What is the average pay per hour of a dental nurse?

Claire Lowe reports the results of a BDA survey on rates of pay for PCDs

In 2002, the BDA research unit carried out a survey of the pay rates of dental nurses, receptionists, practice managers and hygienists. The results of the survey were used to produce Advice Sheet D2, which is available from BDA Shop and can be used by BDA members as a guide to calculating appropriate rates of pay for PCDs. The key findings of the survey are summarised below.

Trainee dental nurses

The average pay per hour for a trainee dental nurse in the UK was found to be £5.01 (base = 217). The average pay for trainee dental nurses in the South East of England (including London) was 22% higher than in

the rest of the UK. Pay rates were found to be higher in practices that were less committed to NHS work and smaller practices seemed to pay higher rates than larger dental practices. The average pay for a trainee dental nurse in a single-handed practice was £5.28, compared with £4.69 in a practice with four or more dentists. This could relate to different working practices, multi-tasking and a broader range of responsibilities (e.g. receptionist tasks).

Dental nurses

The average pay per hour for a trained dental nurse in the UK was £6.57 (base = 661). The highest rates of pay were in Greater London (£7.49 per hour) and Southern England (£7.03 per hour).

The average pay per hour increased with number of years of experience. Predominantly private practices were found to pay higher hourly rates than practices more committed to NHS work (£7.45 compared with £6.25) and dental nurses working in specialist practices were more highly paid than those in non-specialist practices. 51% of dentists awarded extra payment for dental nurses with post qualifications (such as radiography, sedation, oral health, etc.).

Receptionists

The average pay per hour for a receptionist working in a dental practice in the UK was £6.68 (base = 475). The highest pay rates were in the Greater London area, at £7.85 per hour.

As expected, average pay for dental recep-

tionists increased with years of experience. Receptionists with 11 or more years of experience received an average hourly rate of £7.26, compared with £5.85 for those with less than one year of experience.

Practice managers

The average pay per hour for a practice manager working in a dental practice in the UK was £9.49 (base = 139). Practice managers with 11 or more years of experience earned an average hourly rate of £9.91 (compared with £8.88 for those with less than 5 years of experience).

Practice managers working in Southern England (including Greater London) were paid, on average, 11% more per hour than those working in the rest of the UK.

Self-employed hygienists

The average pay per hour for a self-employed hygienist working in the UK was £20.91 (base = 181). Self-employed hygienists working in Greater London and Southern England had pay rates which were almost 25% higher than those working in the rest of the UK.

Employed hygienists

The average hourly rate for an employed hygienist working in the UK was £18.28 (base = 56). Unfortunately there were not enough responses to do any further breakdown for pay rates of employed hygienists.

For further information about the PCD pay survey and other BDA surveys, please contact Claire Lowe at c.lowe@bda.org.