

The BDJ News section accepts items that include general news, latest research and diary events that interest our readers. Press releases or articles may be edited, and should include a colour photograph if possible.

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HEALTH SECRETARY APPEALS AGAINST HIGH COURT CONTRACT DECISION

The health secretary has lodged an appeal against a High Court ruling that a PCT was wrong to insert a termination clause in an orthodontist's contract.

In March, after a two-day hearing at the High Court in London, Mr Justice Collins ruled that South Birmingham PCT had acted beyond its powers in specifying that Eddie Crouch's contract for orthodontic services could be terminated at any time.

But now the secretary of state has lodged an appeal against that decision.

Dr Crouch, who provides orthodontic services at two practices in Birmingham, said he had been told that the Court of Appeal would make a decision within six weeks, and if allowed, the appeal could be heard in December.

'I am confused why the secretary of state wishes to have powers that exceed all other types of work contracts, being able to prevent further work without due cause or reason', he said. 'It seems an abuse of power and one the profession should be very scared by.'

Dr Crouch said the decision appeared vindictive and increased the emotional and financial pressure on his family. A founder member of Challenge, the pressure group established by GDPs in October 2006 to highlight the effects of the new contract, Dr Crouch (pictured here, second from right, with his wife Jane, daughter Laura and guest speaker, Gyles Brandreth) is also chair of the annual conference of local dental committees.

Speaking at the LDC conference dinner in London this month he urged delegates to be on guard against what he saw as increased state control of dentistry.

'We should all be frightened by the secretary of state's decision to attempt an appeal of my victory,' he said.

'Why would they want the power to end a contract without cause or notice? Is the control they already have not enough?'

Dr Lester Ellman, chair of the BDA's general dental practice committee, called on the Department of Health to undo the damage done by the current dental contract. 'Dentists need stability to grow their practices which the contract does not provide,' he said.

Dr Ellman also urged dentists to make sure they benefited from the additional funds the government was giving to PCTs.

LDC conference rejects call to renegotiate contract see page 661.



GSK APPOINTMENT AT FDI

The FDI World Dental Federation has appointed Dr David Alexander as executive director from August 21.

A specialist in dental public health, Dr Alexander, who qualified at Liverpool University, has extensive commercial

experience, most recently with Glaxo-SmithKline where he was responsible for oral health strategy and building partnerships with dental organisations. Dr Alexander was selected from a range of international candidates to lead the federation which has member associations in 135 countries.

BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Tony Jenner, England's deputy chief dental officer and surgeon commodore, Graham Morrison, received OBEs in the Queen's birthday honours. Keiran Fallon and Matthew Gill received MBEs.

GDPs MAY BE CONTRACTED TO PROVIDE SCHOOL SCREENING AS NHS REACHES 60

General dental practitioners (GDPs) in Essex may be contracted to provide school screening, following the success of initiatives introduced to mark the 60th anniversary of the NHS, according to Kathy Flegg, dental lead for North East Essex Primary Care Trust.

As part of a programme of activities to mark the 60th anniversary on July 5, dentists and dental nurses from 15 practices in Essex have been visiting nursery and primary schools to carry out dental checks on children aged 2-11. About 20 per cent of children were found to be in need of follow-up and were given appointments with the practices carrying out the checks.

'It's been so popular that we may continue the service until the end of the year and I am thinking of commissioning it from practices,' said Ms Flegg.

'Access in this part of the country is quite good but we are always looking for ways of improving it,' she added. Problems recruiting to community dentistry had made it difficult for that service to carry out school checks, she said.

As part of the NHS anniversary celebrations, the PCT also organised 'street dentist' initiatives, with dentists standing in Colchester town centre approaching adults with children under 11 and offering them checkups. Dr Husain



Parker from The Smile Clinic, Colchester, one of the dentists taking part, is pictured with Amy Beattie.

Several practices also held child-only days. 'We want to increase awareness of dental health and celebrate the fact that dentistry is a very important part of the NHS,' said Ms Flegg. 'If we can educate children at a young age and make them familiar with dentists this will set them up for good dental health in later life.'

At the BDA annual conference in Manchester last month the President, Gordon Watkins, urged delegates to reduce worsening inequalities in

children's oral health. There was a seven-fold difference between children with the best oral health and those with the worst, he said.

At the time the NHS was launched, a shortage of dentists meant free treatment was not immediately available for all and children and nursing mothers were prioritised. But in October 1948, health minister Aneurin Bevan, architect of the NHS, announced that more than 80 per cent of dentists were taking part in the new service – 8,039 out of a possible 10,000, and that one million people had sought treatment (*BDJ* October 15 1948).

