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LETTER

Dental nurse salaries

My colleague and I work in a dental practice in Leicestershire. We read *Vital* regularly and we enjoy it immensely.

We have been trying to find out for some time what the recommended hourly rate of pay is for a qualified dental nurse. I have nine years' experience and my colleague has seven with two on reception. If you can't help, is there anyone you could pass me on to?

Joanne Callis, by email

Joanne wins Beverly Hills Formula goodies worth £100.

Pam Swain, CEO of the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) responds to Joanne's letter: There isn't a specific salary scale for dental nurses. Salaries depend on geographical location, type of practice, job role and responsibilities, qualifications etc. The BADN and BDA used to provide a recommended minimum salary scale in the days before the national minimum wage, but we stopped doing so for a number of reasons: mostly because some dentists were using it to keep salaries down - 'I can't pay you more than that; the BADN/BDA say I can only pay you so much' - which wasn't the point; it was supposed to be a starting point for salaries!

The BDA do an advice sheet for employers called 'Rewarding Staff' which sets out what you should bear in mind when establishing or negotiating salaries. This is available to BDA members. A potted version of it as it relates to dental nurses is available to

BADN members and is on the members' CD-Rom. Similarly, the BDA salary survey shows what some employers pay their staff (ie those who are BDA members) and is available to BDA members and a version of it to BADN members.

Other things should be taken into consideration when you are negotiating your salary: is the employer willing to pay the GDC registration fee; the BADN membership fee; CPD costs; allow time off and/or the costs of attending conferences/seminars? What else is included such as interest free loans and contributions to child care?

There is a shortage of qualified dental nurses and employers can no longer just employ school leavers on less than minimum wage - they have to employ RDNs. Dental nurses should take this into account when negotiating salaries. The BDA advice sheet for employers also suggests that dental practices should offer salaries which are competitive with other local industries as well as other local practices.

Ed's note: Since Pam responded to this letter, the BADN has published the results of their salary survey conducted at the end of 2009. See news story page 10.

*The BDA also tell me that they are conducting a new dental nurse salary survey in May 2010; look out for the results in a future issue of *Vital*.*

Beverly Hills Formula

Error - photographs

Vital would like to apologise for the photographs used in the article *Orthodontic therapists: the first Bristol cohort* (*Vital* spring 2010; pages 34-36).

Although the photographs used were of Bristol students, they were dental therapy students rather than orthodontic therapy students.

More deaf awareness please

I found the article about services at dental practices for deaf people so interesting (*Vital* spring 2010; 43-44).

I know how it feels to be sitting at the waiting room and missing my name being called out but

I am so lucky that my dental practice know me so well (considering I have been attending the same one since I was tiny!) and they are aware that they need to come to me personally to let me know they are ready for me.

May I see more deaf awareness in both dental practices and the hospital? You'd be amazed that I go to the audiology department for my hearing test and the staff call out names and half of us never hear it! How can they call themselves audiology department?!

Tanya Spalton
Senior Designer, BDA



Vital feedback

I just wanted to say that the *Vital* guide to radiography and radiation protection (*Vital* winter 2009; 43-46) was a very informative article and that I felt I learnt a lot from it.

Thank you.

Louise Harris
Dental Nurse
Oxfordshire

