Murderer gets £44k in compensation for poor dental care

The Court of Appeal has reduced a triple murderer’s compensation to £44,500 after he sued over inadequate dental care in prison.

Steele has suffered ‘persistent severe pain’.

The court heard how Steele sustained damage to his teeth while playing rugby football.

Steele said in his submission that his pain and suffering was aggravated by the fact that he was locked up for much of the day and had nothing to do other than think about his toothache.

The court ruled that the original damages award was out of line with cases of other types by ‘quite a substantial margin’.

The Appeal Court heard how Steele’s fillings fell out at Belmarsh Prison soon after he was given his three life sentences.

Since then, while being moved between high security prisons, Steele has suffered ‘persistent severe pain’.

The Home Office appealed the £66,400 damages Steele received from the Dental Council, which rules whether dentists who fail to pay their annual retention fee (ARF) to the General Dental Council (GDC) are running out of time.

Payments must be received on or before 31 July 2010 if they want to remain on the GDC’s register and eligible to work.

No payments can be processed after the deadline.

All dental care professionals must be registered with the GDC to work in the UK, giving patients reassurance that they are meeting GDC standards.

For the third year in a row the fee is £96 for dental nurses, dental technicians, dental therapists, hygienists, clinicians, dental technicians and orthodontic therapists.

The GDC’s head of registration, Gurvinder Soomal, said: “The GDC has more than 57,000 DCPs on its register and we want to thank those who have already paid this year’s ARF.

‘We now want to make sure that every dental care professional who wants to stay on our register understands they must pay by 31 July. If you haven’t paid yet please get in touch as soon as possible. If your employer normally pays for you – check they’ve done so again this year. If you lead a team, check whether your colleagues are up to date. You can also let us know if you have decided to take a career break or not to stay on the register’.

Any DCPs who fail to make the payment will be removed from the GDC’s register and will no longer be able to work legally in the UK.

If they decide to apply to reinjoin the register they will have to pay a higher fee of £120.

If you have any questions, you can contact the GDC customer advice and information team on 0845 222 4141 or by email information@gdc-uk.org.

DCPs who fail to pay in time will be removed from the register, warns GDC

Dental care professionals who fail to pay their annual retention fee by the end of July will be removed from the register, warns the General Dental Council.

Dental care professionals (DCPs) who haven’t yet paid their annual retention fee (ARF) to the General Dental Council (GDC) are running out of time.

Smith-on celebrated its 10th anniversary

Smile-on celebrated its 10th anniversary in style aboard the luxury Thames cruiser, the Silver Sturgeon.

Friends and colleagues enjoyed a spectacular meal, while being entertained by a Jazz Quartet, on a trip down the Thames.

A spokesman for Smile-on said: “The event provided the company the opportunity to say thank you to all those who have helped the business grow over the past decade to become the UK’s leading healthcare learning provider.

Those who attended looked back over the journey the company had taken over the last ten years and shared some very special highlights.”

As the boat sailed along the Thames, partygoers took par in a charity auction of which the proceeds will be split between the three charities nominated by Smile-on’s directors: Cancer Research UK, Age Exchange and Three Faiths Forum.

The Smile-on spokeswoman added: “Smile-on offers practitioners a variety of courses designed to inspire, motivate and encourage clinical excellence in dentistry. The business is already looking forward to the future and hopes for another fruitful ten years of creativity, professionalism, enterprise, trust and most importantly - education.”

For more information about Smile-on and its healthcare education programmes please call 020 7400 8989 or email info@smile-on.com.

Dentist who faked death arrested

A dentist who is alleged to have faked his own death has been arrested in connection with a £1.8m fraud.

Police have revealed that Neil McClaren, 46, previously known as Emmanuel Parisi, was arrested in Peterhead, Scotland. Police said his arrest followed a complaint from the NHS and other financial institutions that money had been wrongly paid out following McClaren's alleged death last year.

In total, three people have been charged with conspiracy to defraud financial institutions in excess of £1.8m.

McClaren appeared at Exeter Magistrates Court with his wife, Stiliani Theodoropoulou, and sister-in-law Nikoletta Theodoropoulou.

Emmanuel Parisi was previously listed as a dental practitioner at St John’s Dental Centre in Barnstaple. The court heard that the former dentist faked his own death so his wife and sister could claim £1.8m in life insurance.

Prosecutors claimed McClaren and travel documents were faked as he had died while on a trip to Jordan.

Neither McClaren nor his sister-in-law applied for bail. It was requested for Stiliani Theodoropoulou, but was refused.

The case has been committed to Exeter Crown Court, where a preliminary hearing took place on Friday 9 July.

Judge Edward Bailey last year ruled the Home Office had been negligent in failing to give him the dental treatment he needed and awarded him £66,400 damages, including £250 for every week of toothache endured.

Lady Justice Smith, sitting in the appeal court, called it ‘a bad case involving persistent severe pain over nearly four years, together with more moderate pain for two years and some significant deterioration in the general condition of his teeth’.

Steele was jailed in 1998 for shooting dead ‘Essex Boys’ Patrick Tate, Anthony Tucker and Craig Rolfe as they sat in a Range Rover.
Editorial comment

Learning and growing

Dental Tribune has been in Glasgow recently, attending the International Symposium of Dental Hygiene. More than 1,500 delegates were registered, and this international meeting certainly lived up to its billing! Speaking with many of the delegates there was a real sense of coming together and learning from each other.

‘Perverse incentives’

In a recent exchange in the House of Commons, the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, Anne Milton, gave her response to MP, Sir Paul Beresford, who said the biggest disincentive in the contract is ‘its targets, its units of dental activity (UDAs), its clawbacks’.

