

Annual retention fee increases by 1.5% for dentists

Following a public consultation earlier this year, on 21 October, the Council of the General Dental Council (GDC) approved the regulator's strategy for the next three years. In so doing, the GDC also set the Annual Retention Fee (ARF) level for 2023 amidst considerable economic uncertainty. The ARF will be £690 for dentists (an increase of 1.5%) and £114 for dental care professionals (DCPs) (no increase).

The rise for dentists is far below the 10.1% rate of inflation (CPI, 12 months to September 2022) and the ARF level for both dentists and DCPs is lower than the GDC indicated when it consulted on plans in the summer. The lower-than-expected rates were achieved by the regulator tightly managing costs and absorbing, where possible, the impacts of inflation, as it committed to doing when it set out its expenditure plans.

In the context of such uncertainty, Council has set fees at a level that ensures the GDC can continue to fulfil its statutory role of maintaining patient safety and public confidence, while managing the financial risks caused by high and volatile inflationary pressures.

GDC Chair, Lord Toby Harris, said: 'I'd like to thank everyone who

shared their views with us on our plans for the next three years. We have listened to that feedback and look forward to publishing our final strategy in the coming months. Some of that feedback related to the fees we charge, and we're really pleased to have been able to further challenge our own costs and deliver a lower ARF for dental professionals in 2023 than we initially forecast.

'We have statutory duties and so, to ensure these are fulfilled, we must be financially viable. But that is not the only reason we must continue to operate – I believe dental professionals gain great benefit from regulation as it is one of the things that underpins the reputation of the profession as a whole.'

In the consultation on its strategy, the GDC warned that due to high and sustained inflation it may need to increase the ARF in 2024 and 2025. While this does mean less certainty over the coming years in relation to the level of the fee, this approach enabled the GDC to make a prudent provision for inflation whilst keeping 2023 costs as low as possible for dental professionals. If further rises due to inflation are necessary, the regulator commits to limiting these to the rate of inflation at most, while continuing to challenge its own costs.

DCby1 Practice of the Year Award 2023 announced

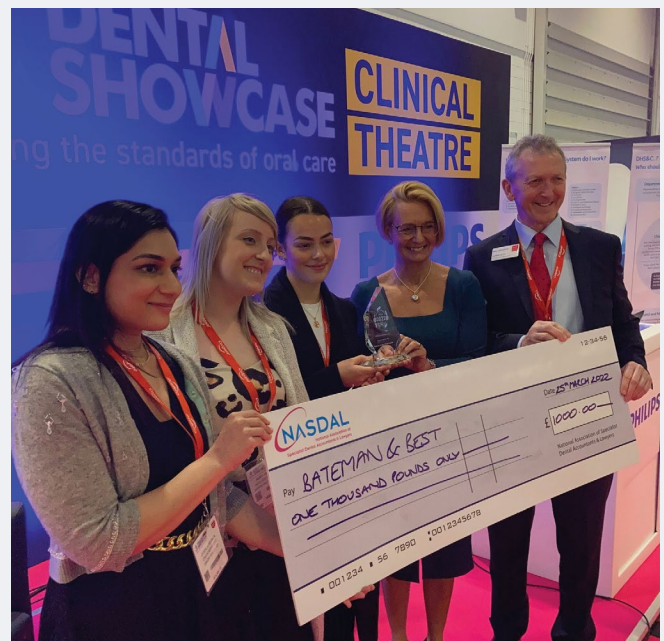
The launch of the 2023 NASDAL Dental Check by One (DCby1) Practice of the Year award has been announced by the National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants and Lawyers (NASDAL).

The award seeks to recognise a practice that has successfully introduced the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) Dental Check by One into their practice. The aim of the initiative is to increase the number of children who access dental care aged 0–2 years, by campaigning to get infants into a dentist's chair by their first birthday.

Established in 2018, the award seeks to highlight excellence in the provision of oral care and prevention in children and showcase the opportunity to achieve a real business improvement. Particular credit is given to applications from dental practices with evidence supporting their contribution to the overall health of their community.

The award will be presented by CDO England, Sara Hurley, at the BDIA Dental Showcase in ExCeL London on Friday 24 March 2023.

Professor Claire Stevens CBE, Spokesperson for BSPD, said: 'We appreciate that the last few years have not been easy for dental practices – however, the importance and impact of reaching those responsible for the oral health of babies in their families or care continues to be crucial. We know that DCby1 can make a difference and we were heartened to see that within as little as two years since its launch, there had already been an improvement with more children aged 0–2 accessing a dentist during that period. We appreciate that the success is in part due to many dental practices getting on board with the campaign and we are so grateful for the hard work of dental practices up and down the UK who support the DCby1 initiative.'



2022 winners, Bateman and Best receiving their award from CDO, Sara Hurley and Chairman of NASDAL, Nick Ledingham

'I would urge all surgeries that have made particular efforts with the youngest in their communities to enter the award and let us recognise and celebrate your efforts!'

Practices who are interested in entering the 2023 NASDAL DCby1 award should visit <https://www.nasdal.org.uk/award>, where they will find all the relevant details and can register. All entries must be submitted before 5 pm, Friday 10 February 2023. The winning practice will receive £1,000, a trophy, and the right to use the NASDAL Dental Check by One Practice of the Year 2023 title.