational trainees to take on huge amounts of treatment, Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft told the conference.

In a question and answer session, Dr Cockcroft heard from several VDPs who felt they were being exploited by their practices. A VDP from South London said 'I am seeing 80 per cent of the high needs patients and taking home less than the minimum wage if I am doing my job properly.'

Another VDP said he had been given the list of the retiring partner in a practice which meant he too was taking home

less than the minimum wage. Another speaker told the CDO 'Vocational trainees are very busy; they are seeing all the patients the associate doesn't want to see.'

Dr Cockcroft said 'The use of vocational trainees as mules to do treatment is completely inappropriate.' The PCT should investigate in cases where a VDP is expected to take over the practice of a retiring dentist, he said.

Dr Cockcroft also told the conference that workforce planning was extremely difficult. Asked if it was likely that some dental graduates would find themselves

without jobs, he said he had resisted attempts to increase student numbers still further. 'The DFES were in mind to have a further expansion of undergraduate training, but I resisted that,' he said.

Dr Cockcroft said the old system for providing NHS services was far from perfect as health authorities had no powers to match provision to need. 'Now new services are opening all the time and the NHS can influence provision,' he said. 'Access in 2002 was very patchy and the NHS could do nothing about it,' he said. There were no payments for prevention under the old system and no evidence base for what was done, he added. There had been a 'vast increase in expenditure' since then, he told the conference.

### DENTISTS WORRIED BY NEW DENTAL SCHOOL, SAYS CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The prospect of a new dental school in Aberdeen must not take investment away from existing schools, Susie Sanderson, Chair of the BDA's Executive Board told the conference.

Dr Sanderson said the new school, due to open in the autumn, had raised concerns among academics. 'I know colleagues are extremely concerned about the impact of the new dental school in Aberdeen,' she said.

'While welcoming this initiative in principle, there must be no compromising of existing schools in Scotland either by redirection of funding or by diluting the already small pool of clinical academic staff which

exists within the UK,' she warned.

Dr Sanderson said the GDC's proposal to introduce provisional registration had raised 'huge issues for students and young dentists'. 'You've told us you feel your undergraduate course should equip all new graduates with all the clinical skills necessary, through the taught curriculum and outreach teaching.'

Dr Sanderson told the audience, which included a record 750 VDPs and advisers: 'We must be extremely careful as a profession about making decisions that won't impact on us but could have major repercussions on future generations of dentists.'

### ONLY THE BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR CHILDREN, URGES PRESIDENT

The dental profession must strive to iron out inequalities in children's oral health and bring all up to the standard of the best, Gordon Watkins urged the conference in his inaugural speech as BDA President.

'Dental disease in parts of society is getting worse. In England there is a seven-fold difference between those with the best oral health and those with the worst.'

Dr Watkins, a retired GDP from Norfolk, said none of his three children, all in their early twenties and two of whom are adopted, had had a filling and he hoped that success could be replicated across the country.

'Differences are unacceptable,' he told the conference. 'Inequalities are a far bigger injustice than access. If we can give our own children oral health then we must be failing if we cannot do it for other children,' he said. Dental disease was not inevitable, he stressed.

### APPLICANTS TO GDC CAN EXPECT CERTIFICATES WITHIN A FORTNIGHT, SAYS CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DCPs applying to the GDC for registration can expect to receive their certificates in a fortnight, provided they supply the right documentation, GDC Chief Executive Duncan Rudkin told the conference.

Mr Rudkin urged DCPs to get their submissions in early to meet the July 31 deadline and to ensure they enclosed the correct documentation.

This comprises proof of identity, their qualification and an explanation of any name change on the documents. 'We are turning round applications to send out certificates in just under two weeks,' he told the conference.

Mr Rudkin added that the current application fee of £96 would cover DCPs until July 2009.

He reminded the audience that working with unregistered colleagues from August this year would put their registration at risk.

He urged dentists to ensure all their staff were registered. Delegates also heard about the requirements for mandatory continuing professional development after registration.