Ms Milton thanked Sir Paul for ‘highlighting the perverse incentives in the contract’ and said: ‘It is absolutely critical that we take those out of any new contract’.

The British Dental Association has already begun formal meetings with the new dentistry minister to discuss the issues facing NHS dentists.

Speaking afterwards, Ms Sanderson said: “This was a constructive introductory meeting that afforded an opportunity to discuss briefly the issues confronting dentistry in this country. We look forward to continuing this dialogue and discussing in greater depth the issues that have been raised.”

John Milne welcomed commitments on the reform of general dental services. He said: “I am pleased to report that the new Minister has committed to continuing the reform of NHS dentistry in England. He has pledged to review the progress so far and then take reform forward. Importantly, he has also committed the new government to discussing change with the profession and to the piloting of long-term change.”

Peter Bateman also gave a positive verdict on the meeting and said: “This meeting provided an early opportunity to raise some of the key issues confronting the salaried dentists who treat the most disadvantaged patient groups. A dialogue has begun and I look forward to discussing how care for vulnerable people will develop.”

I really enjoyed the lectures I attended – watch out in future issues for a write-up!

The Smile-on 10th anniversary celebration was held recently on a luxury boat on the Thames. It was a fantastic evening, as the weather was perfect and the company... well it was pretty good too! There was a real mix of guests on board, all enjoying the occasion. There were a few surprises too, with Singing Dentist Andrew Bain entertaining the guests and a moving rendition of Rudyard Kipling’s If by actress Ruth Rosen. The aim of the event was both to celebrate 10 years of Smile-on but also to say thanks to everyone who had supported the company along the way. From the happy smiles on people’s faces as they collected their limited edition anniversary watches and went off into the London night air, I’d say it was mission completed.

Do you have an opinion or something to say on any Dental Tribune UK article? Or would you like to write your own opinion for our guest comment page? If so don’t hesitate to write to: The Editor, Dental Tribune UK Ltd, 4th Floor, Treasure House, 19-21 Hatton Garden, London, EC1 8BA

Or email: lisa@dentaltribuneuk.com

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NEW

Effect...
NI pay award ‘unrealistic’

Northern Ireland Health Minister Michael McGimpsey has announced the pay award arising from the recommendations of the Review Body on Doctors and Dentists (DDBB) pay for 2010-2011. He revealed that “there will be no increase in net income for independent contractor General Dental Practitioners (GDPs). However, the expenses element of certain items of service will be increased by 0.9 per cent to reflect increase in GDP practice expenses.”

Salaried dentists working in Trusts are to receive a one per cent pay increase.

The British Dental Association in Northern Ireland called the uplift to practice expenses “minimal” and criticised the funding of Health Service for dentistry in Northern Ireland as ‘unrealistic’.

Claudette Christie, BDA director for Northern Ireland, said: “The basis of this announcement is simply unrealistic. Northern Ireland’s dentists have provided health service care to 900,000 people in the communities they serve this year. Salaried dentists working in Trusts treat some of the most vulnerable patients in the community. For dentists to fulfil their responsibilities to these patients it is important they are properly supported.”

She added: “The idea that practitioners can reduce practice running costs does not reflect the reality of a situation where trusts face sharply escalating costs. This approach by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is particularly disappointing given their acknowledgement in evidence that in view of a new contract continuing to be someway off then efficiency gains should not be sought in practice in Northern Ireland.

“The controls are all small businesses at the corner-stone of communities across Northern Ireland, dentists are all too aware of the difficult financial circumstances we all confront.

“But as clinicians, employing highly skilled staff, they’re also aware of the absolute importance of maintaining standards for their patients and investing in the care they provide. Today’s announcement does little to support those aims.”

New dental training centre appoints leadership team

The new £9m University of Portsmouth Dental Academy has appointed its senior leadership team.

Sara Holmes, newly appointed Dental Academy director, is joined by clinical directors, John Wield and Sarah Hatridge, and David Radford of KCLDI has been seconded as director of clinical studies/senior lecturer in integrated dental education and multi-professional care, together with new business manager, Sophie Dampier.

The new Dental Acamly is the shared vision of the University of Portsmouth and King’s College London Dental Institute (KCLDI), and is due to open in September.

The collaboration will see final year undergraduate student dentists from KCLDI and dental care professionals from the University training together in teams in a state-of-the-art facility.

Sara Holmes commented: “We’re pursuing a model of health education where final year dental students work alongside dental therapists, hygienists and nurses in teams that will prepare them all for the transition to general dental practice. By teaching in a team-based primary care setting we’re breaking new ground in dental education.”

Students and staff will work with dental professionals and health organisations in the area in a joint endeavour to raise the oral health of communities in and around Portsmouth, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

The Dental Academy will also offer a proactive and dynamic programme of continuing professional development training events to local dental care professionals and there will be opportunities for new research on integrated dental team training.

Too much regulation says Dental Protection

Dental Protection is calling for less regulation, after being inundated with inquiries from anxious dental professionals.

The indemnity insurance provider has found there has been an unprecedented demand for its advisory services.

Its team of 48 dental-legal advisors has opened 3,700 new case files since the start of the year, as well as responding to almost 10,000 helpline calls over the same period.

Prominent within this additional workload are concerns about the rapid proliferation of guidelines, governance, scrutiny and accountability from many quarters, and the time and costs involved. HTM 01-05, PCT/LHB practice inspections, HIW registration and inspection in Wales, and the fast-approaching Care Quality Commission registration are all part of today’s compliance demands, and General Dental Council revalidation is not that far away.

In response, director of Dental Protection Kevin Lewis, has called for more reasonable and proportional regulation of the dental healthcare environment.

He said: “The controls are out of control. There is a widespread feeling in the profession – and a growing sense of anger and frus-