Time to come together

Leah Farrell

Chair of the Annual LDC Conference, on what online delegates can expect

The dental profession is facing some of the most difficult challenges in its existence. We find ourselves in circumstances where the lives and livelihoods of practitioners and their patients are in the balance. This is why it is vital that the profession comes together and makes its voice heard to make the right the decisions moving forward. This is a call to action, the current environment means we need to build bridges, to collaborate and work together to secure the best future for the profession.

The Local Dental Committees of England Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the means to inform the decision makers. COVID-19 restrictions have led to the first time running the annual LDC Conference online. This brings the benefit that more dentists will be able to attend – and at no charge – when both time and what you spend are precious commodities. As a result, never before has there been a better opportunity to speak to the profession's leadership and government representatives as we look to find a way out of the COVID-19 world we live in.

I am pleased to announce that the plans for the online conference are in place and

on Saturday 25 July we will have an exciting forum for debate in this truly unique year. We will have a packed agenda and more delegates able to attend than ever. I am delighted to announce that we will have key stakeholders attending including leaders from government, Public Health England, the Office of the Chief Dental Officers for all four nations alongside a host of guest speakers.

The online format means we can streamline the agenda and we will have expert discussion, and most importantly the presentation of motions from all the UK LDCs. We are collating motions, and these will be presented by the proposers at the event. Each motion will be proposed and debated on the day and then eligible delegates will vote online. I am acutely aware that events are moving very quickly and accept you may want to submit urgent motions nearer the day of conference. Motions of an urgent nature may be admitted for debate at the discretion of the Conference Chair.

I am focused on maintaining a spirit of constructive, respectful debate with the aim of producing specific actionable points that are most wanted by the profession and can be addressed by our leadership. While we all wish we could be in Brighton, it is exciting for me that the online conference will be more representative of the profession than ever before. Hundreds of LDC and GDPC reps will be part of the exchange of ideas.

It is really important that dentists and

associates all have their say – no corner of the profession has been exempt from the tidal wave caused by COVID-19. I urge every LDC that has not yet registered to do so, and to contribute to the discussion in the form of a motion. We have all felt differing degrees of frustration, fear and anxiety. This is your chance to put those problems to those who can do something about them. If you're not sure what or how to do it, there's more information available on the website.

There is great transparency in being able to scrutinise the key players in the profession, delegates must seize this opportunity to influence those in leadership, to voice their concerns and build bridges going forward, working together not against each other.

Elections of seven committee positions will also take place and details are available from your LDC secretary and online. Alongside LDC Representatives, permitted observers, GDPC members and members of the Conference Agenda Committee, special observer seats are available this year.

LDC Conference 2020 will mark a sea change, a key event at a decisive moment in dentistry. We must all focus on solutions and new ways to improve our working lives, to stay safe and prosper while doing the very best for each other and our patients.

I look forward to seeing you there.

For more information and to register visit ldcuk.org ♦ <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41404-020-0455-z>