**News in brief**

**Sadly missed**

A dentist from Worcester has been killed in a motorcycle accident. Father-of-two John Bue from the NHS Dines Green dental surgery on Gresham Road, died in Worcestershire Royal Hospital, following an accident on the A4440. Councillor Margaret Layland, who helped Dr Bue set up his surgery in 2002, said her ‘great friend’ who believed in free healthcare for everyone would be ‘sadly missed’.

**LDC chair**

Mick Armstrong, a representative on the British Dental Association’s General Dental Practice Committee, has been elected as chair of the Local Dental Committees for 2010-2011. He said: ‘We would like to give the annual conference a bit of a kick’ and get dentists united as much as possible under this awkward new contract.’

**Free treatment**

A dentist in Edinburgh is giving free dental treatment worth thousands of pounds to children affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Bipu Krishnan, who runs the Scottish Dental Implant Centre in Edinburgh, has been treating the teeth of 25 Belarusian children from the town of Mogilev in Belarus. The Friends of Chernobyl’s Children organisation have brought the children over for a month’s treatment with Dr Krishnan providing free dental examinations and treatments. He said: ‘The children can have terrible teeth because of the conditions back home — their poor diets and the poor agriculture thanks to the radiation effects — and we have to try and counter that here. The average lifespan of those affected by the disaster is 50 years old.

**Record deal**

A singing dentist in Richmond, West London is awaiting the release of his debut album after securing a £1 million record deal with Sony BMG. Andrew Bain, began singing in choirs at a young age, went on tour with Cameron Mackintosh’s production of Les Misérables in 1999 and Bill Kenwright’s Whistle Down The Wind in 2002 and signed his million pound contract last July. He currently works two days a week at the Park Dental Clinic in Upper Richmond Road, West. To see him in action, visit myspace.com/andrewbainsings.

---

**Review links pay to patient numbers**

**T**he long-awaited independent review into NHS dentistry wants dentists’ pay linked to how many patients are on their books.

The Independent Review of NHS Dental Services, looks set to reverse the reforms of the 2006 contract, with dentists being paid for the number of treatments they provide.

Critics claimed that this has led to patients tending to have their teeth extracted rather than have fillings or crowns, as it is more profitable for dentists to take a tooth out, than to try to save it with complex treatments such as crowns or bridges.

Before the contract, dentists were paid per procedure, but after it came in they were paid to provide a specific rate of procedures in the coming year.

People in many parts of the UK have had problems accessing an NHS dentist since the new contract came in.

It is hoped that by linking dentists’ pay to patient registration, this will encourage dentists to take on more NHS patients.

Under the recommendations, dentists would have a ‘significant chunk’ of their annual income — possibly as much as 50 per cent — linked to the number of patients on their books.

Professor Jimmy Steele, author of the report wants to see dentists ‘more explicitly accountable’ for providing high-quality and long-lasting treatments (eg, fillings and root canals). He also wants to see more of a focus on prevention with dentists taking the time to advise patients on preventive care.

Professor Steele said: ‘This review is a vision of a better deal for both patients and dentists. It’s about making sure that patients can see an NHS dentist who will take long-term responsibility for their care.

We have recommended some significant changes to the system by which dentists are paid in order to support their work with patients to improve oral health, prevent oral disease and provide treatment of the highest quality.

The report also wants dentists to give a clearer definition of the patients’ rights upon registering with an NHS dentist and for there to be a simpler registration process with dentists, with information on local services made available through NHS Direct or the NHS Choices website.

Patients will still pay NHS charges, which cover about 80 per cent of the cost of treatment, but these may be divided into up to 10 payment bands, compared with the existing three, to tie them more closely to the amount of work done.

Health Secretary Andy Burnham welcomed the review and said access to NHS dentistry is already improving as new NHS dental surgeries are opening up all over the country.

He accepted the recommendations ‘in principle’ and said: ‘From the autumn, many will be asked to pilot the changes that the report has recommended. ’Recognise that more needs to be done to bring NHS dentistry up to the standards that the patient should expect.’

---

**First impressions**

Although it takes the whole team makes a new patient feel at home, it’s the receptionist who will first influence a new patient’s opinion of a practice.

---

**DENTSPLY Rotary Endodontic Team**

Embrace Endodontic Success

Mrs ProTaper Universal lies at the centre of most successful endodontic procedures in the UK.

