

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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NHS EMPLOYERS RECOMMEND 2% PAY INCREASE FOR DENTISTS

Dentists should receive a below inflation pay increase of 2% next year and no increase in contract values, NHS Employers, the body representing health service organisations, has recommended in its evidence to the Doctors' and Dentists Review Body.

It argues in its evidence, published last month (October), that employing organisations need to achieve financial balance and believe a 2% award would be 'affordable' and that relative to other NHS staff, dentists are more satisfied with the conditions of their employment.

In September the BDA called for a 5.3% pay increase for all dentists, citing difficulties in recruitment, mounting student debt and increases in dental care professionals' pay. But NHS Employers says 'Recruitment and retention are generally stable in relation to dentists, suggesting the pay system is largely fit for purpose and needs only limited changes.'

However, half the Trusts responding to a questionnaire reported difficulties recruiting dentists and a minority reported severe difficulties. Salaried

dentists were particularly difficult to recruit. About 12% of PCTs reported difficulties recruiting salaried dentists, suggesting the cause was a combination of pay in competition with general dental services, 'and most applicants not meeting the requirements of the job specification, suggesting a lack of experience in community dental work.'

It is too early to gauge the effect of the new contract for salaried dentists introduced in January, the report adds. But it suggests last year's pay award for GDPs has caused recruitment problems for salaried services. 'PCT provider services are working hard to deliver high quality value for money services, often in deprived areas, but are not operating on a level playing field. General dental practice is perceived as an easier, better paid option,' it notes.

Employers would welcome a 'multi-year' award for dentists to the end of 2011 and believe that there should be no increase in the contract values in general dental services in view of decreasing expenses. 'A recommendation of no increase for 2009/10 will allow PCTs

to manage contracts more effectively and invest in improved services more responsive to local requirements,' the report recommends.

'PCTs would like less national prescription' it adds. 'It was felt that the 2008/09 award was unintentionally generous given an apparent decrease in practice expenses.'

PCTs are successfully tendering for new services and 'current contract values are already attracting high interest from providers. There is no requirement for the value of these contracts to be increased in order to attract more providers,' it notes.

The 2007 NHS staff satisfaction study, published by the Healthcare Commission in March 2008, found 48% of doctors and dentists were satisfied with their level of pay, against 30% of all staff. Doctors and dentists also reported higher levels of satisfaction with their employment conditions than other staff.

Only 12% of doctors and dentists agreed with the statement 'As soon as I can find another job I will leave the trust', as against 18% of NHS overall.

NEW PROJECT TO TRAIN LOCAL DENTISTS UP AND RUNNING

A new £2.2 million dental school has opened in East Lancashire. The Oak House Dental Centre, adjacent to the Accrington Pals Health Centre in Paradise Street, Accrington, was opened by Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft last month and aims to train 'home-grown'

dentists for the future, with the idea that where students train they often end up staying in the area as practitioners.

It has four purpose-built NHS dental surgeries which are up and running in place of the old surgeries at Accrington Victoria Hospital site, and which act as a new base for the local NHS out-of-hours emergency dental service.

The partnership has set up a 'hub and spoke' dental school, with the University

site in Preston acting as the main hub, while East Lancashire's new centre will be one of the 'spokes' placed in the heart of the local community. The others are in Carlisle, Blackpool and Morecambe.

It is part of a project between the Preston-based University of Central Lancashire and the Universities of Liverpool, Lancaster, and Cumbria, together with NHS East Lancashire and the North West Strategic Health Authority.

MAKE ALL NHS DENTISTRY SALARIED SERVICE, SAYS PRIVATE DENTIST CHAIR OF PATIENTS ASSOCIATION

The general dental services contract should be scrapped and all NHS dentistry should be made part of a salaried service, according to Dr Anthony Halperin, Chair of the Patients Association.

Writing in *The Times* on October 17, Dr Halperin – a private dentist practising in Wimpole Street and an adviser to AXA Insurance – called for the contract to be scrapped and for NHS dentistry to be made a fully salaried service.

‘We have evidence that dentists are not doing the necessary work they are contracted to do under the NHS... It is not that dentists are out to take advantage of the patient but they have to reach government-set targets,’ he said. ‘The contract should be scrapped and we should start again.’

‘I believe it should be a fully salaried service with subsidiary payments by

patients for more complex treatment. But I can see no solution because health minister Ann Keen has said the contract is not going to be altered.’

In an accompanying article, printed next to Dr Halperin’s, Chief Dental Officer Barry Cockcroft said, ‘We will need to make minor changes to the contract but first we need to give it time to settle down.

‘PCTs are investing substantial sums of money and we are expecting to see positive changes early next year.’

If dentists were not providing the courses of treatment specified in their contracts it was up to PCTs to do something about it, he added.

‘Criticism of the new contract comes not so much from dentists, but from people who have a vested interest in private practices that are threatened by a strong local NHS,’ he said.

NEW RECRUITMENT WEBSITE LAUNCHED

The Dental Schools Council has launched a new recruitment website for clinical academic jobs in UK Dental schools. The website, www.clinicalacademicjobs.org is a non-profit website which enables job seekers to search free of charge for current clinical academic, teaching and research opportunities across the UK’s undergraduate and postgraduate dental schools.