DCPs will be required to complete 30 hours of CPD per year over a five year period.

## DIARY

### MAY

#### Annual Meeting of the European Society of Dental Ergonomics

Date: May 30-31 2008

Venue: Desenzano del Garda, Lake Garda, Italy

Email: [secretary.esde@live.be](mailto:secretary.esde@live.be)

### JUNE

#### World Aesthetic Congress

Date: June 6-7 2008

Venue: Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London

Tel: 01923 851777

Email: [seminars@fmc.co.uk](mailto:seminars@fmc.co.uk)

#### Managing challenging patients

Date: June 13 2008

Venue: Royal College of Surgeons, London

Tel: 020 7869 6815

Email: [fdseducation@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:fdseducation@rcseng.ac.uk)

#### Annual Conference of Local Dental Committees

Date: June 13 2008

Venue: Kensington Town Hall, London  
[www.ldcuk.org/news](http://www.ldcuk.org/news)

#### BDA seminar: Develop your practice – business and finance

Date: June 20 2008

Venue: Village Hotel, Leeds

Tel: 020 7563 4590

Email: [events@bda.org](mailto:events@bda.org)

#### International Scientific Meeting of the British Society of Dental Sleep Medicine

Date: June 20 2008

Venue: Paramount Oxford Hotel, Oxford

Tel: 01508 530514

[www.dentalsleepmed.org.uk](http://www.dentalsleepmed.org.uk)

#### 114th Meeting of the American Dental Society of Europe

Date: June 19-22 2008

Venue: Lapa Palace, Lisbon, Portugal

Tel: +44 (0)141 331 0088

#### BDA seminar: Preparing for retirement

Date: June 26 2008

Venue: BDA, London

Tel: 020 7563 6880

Email: [m.hatlestad@bda.org](mailto:m.hatlestad@bda.org)

## AIDS RESEARCHER RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE AT SHEFFIELD OPENING

Deborah Greenspan (centre front), a leading researcher on AIDS and oral health, was guest speaker at the opening of the new research wing at Sheffield Dental School last month.

Dr Greenspan, Professor of Oral Medicine at the University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry and Clinical Director of its oral AIDS centre has been at the forefront of AIDS research since the early 1980s.

In 1984, Dr Greenspan was responsible, with her husband John Greenspan, Professor of Oral Biology at UCSF, for the discovery of oral hairy leukoplakia, which opened up new areas of research into AIDS and the Epstein Barr virus.

Dr Greenspan, who qualified at the Royal Dental Hospital London, now part of KCL, in 1964, received an honorary degree from Sheffield University as part of the celebrations.

Dr Greenspan said 'We have known

for years of the impact of oral disease on systemic health. Caries, periodontal disease and oral cancer are exacerbated by poverty, malnutrition, use of tobacco and areca nut in both resource rich and resource poor countries, and with HIV infection it is no different. We have known almost since the beginning of the AIDS pandemic that oral lesions are inextricably linked with the progression of HIV disease. Most of the 33 million adults and children living with HIV are destined to experience oral lesions unless antiretroviral therapy is made universally available.'

The £5.5 million extension at Sheffield includes laboratories and offices for research and postgraduate students.

Professor Paul Speight, Dean of Sheffield Dental School and a member of the *BDJ* Board of Advisors, said 'The new facilities will allow us to keep the school at the forefront of international excellence and develop our research themes of oral disease, oral biomaterials, oral neuroscience and dental public health.'



## BUSINESS MASTERCLASS FOR DENTISTS

The BDA and the British Dental Trade Association are launching a management education programme for dentists at Henley Management College.

The programme will consist of six days tuition over a period of five weeks. Six programmes will be arranged over the year and the first will start in September.

Topics covered will include analysing

your customers and competitors, deciding on services, business planning, effective marketing, improving the patient experience, investment and team building. The programme will include online learning tools and guides on team building, risk management and managing cashflow, as well as workshops. The cost of the programme is £4,970.