More funding for Scottish dentists

The British Dental Association has called for a £75m funding package for dental services in Scotland an ‘encouraging development’. The funding – which is split £35m for 2009-10 and £40m for 2010-11 – represents an increase of more than 17 per cent over the two years on 2008-9’s baseline target funding of £52m.

Priorities for the Scottish Government’s funding programme include new dental centres for independent general dental practitioners (GDPs) working in the NHS, upgrading of decontamination facilities in GDP premises plus community dental centres projects particularly in rural and remote areas.

Andrew Lamb, director of Scotland’s British Dental Association, said: ‘Specifically targeting this funding at supporting dentists to meet the challenges of upgrading decontamination infrastructure is an encouraging development and recognises the representations made by the BDA regarding the need to look at decontamination requirements in the light of existing premises.

Given the wide ranging implications that today’s announcement has on high street dentists, the BDA calls on the NHS Boards to take their steer from the Health Secretary and prioritise support for independent dental practices.’

NHS boards across Scotland have until October to prepare detailed proposals for ministerial approval on how they wish to spend their allocations.

Mr Lamb is concerned about ‘the ability of the Boards to meet this timescale’.

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon, who announced the funding package said the investment in primary care facilities and upgrading would help modernise healthcare services and give Scotland a dental service to be proud of.

She added: ‘Too many people in Scotland still don’t have access to an NHS dentist and we are determined to reverse the years of neglect and bring NHS dentistry within reach of those who currently don’t have access.

Already, we have seen the green shoots of recovery, with more registrations of adults and children across Scotland. We will build on recent increases in the number of dentists working in the NHS with a new £21m dental school in Aberdeen due to start training dentists in October.’

Liberal Democrat Public Health spokesperson Jamie Stone MSP is urging Health Boards to spend the funding for dental services on more dentists, especially in rural areas.

Mr Stone said: ‘While I welcome extra cash for dental services, let’s keep this investment in perspective. The overall health and wellbeing budget is £25,955.7m, so £75m for dental services is a comparatively modest cash injection for this vital service.’

He also expressed concern at the ‘relatively low priority given by the Scottish Government to training and teaching’.

‘It is generally accepted that more dentists is the answer to the crisis in dental services affecting many communities, particularly those in remote and rural areas, across Scotland. I would urge Health Boards to put their share of this funding towards training new dentists for Scotland,’ he said.

Inflatable Hungarian dental surgery tour

An inflatable dental surgery staffed by Hungarian dentists is travelling around the UK promoting cheap dental treatment in Hungary.

The £25,000 mobile surgery complete with dentist chair, X-ray machines and hi-tech equipment is treating patients in London, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow.

The tour is designed to encourage people to travel to Eastern Europe for treatment where major dental work, such as dental implants, costs on average £700 in Hungary – between half and one third of the price in the UK.

The company behind the inflatable dental surgery is Hungarian DentalTravel, which arranges travel for Britons wishing to go to Hungary for treatment.

‘It deals with more than 20 patients a month,’ said Cecilia Varga, the company’s marketing director, said the tour is in response to the growing demand for consultations in the UK as well as overseas treatment.

The PVC structure took a year to develop and the equipment has had to be adapted to cope with being inside an inflatable tent.

Normal dental surgeries have lead in the wastes to stop radiation from the X-ray machine.

To get around the problem, the company is using lead spers imported from Japan and a portable shield to stop the radiation beam.

New magazine for DCPs

Dental Protection, which provides advice and legal representation to dentists, has launched a magazine packed full of risk management information.

The new publication is called Team and will be distributed free to all practices employing dental care professionals (DCPs) indemnified by Dental Protection.

Kevin Lewis, Dental Protection’s dental director said: ‘Dental Protection is very pleased to introduce a new publication that will assist DCPs in their role as part of the overall team and very much as healthcare professionals in their own right.

We cannot work effectively and support others without being supported ourselves, which is why Team deliberately includes articles for practice managers and receptionists as well as GDC-registered DCPs.’

There will also be a newsletter available online.

‘This will provide a method of answering online the different enquiries we get from members of the dental team – because if one person actually asks the question there are probably dozens who thought about it but who didn’t contact us. These items will be totally anonymous of course,’ said a spokesman for Dental Protection.

GDC assessors

The General Dental Council is looking for 10 new assessors for its Registration Assessment Panels.

‘The Panels assess applications for registration from dentists in the European Economic Area (EEA) where their qualification is not automatically recognised in the UK. They also consider applications from dental care professionals from within the EEA and abroad. Dentists from outside the EEA are required to sit an Overseas Registration Exam (OBE), and are not assessed by the Panels.

The Panels are made up of a mixture of dentists, dental care professionals and lay people.

They provide advice and recommendations to the GDC Registrar as to whether an applicant’s name should be added to the GDC’s registers. Panel members also consider applications for entry onto the GDC’s Specialist Lists from dentists who either qualified outside the EEA, or are applying on the basis of knowledge and experience gained from academic or research work.

Appointments are for three years and assessors have the opportunity to reapply for a further term.

