

Welsh equivalent of CQC	<input type="checkbox"/>	---
New in 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Further Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	---
The key to your defence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
A dental speciality	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Essential to obtain before treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Counselling service for BDA members	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Protectors of the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Chair of BDA Board	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Source of reputable guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Legal firm. Nemesis of the profession	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Celebrated its first birthday in 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
Someone to contact in times of professional difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----
The biggest talking point of the year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	-----

The season of goodwill

The BDA Indemnity Underwriting Committee (UwC) regularly meets twice a week to assess any new applications that suggest an unusual level of risk. Using the information supplied by the dentist, the majority of clues above are not referred to the UwC, but approximately a quarter of the applications meet the very specific criteria that need to be reviewed. This material is inevitably sensitive in its content, so every document is meticulously de-identified and references to other parties similarly anonymised before secure circulation.

The UwC comprises insurance experts, people with years of experience in dental underwriting and/or handling cases, experienced clinicians and practice owners, and representatives of the BDA to protect the interests of BDA members both individually and collectively. Everyone concerned takes these responsibilities very seriously, demonstrating admirable commitment to fairness and consistency.

From the outset in April 2019, these were virtual meetings with committee members attending either online or by phone, so apart from the extra practical challenges caused by the admin team home-working once the BDA office closed, we were already well placed to deal with the complications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One particular application referred to the committee turned out to be a game of two halves. The first half was never-ending and involved reading many hundreds of pages of documentation regarding an unfolding story of criminal proceedings, GDC investigations and hearings, negligence claims, complaints, and challenges from a wide range of NHS and statutory bodies. Plus letters from various other indemnity providers detailing expenditure averaging £130k or more a year, many years in succession, until the dentist's cover was finally terminated.

The second half was shorter and began with a long silence at the start of the meeting as if the first contributor had muted their microphone. The caller eventually spoke and explained with regret that they simply couldn't find anything positive to say about the application. Another committee member asked if the approaching 'season of goodwill' might make a difference. The original caller said that it was very helpful to be reminded of that, and added that recommending non-acceptance would really be the best way to show goodwill to all the members who chose BDA Indemnity - and help to keep their premiums down.

Dr Kevin Lewis

Outstanding customer service

Many of us will have found ourselves now having to queue just to enter our local supermarket and early on in the pandemic I observed a new assistant assigned to managing our queue; not a very scintillating role but the way she conducted it was noteworthy. She greeted us all with ready eye contact, her tone of voice warm and reassuring, giving excellent directions and chatting with us in a friendly, professional way as time permitted, without being intrusive or over familiar. Week after week she remained consistent in her welcome and made a somewhat irksome shopping task, more enjoyable. This despite having half her face hidden behind the now familiar mask. No mean feat.

Then I overheard the clue to her evident talent – she had been made redundant from her role as an airhostess and we were the beneficiaries of her years of customer care for a well-known airline. I decided to stop and thank her to show my appreciation; outstanding customer service makes all the difference and as we know too well from our interactions with the public, a thank you is rare and motivating.

At the BDA we have been helping with a number of complaints from patients about the way they have been greeted given they are now venturing to attend dental practices and stepping into the unknown, some with an understandable degree of apprehension. First impressions count and by deploying a team member with outstanding customer service skills to a 'meet and greet' role within the practice can alleviate anxiety and help transform our patients' experience from one they may well fear into one where they can appreciate the efforts made to keep them safe in challenging circumstances.

Dr Jane Merivale

Give us a clue

Answer the clues above set by **Dr Lynn Stephens** and fill in the grid to reveal the message formed by reading down the column of letters in the 14 boxes.

Answers
 HIW, Follow time, CPD, Record keeping, Oral Surgery, Consent, Health Assured, General Dental Council, Eddie Crouch, SDCEP, TDLP, BDA Indemnity, Dento-legal Advisor, Coronavirus.