

DPM Lesley takes the lead

Lesley Turner of Stricklands Dental Fitness Centre, Haslemere, Surrey has won the prestigious Practice Manager Award for 2006, which was presented by the British Dental Practice Managers' Association (BDPMA) and 3M ESPE.

The award is judged on several criteria. The rigorous assessment procedure includes a two-hour practice visit by a panel of judges and interviews with nominees and members of the entrant's practice. They are also required to provide clear evidence of how the practice manager has increased the success and profitability of the practice over the past few years in key areas including



environment and procedures, team training and the patient journey.

In the opinion of the judges, Lesley is calm and professional and able to demonstrate successful capabilities in a range of skills including

strategic and business planning, finance, personnel, marketing and philosophy.

Four finalists were chosen from the greatest number of nominations the award has ever received: Anne Howard of Hitchin Dental Care, Hertfordshire, Toni Batty of Torrington House Dental Practice in Devon, Nicola Hoare of Manor House Dental Practice in St Austell and of course Lesley Turner, the 2006 winner. Chairman of the BDPMA, Bridget Crump said, 'The BDPMA is proud to present four finalists who exemplify the professional, business-oriented practice manager of the twenty-first century and I thank all four finalists for their contribution.'

GDC seeks *professionals* for panel

If you want to give something back to the dental profession, now's your chance. The GDC is seeking dental professionals to join its independent Fitness to Practise Panel, and applications are due now.

Members of the panel are responsible for hearing cases where a dental professional's fitness for registration has been called into question by their conduct, health, or professional performance. Membership of each panel is drawn from this independent pool of dental professionals and laypeople.

The Fitness to Practise Panel was set up by the GDC in 2003 as an independent body. Before this, lay and professional members of the GDC used to hear cases about dental professionals' fitness to remain on the GDC's registers.

The Panel now undertakes a broader range of hearings, including hearings about dental professionals' performance, and needs more professional members to meet the increasing demand.

It currently has 26 dental professional members (20 dentists and six DCPs) and 22 lay members. The GDC is now looking to recruit more dental professionals to serve on the Panel.

Derbyshire-based dental hygienist, Shaun

Howe, has been a DCP member of the Fitness to Practise Panel for three years. He explains how it works: 'We sit in panels of five, with the support of legal, medical and professional advisers and staff from the GDC's Hearings Directorate. We give a basic commitment of 20 days per year.'

'Our task is to protect the public. We do this by hearing evidence and making decisions on the facts which have been alleged in the charge,' says Shaun. 'We then decide how serious the issues are, and what, if anything, needs to be done about it.'

Cases vary enormously in length and type. A health case or simple conduct case such as a criminal conviction can typically be completed in half a day, but a complicated conduct case, involving several patients and many different issues, can take a week or longer.'

Applications are invited from all GDC-registered groups (dentists, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental nurses, dental technicians, clinical dental technicians and orthodontic therapists). Applicants do not need to be registered with the GDC when they apply, however they must be registered by 1 June 2007 to proceed with their application. All completed application forms must be received by Monday 26 March 2007.

DCP health checks

Dental care professionals (DCPs) registering with the General Dental Council (GDC) will be able to ask either their employing or supervising dentist or a doctor to sign their health certificate, following changes made by the Council.

Dental technicians and dental nurses who do not work in a clinical environment will need to make a self-declaration about their health and confirm they do not have any clinical contact with patients.

The GDC says the registration application process enables it to assess an applicant's fitness to carry out their professional duties – DCPs applying for registration need to provide certain information about their professional training, character and health. The changes are in recognition of the fact that some roles are more exposure-prone than others and therefore carry different degrees of risk for patients.

Applicants who may have already paid for medical examinations as part of the application process, who would not require them under the new guidance, will be eligible to apply to the GDC for a refund. For more information visit www.gdc-uk.org/Potential+registrant/ or call 020 7887 3800.