A FIFTH OF UNDER-FIVES BRUSH TEETH UNSUPERVISED, SURVEY SHOWS

A fifth of children are brushing their teeth without supervision, according to a survey by the British Dental Health Foundation published this month.

The telephone survey of 1,000 adults in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast, Bristol, Cambridge, Newcastle, Southampton, Liverpool and Nottingham, conducted in April, found that one in five of under-fives was left to brush their teeth unsupervised. The research also found that 67 per cent of parents thought one minute was long enough for brushing, in contrast to the recommended two minutes.

A quarter of parents with children under five did not know that twice daily brushing was needed and more than a



fifth (23%) were not aware of the need to avoid sugary fizzy drinks.

Dr Nigel Carter, chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, said 'These results are very worrying and help explain why around half of children under five have tooth decay in the UK.'

The survey also found that more than half – 59% – of adults had an NHS dentist. About 10% of respondents reported difficulty finding an NHS dentist and some did not know how to set about this.

The survey also showed that more than 29% of adults had bleeding gums and many were unaware of what to do about them.

GDC PLEDGES GREATER TRANSPARENCY FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OVERSEAS QUALIFIED DENTISTS

The GDC is to revise its assessment procedures of overseas qualified dentists following criticism that dentists who qualified outside the EU felt they were being set up to fail.

Speaking at the GDC meeting this month, chief executive Duncan Rudkin said the Council was revising the guidance for panellists assessing the dossiers of overseas qualified dentists. Assessment meetings would be reoriented to include applicants and observers, he said.

'The fact that applicants don't experience the process as transparent is a matter of concern,' Mr Rudkin told the meeting. 'We should be aiming for a process that is so transparent that applicants should be able to attend,' he said.

The undertaking followed criticisms, made by Owen South at the GDC meeting in March, that the Council was dismissive of candidates' dossiers explaining their qualifications and experience. Mr South, a local government officer whose wife is a dentist who qualified in Russia, also said that the International Qualifying Exam

system appeared to be manipulated to the disadvantage of non-EU candidates, 'setting them up to fail'.

The exams were being concentrated at the Eastman Dental Institute, which had a higher failure rate than other exam centres in England and Wales, Mr South told the council. GDC representatives met with Mr South and Flor Kent, an overseas qualified dentist, to explore these issues in April.

Mr Rudkin said the registration process was perceived as inflexible and there was a belief that the exam system was designed to fail applicants. 'The point was made to us that the candidates experienced this as a form of bullying,' Mr Rudkin told the council. 'We have suggested that there should be a workshop for disaffected and disappointed candidates,' he said.

Mr South said the current situation excluded some 200 overseas qualified dentists from practising in the UK and he was disappointed with the GDC's reaction. 'A few cosmetic changes aren't going to make a difference,' he said.

LDCs CONFERENCE REJECTS CALL TO RENEGOTIATE CONTRACT

A call for the profession to renegotiate the dental contract in favour of one involving registration and capitation was rejected by the annual conference of local dental committees.

Calling for the general dental practice committee (GDPC) to reopen negotiations with the Department of Health, Jane Ainsworth of North Tyneside LDC, said: 'The new system was introduced to improve access and reduce inequalities and it has failed.'

'Patients are bouncing round the practices desperate to find an NHS dentist.' With a system of patient registration dentists would be able to convert casual attenders into regular patients, she argued.

Supporting her motion, Dr John Mooney, a member of the GDPC, said: 'Patients' interests and dentists' interests are diametrically opposed. A properly funded capitation with an element of item of service is a possible way forward.' But the motion was defeated.

'I don't believe the profession has the stomach for negotiating a huge new contract,' said Alisdair McKendrick, representing Northamptonshire LDC.

The conference also defeated a motion which argued that the general dental service 'does not even provide an adequate core service'.

But delegates called on the Department of Health to allow the continuance of children and exempt only contracts. CDO Barry Cockroft has suggested these may be phased out.

DENTAL TEAM MAGAZINE RELAUNCHES FOR NEW ERA



Vital, the glossy quarterly magazine for the whole dental team, has been relaunched with a new look and website.

Originally launched in 2003 as a supplement to the *BDJ*, *Vital* set out to inform, educate and entertain dental care professionals (DCPs) in the run up to mandatory registration with the GDC.

