

DENTAL NURSE UK RETENTION SURVEY 2023 REPORT PUBLISHED

The Report of the Dental Nurse Recruitment and Retention Survey undertaken by Dr Debbie Reed and supported by the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) is now available for download via ResearchGate.¹

Dr Reed, a Registered Dental Nurse, former BADN Chairman, and Chair of the College of General Dentistry's (CGDent's) Dental Nursing and Orthodontic Therapy Faculty Board said: 'It has been a pleasure to work with the UK's RDNs and BADN to produce the DN UK Retention Survey 2023 Report. The document presents the findings from the survey carried out between January and March 2023. The survey is believed to be the first comprehensive survey solely focused on DN retention in the UK. The report has been made freely available for those who wish to draw upon the data. It is hoped the report will make a significant contribution to the discourse related to dental nurse (and other dental professional) workforce retention.'

Over 3,000 RDNs responded to the survey. Almost half of the respondents said they were planning to stay in dental nursing, and 34% said they were not certain. Over 70% of respondents earned between £10 and £15 per hour. Over 46% said they strongly agreed when asked if they enjoyed working as a dental nurse and that they highly valued being a registered dental professional. Over 45% said that

they enjoyed being recognised by patients for their contribution to their oral health. Results in relation to satisfaction with pay rates were more mixed.

For the full results, readers can access the full survey report¹ which was also introduced in *BDJ Team* by Dr Reed in October.²

The results will be followed with a number of academic papers delivered at conferences and published over the course of the next year or so.

Current BADN Chair Joan Hatchard said: 'Finally, we have reliable data on this issue obtained through an ethically approved, methodologically sound research approach which can be used to inform decisions relevant to the dental nurse workforce.'

References

1. Reed D. The Dental Nurse UK Retention Survey 2023: An internet mediated survey of members of the British Association of Dental Nurses and wider dental nurse workforce regarding what encourages them to remain within the dental sector. 2023. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374919034_Dental_Nurse_UK_Retention_Survey_2023 (accessed November 2023).
2. Reed D. Dental nurse retention in the UK. *BDJ Team* 2023; 10: 45–47. Available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41407-023-1995-y> (accessed November 2023).

ONLINE EVENT: AN IRMER UPDATE IN DENTAL RADIOGRAPHY AND RADIATION PROTECTION

Available throughout January 2024, the IRMER update in dental radiography and radiation protection will be delivered in a series of five easy to access, on-demand lectures that can be viewed at a time convenient to you between Monday 1 January and Wednesday 31 January 2024.

This course will bring you up to date with dental radiography legislation and ensure you are aware of statutory responsibilities. Covering the principles of justification, optimisation and limitation, this course satisfies both the IRMER regulations and CPD requirements as recommended by the GDC.

Learning objectives:

- Understand the principles of radiation physics and the risks of ionising radiation
- Understand the radiation doses in dental radiography and the factors affecting them
- Be up to date on the statutory requirements, selection criteria and quality assurance.

Price: BDA members: £95, non-members: £140, DCPs: £95. Five hours of CPD are included with development outcomes C and D.

For further information and booking details visit <https://www.bda.org/events/Pages/IRMER-radiography-and-radiation-protection-update-online.aspx>.

OVER 2 IN 5 HYGIENISTS AND THERAPISTS SAY MENTAL WELLBEING IS WORSE NOW THAN DURING THE PANDEMIC

Two in five dental hygienists (40%) who took part in a survey say their mental health is worse now than it was during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 35% are considering their future in the dental profession due to mental wellbeing concerns. A Dental Protection survey of over 1,300 dental professionals in the UK, including almost 350 hygienists and therapists, showed similar results for dental therapists, with 41% saying their mental health is worse now than it was during the COVID-19 pandemic and 39% considering their future in the dental profession due to mental wellbeing concerns.

Dr Yvonne Shaw, Deputy Dental Director at Dental Protection said: 'The pandemic created an exceptionally tough time for dentistry, and we know that many practices are still grappling

with the aftermath. It is hugely concerning that so many dental professionals who endured the challenges of the pandemic feel that their mental wellbeing is worse off today.

'We all have a part to play in supporting the dental team and looking to restore optimism and purpose in the profession. Many practices offered wellbeing support to dental teams during the pandemic. Wherever possible, this should continue.

'I would also encourage members facing mental wellbeing concerns to make use of our 24/7 counselling service and other wellbeing support which is a benefit of membership with Dental Protection. The service is provided through a third-party partner and is completely confidential.'

Dental hygienists who participated in the survey commented anonymously:

'Since the pandemic, I do feel under more pressure from work. Timing of appointments is an issue. Patients are more demanding and often quite rude. I do feel that my career as a hygienist will be ending sooner than I had planned.'

'I'm now 58. In a way I'm glad I don't have a long career in dental hygiene ahead of me. Most patients have been understanding but the frustration of lack of appointments is beginning to creep in and they are becoming increasingly less understanding. You have to explain the situation to them more. There is certainly a change in atmosphere since the pandemic.'