

« Local Dental Committees are a valuable source of networking for dentists with an NHS contract. Dental professionals working in private practice can instead link up with others through regional branches of special interest societies, such as those above. There may also be opportunities to network with other dental professionals through events hosted by one of the UK's dental schools. These may include evening lectures or alumni events.

Networking does not have to be with people outside of the home practice. Knowledge can be mobilised through regular journal club and knowledge exchange activities within the practice. A journal club, for example, would encourage the whole dental team to engage with dental literature. Team members should take it in turns to select and share an article for discussion. Further sharing of knowledge can take place following attendance at a conference or lecture. When keeping yourself up-to-date, consider what might be useful for other team members, and the best mechanisms for sharing knowledge with colleagues. ■

References

1. Nonaka I. A dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation. *Organization Sci* 1994; **5**: 14–37.
2. Payne J, Fryer J. Knowledge management and information management: A tale of two siblings. *Business Information Review* 2020; **37**: 69–77.
3. Day A. K is for Knowledge, M is for Mobilisation. Why bother with Knowledge Mobilisation in healthcare? Health Education England. May 2021. Available at: <https://library.hee.nhs.uk/about/blogs/k-is-for-knowledge-and-m-is-for-mobilisation.-why-bother-with-knowledge-mobilisation-in-healthcare> (accessed November 2023).

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Are you aware of dental charges in your area?



The Dental Defence Union (DDU) is reminding dental professionals to be clear when communicating dental charges and fees to patients.

This follows the introduction of the new dental fee structure in Scotland which came into effect on 1 November and a recent report¹ published by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman which found that the number of dental complaints about NHS treatment in England has risen from 1,193 in 2017/18 to 1,982 in 2022/23 – a 66% increase. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman states that there needs to be complete transparency over the costs of care.

Leo Briggs, deputy head of the DDU said: ‘In the DDU’s experience, confusion or disagreement over dental fees can lead to a complaint. To avoid problems, we advise communicating charges and your practice’s fee policy clearly to all patients at the earliest opportunity’.

The DDU’s checklist to minimise the risk of receiving a compliant due to dental charges includes:

1. Clearly set out services and charges in practice notices and on your website
2. Provide details of payment arrangements, such as whether patients are expected to pay for their treatment in advance or on completion
3. Provide a written treatment plan that includes costs and if the treatment is being provided privately or under the NHS. Ask the patient to sign this and keep a copy with their records
4. Provide an updated written cost estimate and treatment plan if changes are required as the treatment progresses.

To learn more about dental charges and exemptions visit <https://www.theddu.com/guidance-and-advice/guides/avoiding-confusion-over-dental-charges-and-exemptions>.

References

1. Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Complaints to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, 2022–23. 2023. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.org.uk/publications/complaints-parliamentary-and-health-service-ombudsman-2022-23> (accessed November 2023).