Due to her unique shape, she cuts quickly ensuring efficiency, whilst maintaining flexibility whether you are heading straight or into a curve. She doesn’t need how experienced you are, whether you are a GP who hasn’t used her before or an endodontist, she’s high quality and easy to work with, ensuring success and consistent results every time.

She’s a true exception – let her be at the centre of your endodontic success.

* Dentsply Universal is the market leader with 23.4% market share (EU, US, CDN data). For more information, please call our Technical number or email us:

Tel: +44 (0)208 672 2213
Email: info@dentsply.com
Web Site: www.dentsply.com 
www.dentsply.co.uk
**Review links pay to patient numbers**

He added: ‘What is important now is that the Government pilots properly the changes it makes and engages fully with the profession and patient groups as we move forward. The BDA looks forward to playing a full part in that process.’

Prior to the report’s publication, Dr Milne speaking at the annual conference of Local Dental Committees in London, prior to the publication of the report.

He revealed that a big reason he took on the task given to him by the Government was that he was ‘very concerned’ about the state of NHS dentistry.

He revealed that researching ‘The Independent Review of NHS Dental Services’ has been difficult and he has had to deal ‘over the last six months with some very conflicting viewpoints’.

‘I have had to deal with a profession that is hostile to the reforms and you cannot have a good dental service if you don’t have happy dentists.

I was also dealing with an NHS that was telling me that more money had been put into it but there are fewer patients being treated.

I felt like a man on a tightrope trying to keep my balance and trying to keep my balance for you.

Of course I recognise that there are priorities for the NHS so there is a fixed pot of money and we have spent a lot of time thinking about these priorities,’ he said.

Professor Steele did have praise for NHS dental care and said: ‘There are many patients who are receiving outstanding care from the NHS and it is excellent value for money. I would rather have the NHS dental care in this country than quite a lot of the care that is being provided in the developed world.’

However, on the negative side, he found that ‘some patients are not able to access care and added: ‘I am really concerned that some of the best dentists are unable to provide the best care they want to provide.’

He also expressed concern about the ‘highly variable commissioning’ that takes place now it is all done at a local level’ and said: ‘There needs to be more robust performance management from the PCTs and better coordination of information and better data and improved use of data.’

One of the core reforms of the 2006 contract was the move to local commissioning.

So one of the real issues, since it came in, has been the competence of the PCTs.

‘Where it is done well, you have the local dental committee, commissioners and chief executives fully engaged in the process,’ he said.

He also dealt with the problem of UDA (units of dental activity) and said: ‘There is unrealistic remuneration for certain procedures and to have the UDA as a sole measure of payment is wrong’.

Another problem with the current contract is that the NHS offer is unclear ‘so patients are confused about charges and what treatments are available on the NHS’.

He also feels there is a problem with the image of dentists and called them ‘fairly unpopular’, second on people’s dislike list only to lawyers and politicians.

To reverse this trend, there needs to be ‘high level support for dentistry’ and from all political parties and said: ‘That commitment is really important’.

**Lack of IT funding ‘quite shameful’**

Professor Jimmy Steele, who led the independent review into NHS dentistry, has called the lack of IT investment into dentistry ‘quite shameful’.

Professor Steele, who has been carrying out research into the state of NHS dentistry over the last six months, spoke about his findings at the annual conference of Local Dental Committees in London, prior to the publication of the report.

He revealed that a big reason he took on the task given to him by the Government was that he was ‘very concerned’ about the state of NHS dentistry.

He revealed that researching ‘The Independent Review of NHS Dental Services’ has been difficult and he has had to deal ‘over the last six months with some very conflicting viewpoints’.

‘I have had to deal with a profession that is hostile to the reforms and you cannot have a good dental service if you don’t have happy dentists.

I was also dealing with an NHS that was telling me that more money had been put into it but there are fewer patients being treated.

I felt like a man on a tightrope trying to keep my balance and trying to keep my balance for you.

Of course I recognise that there are priorities for the NHS so there is a fixed pot of money and we have spent a lot of time thinking about these priorities,’ he said.

Professor Steele did have praise for NHS dental care and said: ‘There are many patients who are receiving outstanding care from the NHS and it is excellent value for money. I would rather have the NHS dental care in this country than quite a lot of the care that is being provided in the developed world.’