To coincide with the registration deadline for dental nurses and technicians of 30 July, *Vital's* 64-page summer issue is bigger than ever before. The magazine's content has been keenly researched and focused on the target reader, and is complemented by a striking re-design.

Also launching is a verifiable CPD scheme just for DCPs. Using a comprehensive website, DCPs can obtain two hours of verifiable CPD per issue of *Vital*. The team behind *Vital* hope that the scheme will prove as popular as the *BDJ* CPD scheme for dentists.

'*Vital* has had its own scale and polish to celebrate one of the most important dates in DCP history,' said *Vital* editor Kate Maynard. 'The summer issue will be sent to over 20,000 DCPs; we intend to make *Vital* essential reading for dental teams across the UK.'

The cover of the new issue of *Vital* features Bob Bhamra, a dentist who survived the 2004 Asian tsunami and went on to establish the UK's first carbon neutral dental practice. Check out *Vital's* new look at www.nature.com/vital.

DIARY

JULY

Viruses and dentistry

Date: July 1 2008

Venue: Clinical Sciences Building,
Aintree Hospital, Liverpool

Tel: 0151 285 4748

Email: emmawoods@merseydeanery.nhs.uk

BDA Armed Forces Group AGM

Date: July 3 2008

Venue: BDA, London.

Tel: 02920 496174

Details and nomination forms:

s.jones@bda.org

All members of the group are entitled to attend. Nominations to group's management committee are being sought

International Association for Dental Research General Session

Date: July 3-5 2008

Venue: Metro Convention Centre,
Toronto, Canada

Tel: +1 514 228 3031

Email: IADR@laser-registration.com

Update in Endodontics

Date: July 4 2008

Venue: Postgraduate Medical and Dental
Centre, Eastbourne District General Hospital
Tel: 01892 654384

Email: elisabeth.jarrett@btinternet.com

Dental i2 event – turning your ideas into products

Speaker: Mel Rosenberg

Date: July 7 2008

Venue: Royal Society of Medicine, London

Tel: 020 7290 3946

Email: events@rsm.ac.uk

Smoking Cessation

Date: July 23 2008

Venue: Halton Education Centre,
North Cheshire Hospitals Trust, Runcorn
Tel: 0151 285 4748

Email: emma.woods@merseydeanery.nhs.uk

Effective Communication for the Dental Team

Date: July 24 2008

Venue: Charles Hastings Education Centre,
Worcester Royal Hospital

Tel: 01905 760604

AUGUST

Member of the Faculty of Dental Surgery, Part 1 – revision course

Date: August 25-29 2008

Venue: Royal College of Physicians and
Surgeons of Glasgow

Tel: 0141 221 6072

Email: mgt.cooper@rcpsg.ac.uk

LECTURER WINS RESEARCH AWARD

Phil Tomson, clinical lecturer and specialist registrar in restorative dentistry at Birmingham University, has won a research fellowship from the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The one-year award will allow him to continue his work on mineral trioxide aggregate (MTA) and its role in pulp capping. A graduate of Birmingham, Dr Tomson began his research career looking at the use of ultrasonics in endodontics and won the British Endodontic Society research poster prize in 2003. In 2005 he won the Wladimir Adlivankine European Society of Endodontology research prize for his work on MTA.



FIRST APPOINTMENTS AT ABERDEEN DENTAL SCHOOL

Aberdeen dental school, due to open in the autumn, has made its first appointments.

Jaya Jayasinghe, senior lecturer in anatomy at St George's, University of London, has been appointed Professor of Oral Sciences and Elizabeth Pryde, a practising dentist who has been

teaching at Dundee Dental Hospital, has been made a clinical teaching fellow at the new school.

The new school is restricted to graduates. There have been 50 applications for the initial intake of 15 places, which will rise to 80 as the course rolls out.

NEW CHAIR AT EASTMAN

Ian Needleman has been appointed as the Eastman Dental Institute's new chair of restorative dentistry and evidence-based healthcare. Professor Needleman, who has been at the Eastman since 1995, was previously a senior lecturer. His research interests include the relationship between periodontal diseases and general health and he is director of the International Centre for Evidence-Based Oral Health. He was involved with the development of the NICE dental recall guidelines and is an editor for the Cochrane Collaboration Oral Health Group. As well as teaching and research, Professor Needleman continues part-time in periodontal practice.

He is an examiner for London University and an external examiner for



Manchester university. His particular training interests are preparing researchers to conduct systematic reviews and evidence-based healthcare in graduate education. He chaired a European working group on smoking cessation in dental practice.