Dental professionals asked to sign up to direct debit

Dental professionals are urged by the General Dental Council to pay their Annual Retention Fee by direct debit.

Once a direct debit is set up, registrants won’t have to contact the General Dental Council (GDC) to make a payment or write a cheque each time their Annual Retention Fee (ARF) is due.

Gurvinder Soomal, GDC head of registration said: “The annual retention fee pays for all our core regulatory activities and we always want to make sure that it is spent wisely. We are committed to finding the most cost-efficient way of carrying out our work. Encouraging dental professionals to sign up to direct debit is one way we can help reduce administration costs. It’s helpful for registrants too. Payments are made automatically, ensuring fees are never forgotten and that costly restoration fees are avoided. This is also a very good time for those who have already set up direct debits to check their details are up-to-date.”

Direct debits operate under a guarantee offered by all banks and building societies.

There is an immediate money-back guarantee from the bank in the event of an error, advance notice if the date or amount change, and the right to cancel at any time.

This year the GDC is also introducing a new solution for managing multiple ARF payments from a single bank account. An update will be sent to the account holder before each ARF collection. The update form shows each registrant that is being paid for by direct debit and allows names to be easily removed or added.

To set up a direct debit in time for the July 2010 ARF collection, registrants must return the completed form or set up their instruction on line at www.gdc-uk.org by 14 June 2010.

For further help, contact the registration team by phone on 020 7544 3760 or email registration@gdc-uk.org.

Oral health charity criticises ‘dangerous sweetie culture’

The British Dental Health Foundation wants oral health messages on diet and toothbrushing to be specifically targeted at children. The oral health charity has expressed its concern after a new study highlighted the problems surrounding a ‘sweetie culture’.

The BDHF claims the report has flagged up a severe lack of support for parents, with the research showing that parents find it particularly difficult to refuse their children’s constant demands for sweets, biscuits and chocolate - in a society where sugary snacks are so easily available.

Chief executive of the British Dental Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, said the study highlights the need for stricter measures to be put in place so that children’s health does not deteriorate further. He said: “The research underlines the struggles parents have in today’s society, where sweets and sugary foods have become the norm. It also gives us an insight into why children’s dental health in the UK is so poor, despite the constant hard work we do in making information available to the public.”

He added: “The UK in general has developed a very unhealthy food environment, making it even harder for us to improve the dietary habits of children in this country. Cutting sweets and high-in-sugar foods in schools is a start and a step that the government must radically think about adopting.”

The research, ‘Living in a sweetie culture: Scottish parents’ difficulties in maintaining their children’s oral health’ was carried out by the University of Dundee’s Dental Health Services and Research Unit.

The study looked at parents from varied social backgrounds with children aged three to 12 whose teeth had to be extracted. Many parents confessed to using sweets ‘to control their children’s tantrums’ and made a plea for schools to ban sweets because they were ‘everywhere’. They were also found to have limited knowledge of oral health maintenance.

Dr Carter added: “Children do not naturally have a sweet tooth and very often only develop this when they are offered sweets as rewards by parents and grandparents. Trying to offer other rewards can reap benefits for both dental and general health of the child.”

A recent BBC1 Panorama special highlighted the tooth decay epidemic which children in the UK are facing today. The documentary featured five-year-old Kaifyn, who had had eight molars removed to tooth decay. Her mother, Sharon, said the culprits were her daughter’s love of sweets and tomato sauce.

BACD member to train students at Peninsula

A member of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry has been chosen to train students at the Peninsula Dental School.

Dominic Kiernander, from the Pearly Whites Dental Practice on City Road in Truro, has been awarded full membership of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. He is the second member of the academy in Cornwall, and the only dentist in Truro with full membership.

Professor Elizabeth Kay, Dean of Peninsula Dental School, said: “We’re delighted to have secured Dominic’s skills to give students at the Peninsula Dental School the opportunity to train under a member of the British Academy in Cornwall, and the only dentist in Truro with full membership.”

