

YOUR VIEW

compiled by **Julie Ferry**

Dentistry 2005

How will the changes will affect you?

Therapist

Sally Reid, therapist at Confidential in Sandhurst and Park Health in Bracknell.

'I think it is all for the good and is the only way forward for the NHS at the moment. More and more dentists are coming out of the NHS and something had to be done and this way, it opens the pathway for a lot more therapists to work in practice. There is obviously an offer of a lot more money, so we can provide a better service for the patients too. It can only be good for them and will take a lot of stress off dentists as well. Because it won't be fee per item, they will be able to give their patients a bit more time than they can now.'

Practice Manager

Elaine Gaffney, practice manager at Bateman and Best Dental Practice in Darwen, Lancashire.

'We have had a lot of changes in our practice over the last two years. When I was appointed, I completely revamped the place. My role is to alleviate all the problems for the dentists on the paperwork side and then they have more time to spend chairside and this has definitely helped a lot. We spend a lot of time with patients already, going over oral hygiene and things like that, but that is something that we have developed over the last two years since I've been here to do the paperwork side. In the new system there will be a lot more paperwork for me to do but it is nothing that I don't do now, so I don't see my workload increasing that much. Everything is up to scratch here so I'm not starting from the beginning.'

Receptionist

Andrea Bardwell, receptionist at Lynton House Dental Practice in Barnsley.

'I think there will definitely be some improvements at work. There will be more time with patients and a more relaxed atmosphere. We are one of the field sites and I have found it excellent and have really enjoyed it. In my experience it has been a positive thing for us.'



Sally Reid

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Brendan Hudson

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Technician

Brendan Hudson, technician and owner of PDS Dental Laboratory in Pudsey, Leeds.

'I think that NHS work in general will be hit very badly. My laboratory still has a strong NHS clientele but along with many surgeons we are steadily building our private sector. I feel fortunate that the laboratory has progressed to this level because I think many smaller labs and one man bands are going to be fighting over diminishing amounts of NHS work. From my conversations with dentists, most feel that they will be able to reduce their workload through the new contracts. I wonder then how this is going to benefit the ever-growing numbers who cannot find NHS treatment.'

Dental nurse

Jenny Edwards, dental nurse at Rockferry Dental Centre in The Wirral, an Options for Change field site.

'We are doing Options for Change at our practice. It was very strange to start with, as it meant learning new ways to book appointments, and deal with patients. There seemed to be more paperwork at first - but now we are used to it, it is more efficient as our dentists complete the paperwork after each patient, and we take payments as we go along, so there are no bills. We had to get used to leaving a little extra space between appointments, so our dentists have time to do the paperwork. That was odd at first, because we are a very busy NHS practice, and were used to filling every single minute in the appointment book! But the good thing is you get to know the patients a lot more, so our communications skills are improving. We also have time booked off for training, so it is helping the staff to improve all the time.'

Hygienist

Heather Maynard, a hygienist at the Avon House Dental Practice in Keynsham, a private practice.

'The last place I worked was an NHS practice. Timescale was the reason I moved to a private practice as there were more and more stringent demands on my time to increase productivity, to what I felt was a little bit too much. Working at a private practice now, I have the benefit of more time. Personally, I'm not sure that the changes will entice that many people back to the NHS. I think that dentistry is going the private route, like opticians did a few years ago and gradually people will grow accustomed to the private side of things and accept it.'



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