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LETTER

We can meet any challenge

I really enjoyed this issue of *Vital* and in particular the article *Making CQC registration work for you* (*Vital* spring 2011; pages 38-40). It brought back memories of our experience of CQC registration and how much we have changed as a practice in the last few months.

Like many other practice managers working in private practice, I had never heard of the CQC, so registration was a completely new experience. I assumed we had to fill in an application form and duly reminded my boss to submit his details to apply for our form to sign. It wasn't until the CQC essential standards of quality and safety arrived on our doorstep with a thud worthy of a telephone directory that I began to suspect we were in for more than just a signature on a registration application! This was followed by the *Essential standards of quality: judgement framework* and my suspicions were well and truly confirmed.

I began to read the guide along with the judgement framework and quickly realised that although we could meet virtually all the requirements for registration, demonstrating that compliance would be another matter entirely. I decided that I would have to work along with the practice owner to ensure our practice policies and procedures truly reflected the quality of service I knew we provided. We would also have to put ourselves in the place of our patients and try to discern how our patients feel about us and the care we provide and then try to document their experiences.

Just then, tragedy struck! My boss' son was rushed to hospital seriously ill. My boss had to move into the hospital to be with his family and it was a very worrying time for all concerned. We tried to keep everything going for him at the practice, but what about CQC? If we didn't register on time, there may not be a practice to come back to! I knew that that the only option was for us to take responsibility and manage this process until he was able to take over. All the team offered their full support; it was wonderful.

I read every article I could find and spent hours on the internet looking at the GDC, BDA and CQC websites. I noticed that Jo Russell of Oracle (previously featured in *Vital* – spring 2009; pages 35-39) was running a course on CQC compliance and managed to get a place. I then heard that a meeting was arranged for local dentists on how to complete the online application and that CQC representatives would be present. I contacted the local LDC secretary and explained our difficult circumstances and he very kindly agreed to let me go. Lesley our senior dental nurse insisted on coming along to keep me company and take notes.

Armed with all this information I began to look at the 16 outcomes for compliance. We revised all our policies and changed working practice where necessary. Lesley began to audit our effectiveness and Jackie our receptionist was typing and photocopying like her life depended on

it. I realised that this was only the start of compliance and more was expected if we didn't want this to be just a paper exercise, so I made a PowerPoint presentation for the staff and we began one of several staff meetings and training sessions. I attended courses on subjects as diverse as child protection, cross infection, employment law and First Aid, then I would share all the new information at our practice meetings.

Happily, my boss soon returned to work and we completed the online application form together. A few short weeks later we received three certificates of registration from the CQC - we did it!

Looking back over the past few months we have changed so much as a practice. Our regular team meetings have brought us closer together and we are far more aware of how we are perceived by the patients who use our services. Personally, I have met so many new people as I attended courses all over the area.

Of course, registration is only the beginning; ongoing compliance is necessary and there is always room for improvement but I'm confident that with my team behind me, we can meet any challenge.

Paula Allen

Practice Manager, Smile Dental Care

Paula wins Colgate products worth £100.



All aboard in Belfast

May I take this opportunity to update you on the dental nurse training courses we provide at Belfast Metropolitan College?

We offer the NEBDN National Certificate in Dental Nursing full time, part time day release or through evening classes. We also offer the Post Certification Certificate in Oral Health as an evening course.

We also run revision classes twice-yearly on Saturday mornings in September and January.

Belfast Metropolitan College has been delivering dental nurse training for over three decades and we are about to move campus into our new state of the art building in the Titanic Quarter, which has been designed to resemble a ship. The new campus overlooks Belfast Lough on one side and has fantastic views of the Cave Hill on the other: a truly idyllic setting.

We have a huge purpose-built clinical room which houses two dental units, overhead cameras for practical demonstrations and all the latest dental equipment including ICT.

We are very excited about the move and anticipate that our students will experience a magnificent learning environment.

Rosemary Girvan, Tutor/Coordinator
Belfast Metropolitan College