Dental receptionist wins sex discrimination case

A dental receptionist, who claimed she lost her job because she was pregnant, has been awarded £5,000 in compensation.

Saha Saeed, of Great Barr, Birmingham, said her former employers, Dr Farshid Shojai and Mrs Shokki Shojai, who run Shokki Shojai Dental Practice in Edgbaston had discriminated against her because she was a woman.

The receptionist also claimed that she was dismissed when she revealed that she was pregnant.

However, Dr Shojai said Miss Saeed had intimidated other members of staff by making personal phone calls in work hours and talked to colleagues in a rude and inappropriate manner. Miss Saeed denied the allegations.

At Birmingham Employment Tribunal, judge Tom Roper, said Miss Saeed had indeed been discriminated against due to her gender and was also unfairly dismissed on the grounds that she had announced that she was pregnant and was sacked just days after the announcement. She was informed by her employers that ‘things between them were not working out’.

The hearing lasted for two days and Miss Saeed was given compensation totalling £5,041.

The sum included a 25 per cent penalty, as Miss Saeed’s employers had not followed the correct disciplinary and dismissal procedure under the Employment Rights Act.

EndoCare director successfully completes the London Marathon

The clinical director of EndoCare successfully completed the London Marathon and raised £2,000 for charity.

Clinical director, Dr Michael Sultan, finished the marathon in four hours and 44 minutes.

Dr Sultan, himself an asthma sufferer, raised more than £2,000 for Asthma UK, a charity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of those whose lives are affected by asthma.

“I ran 50km well but then I started to get pain in my right hip, which eventually seized up completely,” said Dr Sultan.

“There was no way I wasn’t going to finish the race so I walked and limped the last 12km. Donations for this year’s event are still rolling in and new donations are always welcome,” he added.
Editorial comment

Brave New World

So we have a new Prime Minister and Government, and all seems rosy in camp Cameron and Clegg. Now the real work begins of running the country, reducing the national deficit and getting the ornaments out to adorn the cupboards of Number 10.

The papers have been full this week of the dire state of the country’s finances and the drastic measures needed to redress this state. With £6bn of cuts to be announced, and an emergency budget planned for June 22, all areas of industry, not just health-care, are waiting anxiously to see what this will mean in terms of their business.

Closer to home, we are still awaiting the announcement of the ministerial portfolios for the new ministers and under secretaries for health. Of the four announced so far, Paul Burstow, Simon Burns, Anne Milton and Earl Howe, there is nothing obvious which makes them stand out as more suitable for dentistry so it is a case of wait and see what happens. For what it’s worth, my money is on Paul Burstow.

New training committee for dental trainees

Dental trainees are to get a new national training committee, the Joint Committee for Postgraduate Training in Dentistry be launched in June.

It will be made up of representatives from across postgraduate dental education and training.

The JCPTD will provide advice on foundation training and specialist training in dentistry and will promote a consistency of approach to training and facilitate robust quality assurance.

Key components of the JCPTD will be the Advisory Board for Dental Foundation Training and the Advisory Board for Specialist Training in Dentistry which will be supported by the existing Specialist Advisory Committees (SACs).

Chair-elect of the JCPTD, Prof Jonathan Cowpe, current director of Dental Postgraduate Education in Wales and previously head of Bristol Dental School and dean of the Faculty of Dental Surgery, the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, said: “Dentistry and educational issues associated with the profession have entered an interesting and challenging period. I look forward to working with key stakeholders to enhance communication and promote a shared ownership of the initiatives of the JCPTD. This should facilitate enhanced cooperation on the future direction of dental education in the UK. This strategy should be at the heart of a modern approach to the continuum of education, underpinning the concept of lifelong learning in dentistry.”

Clinically proven 12-hour antibacterial protection

• Unique triclosan and copolymer formulation retains triclosan on soft and hard tissues to hinder plaque recolonisation

• Clinically proven to significantly reduce bacteria for 12 hours

Evidence-Based toothpaste

Recommend it to your patients

Portsmouth University's £9m dental outreach centre, which will train 80 dental students a year, is on schedule to open in September.

