

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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BDA PLEASSED WITH QUALITY IN CONTRACT PILOTS

The Department of Health announced just before Christmas that dental pilots will begin in April and will test new contract models that focus on providing continuing care for registered patients and improving access. They will also explore ways of moving away from the target-driven basis of the current dental contract and instead focusing on prevention and quality of care.

Dr John Milne, Chair of the BDA's General Dental Practice Committee, said: 'The announcement is an important, positive step towards the goal of improving NHS dental care for patients across England. The current arrangements, which were implemented in 2006, have failed to promote preventive care for patients and have been deeply unpopular with dentists. The BDA has campaigned

hard for a re-think and we are encouraged that the Department of Health is to begin testing new ways of delivering care. We are pleased that two principles that we believe are particularly important – quality of care and a continuing care relationship between practitioner and patient – are central to what is being piloted.

'Getting the detail of these changes right will be crucial to their success. These pilots must be afforded sufficient time for their impact on oral health to be properly understood and the results from them must be fully evaluated. It will also be crucial that input from the profession is taken into account and that meaningful engagement continues as the pilots crystallise into permanent changes.'

MOST COMPLAINANTS JUST WANT AN APOLOGY

Around 5% of the complaints made to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) are about dental services, according to Dr Gavin McBurnie, Director of Clinical Advice to the Ombudsman. The PHSO received 13,500 complaints about an NHS service or organisation in its first year of operation.

Dr McBurnie was the guest speaker at the Dental Law and Ethics Forum's last meeting for 2010.

While more than 600 complaints about dental services have been made, only five formal investigations have been completed so far: two upheld, two

partly upheld and one thrown out. Most complaints are not investigated, said Dr McBurnie, because they do not meet the PHSO criteria. The complaint must be made: in writing; once an attempt to resolve it has failed; and within a year of the incident.

The complainant must inform the practice or organisation that they are dissatisfied and give them an opportunity to remedy the situation. Most complaints to the PHSO fail because the complainant has not gone down this route.

Dr McBurnie explained that the nature of complaints is highly varied but most have one thing in common – the complainant is looking for an apology and a guarantee that the poor service they received will not be repeated.

GDC CALLS FOR CPD DECLARATIONS

The General Dental Council (GDC) has written to dentists in the UK asking them to submit their annual or end of cycle continuing professional development (CPD) declarations by 28 January 2011.

To remain registered to practise, UK dentists must complete 250 hours of CPD every five years, of which 75 hours must be verifiable.

At the end of each year a registrant is asked to submit the number of CPD hours they have completed by returning their annual statement form or logging on to the eGDC website.

If a registrant is in the 2006-2010 CPD cycle, their five-year cycle ends on 31 December 2010 and the GDC will be asking them to complete a CPD end of cycle declaration form or amend and update the CPD hours on their eGDC account. Registrants must do this by law.

Any end of cycle registrants who do not meet the 28 January deadline will be contacted and asked to send their full CPD records to verify that they have met the GDC's requirements. Registrants are requested not to send in CPD evidence unless they are asked to do so.

If a dentist does not confirm that they have completed a minimum of 250 hours of CPD every five years, they face removal from the GDC register and losing their right to practise in the UK. End of cycle registrants are also reminded that they need to keep records for five years after the end of their cycle, as they may be required for audit purposes.

Dentists who have registered in 2010 and therefore have not started their CPD cycle will not be included in this process.