



VITAL for the whole dental team

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All change

As 2004 moves towards its final quarter, change is in the air. 2005 promises to bring with it the biggest reforms to NHS dentistry in England in Wales since its inception, as well as the long-awaited GDC registration of the whole clinical team.

October 2004 also brings change, as service providers are enforced to make reasonable structural alterations to accommodate disabled patients. All of these issues are covered in this issue of *Vital*.

The Dentistry 2005 changes will affect the daily lives of all dental team members, and in this issue of *Vital* we attempt to answer your questions (pages 22-24) and share your hopes and fears (*Perspectives*, page 15).

Change brings with it opportunity, and the expectation from October 1 that service providers will take reasonable steps to 'remove, alter or provide means of avoiding physical features that make it unreasonably difficult for disabled people' can only improve customer care.

We take an in-depth look at a practice that has refurbished in light of these requirements on page 50. Customer care itself is an essential issue, as Tony Griffin describes on page 36.

Upcoming GDC registration continues to pose questions. Linda Hillman writes of her grave concerns that a lack of training routes in Norwich will lead to a shortage of nurses in her letter on page 5. David Turner responds with a comprehensive guide for nurses seeking clarity on whether they qualify for registration on pages 18-19.

One of the effects of registration of dental nurses is that it may encourage more men to enter the profession (see *A Woman's World*, pages 26-28). While the increased status should attract people in, the more defined career path should also encourage a larger pool to consider dental nursing as a career.

But the biggest changes for dentistry are those due to occur next October. There is a hope that the reforms might encourage more of a focus on team working within a practice, with some PCDs taking over some types of work from dentists, enabling more effective deployment of dentists' specialist skills.

More team work, better customer care, increased status. Let's hope 2005 lives up to the expectations.

Change is not always comfortable, but it is often worthwhile.

Kate Craig

