

# YOUR VIEW

compiled by **Julie Ferry**

## What does being a professional mean to you?



Gillian Pratt

“The image we aim to give our patients is of organised, professional calm and that we are ready to help them.”

### Receptionist

**Gillian Pratt, a receptionist at a large practice in Harley Street, London.**

“Receptionists are the image of the company they work for and are the first point of contact for patients. Therefore the manner in which a patient is dealt with by a receptionist is of the utmost importance. The image we aim to give our patients is of organised, professional calm and that we are ready to help them. I think that a good receptionist should be pleasant and welcoming, demonstrate effective communication skills and assess client needs. I have been at my current practice for several years. I am now a senior receptionist, heading a team of three and I do feel more of a professional. The practice has grown in the past few years and they place more importance on us now than before.”

### Dental nurse

**Melanie Ramsey, dental nurse at Peter Fleming Associates in Northumberland.**

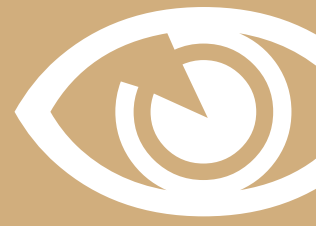
“I think people are aware the nurse’s role is more than just being the person that stands in the background mixing. It used to be that the patients would come in and talk to the dentist and look past me. Now, I talk to them as well and it is a nice feeling. Basically if the patients have been in pain and then leave happy I get a buzz out of it as I feel I have done my job properly. I really enjoy learning and it is good to understand what treatments are about and why we are doing it. So I am not just treating it as something I do everyday. I think registration will help to make us feel like a profession even more.”

### Hygienist

**Lisa Robson, hygienist at Admiral House Dental Practice in Birkenstead and a teacher at the Eastman Dental Institute.**

“There are many responsibilities when you are a hygienist. First there is the care of patients and the promotion of relevant and feasible dental health education. One size doesn’t fit all and care should be tailored to each patient’s need. We also owe it to ourselves and our patients to keep abreast of developments in our field, so there is a lot to think about.

“I think there have been many changes in the way dentistry is carried out and now hygienists are much more recognised and the part that they can play in a practice is respected. When I began my career I don’t think dentists were sure of our abilities, but that has changed and they are much more aware. I have been working for 17 years and we now have a lot more technical and clinical skills. There is a lot of scope for hygienists to diagnose treatment and to work much more for themselves.”



Glenn Harger,  
Bucks Oral Design Studio

“The respect that would come with registration would have many benefits for the whole profession”

## Practice manager

**Mary McGovern, practice manager at two Integrated Dental Holdings practices in Luton and Baldock.**

“I have worked in dentistry for the past 17 years and have been a practice manager for eight years. In that time I have seen my role within the practice develop continuously. Every year you learn new skills and improve. With the forthcoming changes within the NHS it is important to keep up to date. I have been on a number of courses and feel that my career development has always been supported. I have found these courses invaluable and always look forward to the next one. I no longer feel that the position of practice manager is just about administration and supervising, it is so much more than that now, which shows just how much the job has grown.”

## Technician

**Glenn Harger, technician at Bucks Oral Design Studio in High Wycombe.**

“I have been doing private work for some time and I have a very good relationship with my clients. The idea of registration for technicians is good. The respect that would come with registration would have many benefits for the whole profession. The respect we command at the moment has grown a lot compared with when I first started. All of my clients are very respectful of what I do. However, you still come across the odd dinosaur that doesn't but generally things have moved on. I have more communication with my clients now and contact them if there is something we are not quite happy with, which gives them the opportunity to make changes. In some cases I also get involved in treatment planning. A registered technician will have to get into further education and go on courses. Most technicians do that anyway, but for those that don't it will mean that standards will go up. That can only be a good thing for the profession.”

## Therapist

**Myra Cameron, a therapist who works in the community dental service and general practice and teaches at the Eastman Dental Institute in London.**

“Registration which includes the whole PCD team is in my view a welcome introduction. Hopefully it will initiate the formation of a more structured career pathway which will raise the standards of PCDs in the dental team. Certainly the changes of 2002 have helped raise the focus on PCDs and with the increased numbers of therapists being trained proves that a career in dentistry is highly regarded. Each of my positions has been enhanced by the changes and they have made dental therapy a profession I am very proud of.”



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