Up to 3,000 people a year are expected to benefit from its services, which will include oral health advice and all aspects of primary care dentistry including check-ups, fillings, extractions, crowns, bridges and dentures.

Portsmouth University hopes that the centre will be at the leading edge of dental education, training dentists, dental therapists, hygienists and dental nurses.

Student dentists will be trained in teams alongside dental hygienists, dental therapists and dental nurses mirroring how dental professionals work in practice.

The new centre is an innovative partnership between the University of Portsmouth and King's College London's Dental Institute.

It will provide NHS treatment to communities in Portsmouth, South East Hampshire and the Isle of Wight where, in some areas, oral health is significantly poorer than the national average.

Dr Barry Cockcroft, chief dental officer, said: “Outreach training has made a key contribution to our programme for the expansion of dental education, giving students practical experience of treating patients in a community setting. Equally importantly, this project is fostering cooperation between two universities with different resources and priorities.”

He added: “King’s College has an international reputation for teaching and research in the dental sciences while the University of Portsmouth is developing training programmes for dental care professionals in an area where many people have unmet needs for dental treatment and support in maintaining good oral health.”

Of the £9m capital investment, £3m is from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) strategic development fund in recognition of the educational innovation of the new centre. The NHS and Department of Health are contributing £4m, with the balance from the universities.

The new centre will be integrated with the University of Portsmouth’s existing dentistry school of Dental Education and will provide routine, free National Health Service dental care to adults and children.

Final year dental students from King’s College London, in groups of 20, will conduct 10-week supervised clinical placements at the centre. Staff from King’s College London Dental Institute will also work at the centre, enabling the local community to benefit from their expertise in specialised aspects of dentistry such as identifying oral cancer.

The other partners in the centre will be the Portsmouth City Teaching Primary Care Trust, the South Central Strategic Health Authority, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight PCTs and the Guy’s and St Thomas’s and King’s College Hospital Trusts.

Portsmouth’s new £9m dental outreach centre

A millionaire dentist who took part in the Television programme, The Secret Millionaire, has set up a charity to help disadvantaged children in India.

Seema Sharma, was shown on the TV show earlier this year, going undercover in the Mumbai slums in India.

Mrs Sharma, who owns a small group of dental practices in London known as Smile Impressions Ltd, revealed how she felt despair at the sheer magnitude of the deprivation she saw.

She said: “I was humbled by the dignity, love and generosity of those with so little.”

She has now set up a charity, The Sharma Foundation, to provide on-going funding for the three projects she decided to help out in India.

The Foundation is organising fundraising events in the UK and Henry Schein Minerva, distributor and supplier of dental and healthcare products, is supporting a charity dinner being held on 30 June in London.

The evening will feature a three-course dinner created by Cyrus Toodywala from his award-winning restaurant, The Spice Café in London and will be followed by comedy and entertainment from comedian Paul Sinha.

Tickets cost £55 per person or you can buy two for £100. To reserve your place at this charity evening please call Lynn on 0208 2970100. For more information or to see ‘Slumdog Secret Millionaire’ please visit www.seemasharma.co.uk.
Time to talk about dry mouth?

Approximately 20% of people suffer symptoms of dry mouth, primarily related to disease and medication use. More than 400 medicines including tricyclic antidepressants and antihistamines can cause dry mouth and the prevalence is directly related to the total number of drugs taken.

Ask your patients

Some patients develop advanced coping strategies for dealing with dry mouth, unaware that there are products available that can help to provide protection against dry mouth, like the Biotène system.

Diagnosis may also be complicated by the fact physical symptoms of dry mouth may not occur until salivary flow has been reduced by 50%.