The aim of the website is to support schools in their recruitment for dental clinical academics, whilst acting as a career resource for the current and future academic workforce. In addition, job seekers will have access to relevant organisations offering funding and training for clinical academic careers.

The website is managed in partnership between the Dental Schools Council and the Medical Schools Council and is endorsed by medical and dental schools throughout the UK.

HEALTHY DRINKS ROLLED OUT IN NEW SCHEME

NHS Tayside has banned sugary drinks from all its vending machines, in a bid to tackle rising obesity and to encourage healthier diets in the community.

The Drinks4Health initiative involves all high-sugar drinks being replaced with a range of healthier drinks such as unsweetened fruit juices and bottled water in vending machines, shops and staff dining rooms.

NHS Tayside developed the scheme in a move towards tackling obesity and promoting good health. It was introduced following successful pilot schemes in Perth and Dundee.

The British Dental Health Foundation welcomed the announcement but called for a UK-wide ban on sales of fizzy drinks and sugary snacks on healthcare and education premises. According to the Foundation's Chief Executive Dr Nigel Carter, poor diet has been linked with gum disease which threatens tooth loss, and has an impact on overall health.

'Research is proving that gum disease

is linked to diabetes, heart disease, strokes and premature and low birth-weight babies,' he said, adding that by tackling the sale of unhealthy snacks in schools, young people could be encouraged to get into good oral health habits at an early age.

Meanwhile, a report conducted by the Department of Health has shown that fewer children are being exposed to 'junk food' advertising on television. *Changes in food and drink advertising and promotion to children* shows the prevalence of advertising to children by the food and

drink industry and found that child-themed advertising spend had decreased by 41% since the beginning of 2003.

The fall was most notable in TV advertising, which fell sharply in 2007 with a drop of 46% compared to 2003. In particular, there was less child-focused advertising for confectionery, fast food restaurants, non-alcoholic drinks and cereals.

The report is part of a raft of measures taken across Government to tackle child obesity. It includes Change4Life, an initiative launched this autumn aimed at helping people to live healthier, more active lives.



DIARY

NOVEMBER

BDA Seminar series: Advanced business and communication skills for dental practices

Date: 28 November 2008
Venue: Café Royal, London
Tel: 020 7563 4590
Email: events@bda.org

DECEMBER

The British Society of Dental Hygiene & Therapy (BSDHT) Medical Emergency Evening

Date: 2 December 2008
Venue: Glenfield Hospital, Leicester
www.bsdht.org.uk/diary.html

9th Annual Meeting of the Global Forum on Bioethics in Research

Date: 3-5 December 2008
Venue: Auckland, New Zealand
<http://gfbr9.hrc.govt.nz/index.php/home>

NHS Contract 2009

Date: 6 December 2008
Venue: Marriott, Marble Arch, London
www.dentalevents.co.uk

RCPSG GDC Core Competencies Symposium

Date: 10-12 December 2008
Venue: Glasgow
www.rcpsg.ac.uk

FGDP(UK) Scotland annual study day

Date: 12 December 2008
Venue: Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
www.fgdp-scotland.org

NEW APPOINTMENT AT LIVERPOOL DENTAL SCHOOL

Professor Callum Youngson has been appointed head of Liverpool Dental School.

Appointed Professor in Restorative Dentistry in 2004, he has been responsible for reorganising undergraduate studies at the school. Professor Youngson, who qualified in Dundee in 1982, has held academic appointments in Leeds and chairs the Association of Consultants and Specialists in Restorative Dentistry.

TREATMENT RESTORES STUDENT'S CONFIDENCE

A 15-year-old school boy has won first prize in a national competition which illustrates how orthodontic treatment can change lives. Against the Odds is an award given by the British Orthodontic Society to recognise the most inspiring account of orthodontic treatment.

James McAuliffe first visited his orthodontist a few days before his 11th birthday in early 2004 when it was discovered he would not develop four adult teeth – the upper lateral incisors and canines. After around three years of specialist treatment from Dr John

Costello at Total Orthodontics in Tonbridge, Kent, James's appearance has been transformed.

He commented, 'My teeth now look absolutely amazing. It is hard to put into words what a difference my treatment has made. I am now a really confident person and always love to flash people a smile – all thanks to John.'

James has won £750 worth of travel vouchers donated by orthodontic company SDS Ormco, while his orthodontist was awarded a trophy at the British Orthodontic Society's recent annual conference in Brighton.



Before



After



SUPPORTING RESEARCH IN PRIMARY DENTAL CARE

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) (FGDP(UK)) has set up a network of research contacts to provide primary care dentists and their teams with sources of advice on oral health-care research.

A network of 21 research contacts has been established throughout the UK. They are known as Divisional Research Contacts (DRCs) and are available to advise dentists and dental care professionals on all aspects of research in primary dental care.

The Faculty says that infrastructure and resource barriers can sometimes

exist to prevent dental practitioners from carrying out research within their own practices and it is working to support research in primary dental care centres, including dental practices.

It has focused on identifying research priorities in primary care, establishing a database of academic collaborators, assessing GDPs' needs for research training, identifying training opportunities and funding for researchers. It is also developing research networks at primary care level to foster a research culture within general dental practice.