GDPUK round-up
The GDPUK online community has been dominated by political topics says Tony Jacobs

The General Election, the formation of a new government and all the speeches and appointments that followed this has lately kept the GDPUK forum bubbling away. Colleagues discussed the prospectuses of the contesting parties, they argued over who they would vote for and why, and when the prospect of a hung Parliament loomed, they talked about who should join to form a government and the effect of the new policies on dentistry.

Early after the election, two major speeches could be extrapolated to make dentists and dentistry feel more positive about the future. Nick Clegg announced new ideas to tear up many of the laws brought in by Labour, and asked for people to tell him which ones should go. The new Home Secretary, Theresa May, spoke to the Police Federation and said that her predecessors had tied the Police up in red tape and undermined their professional responsibility. Now things would be different. She was not going to tell them how to do their job, any more than she would tell a surgeon how to perform an operation or an engineer how to build a bridge.

Feelings continue to run very high regarding the imposition of HTM 0105 and people co-operate to protest about it. Groups coalesce to write letters to their MPs, to the new health ministers, to Norman Lamb (formerly Lib-Dem shadow Health Secretary, well briefed and sympathetic towards dentistry, and now chief political adviser to Nick Clegg). If the politicians are to be taken at their word, and the words they use are to be believed (am I naïve?), then there could be a better future for UK dentistry, with less interference from Government-based edicts and agencies.

I would also ask though, does dentistry need a further layer of costly regulation in the form of the Care Quality Commission?

I urge those reading this to write to their MP and Nick Clegg, plus Norman Lamb, and encourage their practice colleagues to do so, as well as LDCs and BDA sections, to mobilise the UK dentistry to remind the new Government what we need them to change - HTM 0105 and the CQC.

As well as political topics, GDPUK forum writers and readers have been discussing aspects of practice management, ideas from the US of having a large, multisurgery practice with one dentist “running” from room to room and treating many patients with less downtime. The plight of snooker star Alex Higgins, who lost his teeth following radiotherapy for throat cancer and had friends helping to raise funds for him to have implant based dental restorations was also debated.

One colleague raised the issue of a patient with addiction to Lucozade! What would you do? Another had a patient (who had been previously interested in tooth whitening) appearing with grey teeth. This was not from tetracycline. One writer suggested that she might have had treatment in a beauty salon using chlorine dioxide, which can apparently have this side effect. Treatment options to help this lady were not discussed. Visit www.gdpuk.com.

About the author
Tony Jacobs, 52 is a GDP in the suburbs of Manchester, in practice with partner Steve Lazarus at 406 Dental (www.406dental.com). He has had roles in his LDC, local BDA and with the annual conference of LDCs, and is a local dental adviser for Dental Protection. Nowadays, he concentrates on GDPUK, the web group for UK dentists to discuss their profession online, www.gdpuk.com.