Diagnosing dry mouth

Four key questions have been validated to help determine the subjective evaluation of a patient’s dry mouth:

1. Do you have any difficulty swallowing?
2. Does your mouth feel dry when eating a meal?
3. Do you sip liquids to aid in swallowing dry food?
4. Does the amount of saliva in your mouth seem to be too little, too much or you do not notice?

Clinical evaluations can also help to pick up on the condition, in particular:

- Use of the mirror ‘stick’ test - place the mirror against the buccal mucosa and tongue. If it adheres to the tissues, then salivary secretion may be reduced
- Checking for saliva pooling - is there saliva pooling in the floor of the mouth? If no, salivary rates may be abnormal
- Determining changes in caries rates and presentation, looking for unusual sites, e.g. incisal, cuspal and cervical caries.

Consequences of unmanaged dry mouth include caries, halitosis and oral infections.

The Biotène patented salivary LP3 enzyme system

The Biotène formulation supplements natural saliva, providing some of the missing salivary enzymes and proteins in patients with xerostomia and hyposalivation to replenish dry mouths.

The Biotène system allows patients to choose appropriate products to fit in with their lifestyles:

Products specially formulated for dry mouth:
- Biotène Oral Balance Saliva Replacement Gel
- Biotène Oral Balance Liquid.

Hygiene Products:
- Biotène Dry Mouth Toothpaste
- Biotène Dry Mouth Mouthwash.

The range is appropriately formulated for the sensitive mucosa of the dry mouth patient:
- Alcohol free
- Mild flavour
- Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) free.

The Biotène formulation:
- Helps maintain the oral environment and provide protection against dry mouth
- Helps supplement saliva’s natural defences
- Helps supplement saliva’s natural antibacterial system - weakened in a dry mouth.

Samples available from www.gsk-dentalprofessionals.co.uk

Biotène is a registered trade mark of the GlaxoSmithKline group of companies.

4. Dawes C. ‘How much Saliva Is Enough for Avoidance of Xerostomia?’.
Dental comparison website to bring ‘transparency to sector’

The first dental comparison website, which claims to bring transparency to the private dentistry sector, has been launched.

www.dentalpricecheck.com lists dental practices with their names and address. For more information, the dental practice has to submit details which include prices for treatments that the practice offers, together with details of the dentists working there, their indemnity cover and complaints mechanisms. On the basis of this, the practice is given a star rating.

The company was created as the result of a visit to the dentist by the founder Sadiq Rahman.

It claims to be creating transparency in a sector that has been heavily criticised by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

In 2005, the OFT carried out an investigation on the private dental industry and found unfair practices by private dentists in terms of transparency and said the consumer was limited on choice and thus at a disadvantage.

A spokesman for the website said: “The OFT report was published in 2005, seven years later we feel little has changed based on our own research. No real efforts to make the recommendations made in the report have been followed through as much as we would like. In our opinion, today there is no visible evidence to show that anything has significantly changed. However, with the launch of dentalpricecheck.com we hope that this will be a key turning point as we are certain that our comparison service will help both the public and dentists alike raise standards in the way of transparency. dentalpricecheck.com also addresses a number of other key recommendations that were laid out in the Office of Fair Trading Report.”

The website claims that dental practices will be able to advertise their treatments and fees for free to millions of people online and patients will be able to make bookings online.

The website is also offering a free trial use of its Market Intelligence Tool which could be of use to practices especially if they are intending to set up new practices. It will be free for three months and then dentists can buy details of website hits and demographical details of the area they are investigating.

Prestigious award for professor

Prof David Watts (pictured) from Manchester University School of Dentistry has been given the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Research Award.

The professor of biomaterials at The University of Manchester School of Dentistry has been given the lifetime research achievement award, which is granted annually to academics whose research achievements involve fundamental discoveries, new theories, or insights which have had a significant impact on their own discipline and who are expected to continue producing cutting-edge achievements in future.

It will involve Prof Watts spending a period of up to one year cooperating on a long-term research project with specialist colleagues at German research institutions, including the Universities of Jena and Munich, as an award winner he will also meet the president of Germany.

