Guest comment
Sharing the load

I wrote last year about how positive scope of practice was for the dental team. It gave clarity to each team member’s boundaries and allowed people to view their job as a career with a path and room for development. It allows for the tailoring of the team to suit the practice requirements, presenting opportunities for job fulfilment that haven’t always been available. The potential for good personnel utilisation and therefore increased revenue is a strong reality, I like many DCPs, hope that this is just the beginning.

What is really getting up my nose, apart from grime from my daily underground commute, is the lack of vision of some of our fine profession. CPD is now compulsory for dental nurses yet they are not fortunate enough to be able to claim it as a taxable expense. Section 63 courses are hard to come by and hospital run courses seriously oversubscribed.

No problem, the majority think, the principle in his or her wisdom will recognise the value of an educated, enthusiastic, confident professional as a team member as a pose to someone who feels about as valued as something you scrape of your shoe. No brainer eh? It is tax deductible and with the extension of duties as well as the core subjects a sound investment of practice money. Surely? Used correctly they can free up the clinicians time allowing them to focus on the finer treatment elements, safe in the knowledge that their team is supporting them all the way. And generating more income. That has got to be good right?

Try not to be too shocked, but there are still some of us out there who cannot see the benefit of team training, working together and sharing the workload out to those most suited to the job. They prefer to stumble along, shouldering the responsibility solely, burnt out and unsatisfied, and look at the nurse in sheer horror at the suggestion that they might be able to develop skills. God forbid, the nurse may even find enthusiasm for their job again.

In the current climate, people are valuing their pound more than ever. We want more for our money as consumers and we as a profession need to take note of this and change our spots accordingly. It is not enough to provide a mediocre service and assume they will just stick with you.

So come on, support your staff. Invest in your team. Dispel that myth about how much you don’t like to part with your money. Who knows, this time next year you could be looking back at 2009 as the year you shared some of the burden with people only too glad to help, and capable to boot. You could be feeling a bit more positive about your practice and actually enjoying the art of dentistry again. Nobody prepares you for the extra burden of running a team and business so delegate more and get back to the things you enjoy. Good luck.