This is only the first international accolade awarded to Prof Watts. In 2005 he was the recipient of the International Association of Dental Research (IADR)’s Distinguished Scientist Award for prestigious research in dental biomaterials.

Fancy a cuppa?

A cup of tea contains fluoride which can help ward off tooth decay, according to a recent study.

The study carried out by public health nutritionist, Dr Carrie Ruxton, and colleagues at Kings College London, looked at published studies on the health effects of tea consumption.

She found that drinking three or more cups of tea a day is as good for you as drinking plenty of water and may even have extra health benefits.

The study published in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that tea protects against plaque and decay as it contains fluoride.

Tea not only rehydrates as well as water does, but it can also protect against heart disease and some cancers.

Experts believe flavonoids are the key ingredient in tea that promote health.

The website is also offering a free trial use of its Market Intelligence Tool which could be of use to practices especially if they are intending to set up new practices. It will be free for three months and then dentists can buy details of website hits and demographical details of the area they are investigating.
Inspirating teachers need apply

The search for this year’s most inspiring teachers in the UK’s dental schools and foundation schemes has begun, as the DDU opens nominations for its eighth annual Educational Awards.

For the first time, fellow teachers, as well as students and recent graduates, can nominate a teacher who has made the most positive educational impact on them, their school, or their foundation scheme. The deadline for entries is Tuesday 31 August 2010.

Rupert Hoppenbrouwers, Head of the DDU said: “We started these awards for teachers of undergraduate dentists in 2003 and their popularity has enabled us to expand the event to include teachers of dental care professionals and vocational trainers. Until now, student dentists and DCPs have enthusiastically nominated the teachers who have made a positive impression on them during their dental education. This year we are also inviting teachers themselves to get involved and nominate a colleague they believe has made a real difference to their faculty or deanery, their students and colleagues. We hope they will take up the challenge!”

Dr Gary Marvin, Marketing Director at DENTSPLY, the main sponsor of the awards added: “DENTSPLY is delighted to continue our support for these awards and is committed to continuing its strong heritage of investing in dental education. These awards reward and recognise the huge investment made by those dental professionals and academics who work in dental education and celebrate the fantastic talent that we have here in the UK.”

There are two award categories: Dentist Teacher of the Year (dental schools and foundation schemes) and Dental Care Professional (DCP) Teacher of the Year. The three finalists chosen from the nominations in each category will compete for the title at an awards ceremony in central London on Wednesday 17 November. Each finalist will be awarded £250 each and the overall winners in each category will receive £1,000 towards the cost of educational materials for their schools or VT schemes. Nominations will be considered across a number of criteria, including enthusiasm for their subject, student mentoring and the ability to motivate others.

Nomination forms can be downloaded or completed online at the DDU website (www.the-ddu.com/dduawards), or obtained from a DDU dental liaison manager.

The World’s First Online
MSc in Restorative & Aesthetic Dentistry

Master of Science in
Restorative & Aesthetic Dentistry

‘The Best of Everything’

Two of the UK’s most respected education and academic organisations have joined forces to provide an innovative, technology driven MSc in Restorative and Aesthetic Dentistry. Smile-on, the UK’s pre-eminent healthcare provider and the University of Manchester, one of the top twenty-five universities in the world, have had the prescience to collaborate in providing students with the best of everything – lecturers, online technology, live sessions and support.

Convenience
The majority of the learning resources on this programme will be online. The masters will combine interactive distance learning, webinars, live learning and print.

Ownership
The programme is designed to encourage the student to take responsibility for his/her own learning. The emphasis is on a self-directed learning approach.

Community
Students will be able to communicate with a diverse multi-ethnic global community of peers, with who they will also share residential get-togethers in fantastic settings around the world.

Opportunity
This innovative programme establishes the academic and clinical parameters and standards for restorative and aesthetic dentistry. Students will leave with a world recognised MSc.