Application packs and more information are available at www.gdc-uk.org or from Patrick Kavanagh at pkavanagh@gdc-uk.org. Applications close on Friday 26th September 2008.

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CDO opens new dental practice

The Chief Dental Officer for England returned to his hometown to officially open a new dental practice.

Barry Cockcroft, who used to run his own dental practice in Rugby, officially opened Rugby Dental Practice which is run by Rodericks Ltd.

The service has been contracted by NHS Warwickshire in order to offer improved access to dental services for people in Rugby. The practice has two dentists who are accepting NHS patients, as well as a dental therapist.

Dr Cockcroft, said: ‘I am currently spending a lot of time opening new NHS dental practices around the country. It is a real pleasure to be opening this new practice in my own hometown.

We are making unprecedented investment in NHS dental services and we are now turning the corner across the country.

This year alone we have increased spending on dentistry by £200m.

Dr Cockcroft also paid a visit to his old practice in the high street where he worked for over 20 years.

Shalin Mehra, managing director of the new practice, said: ‘There was a shortage of dental provision in the area and we are extremely proud to have been chosen by NHS Warwickshire to provide general dental services to people in Rugby.’

David Pulsford, chairman of Warwickshire’s Local Dental Committee, called it an ‘exciting new development in Rugby’ and added it will ensure more NHS dental care in the local area.

Patients choose comfort

Patients choose a dentist who makes them feel most comfortable, according to business speaker Phillip Khan-Panni.

Mr Khan-Panni, who will be speaking at this year’s annual study day hosted by the Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP), believes dentists need to learn how to communicate with their patients better.

He will be giving advice on how to connect with patients, suppliers and staff and how to establish a rapport in those vital first few seconds when decisions of trust are made.

The event, which is being held at The Royal College of Surgeons of England, in London on 12 September, promises to explore the interaction between dentists and the patient and provide in-depth insights into the narrative nature of clinical cases, the pitfalls of poor communication, and the art of ‘speaking without words’.

Speakers Mike Clarke, Raj Ratan and Brian Hurwitz will also be at the event. C:

Communication, Conversation, Con-juring…As if by magic which is sponsored by Denplan.

The event is valid for five hours of CPD and costs £50, £100 or £150 for vocational dental practitioners, FGDP(UK)/Denplan members and non-members respectively, with discounted rates for dental care professionals and vocational trainee advisers. Contact the FGDP(UK) on 020 7869 6760 or fgdp@fre-seng.ac.uk to reserve a place.

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News & Opinions

How will the recent reforms affect you?

The patients’ safety charity AvMA is holding a conference exploring the changes in regulation affecting dentistry.

The event organised by Action Against Medical Accidents and run in association with the General Dental Council will also tackle the medico-legal issues facing dentistry, and examine how to improve patient safety and learn from mistakes to ensure a safer workplace.

Speakers at the conference include Duncan Radkin, chief executive and registrar of the GDC, exploring the regulation of the dental team and Dr Janice Fiske, senior lecturer of sedation and special care dentistry at King’s Dental Institute, discussing special care dentistry and dealing with patients with additional needs.

Carol Varlaam, a lay member of the GDC, will be focusing on revalidation for the dental team.

The event is designed for all members of the dental team, as well as those concerned with clinical governance, risk management, patient safety and complaint management in dentistry, both in the NHS and in private practice.

The event will take place on 9 October at Woburn House in London.

For further information on the conference and details on how to register, please visit www.avma.org.uk or email conferences@avma.org.uk or phone 020 8680 9555.

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Walk the Great Wall of China

Oral health charity Dentaid is planning to walk the Great Wall of China for its next fundraising trek.

The 10-day trip along sections of the wall will be physically demanding. Highlights of the trip also include the Black Dragon Paw Park, Tianmenmen Square and the Forbidden City.

Dentaid’s communications and fundraising manager Jenni Phillips said: ‘This trek is all about beauty, culture, people and above all a real physical and mental challenge, which will earn every penny of sponsorship raised.’

To take part in trekking the Great Wall of China from 19–28 September 2009, participants need to raise sponsorship of £2500 (plus a deposit of £150 and airport taxes.)

Denplan, one of Dentaid’s key corporate partners, is championing the trek by publicising it to its members and any trekkers recruited by Denplan will go towards its commitment of raising money for Dentaid over the next 5 years.

For more information on the Great Wall of China trek contact Felicity for an application pack on 01794 524249 or email felicity@dentaid.org.

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GDPs to declare involvement

Dental professionals registered with the General Dental Council will have to tell their patients if they are employed by or belong to a dental body corporate, under new proposals.

The General Dental Council is currently consulting on ‘Declaration of involvement with a Dental Body Corporate’.

Following amendments to the Dentists Act in 2005, any corporate body can carry out the business of dentistry provided it satisfies certain conditions. However, the GDC believes that in order to protect patients, those involved in Dental Body Corporates should declare that involvement.

Subject to consultation, the GDC wants to insert a requirement into its Standards Guidance to ensure GDC registrants disclose they are a member of, or involved with or employed by, a body corporate, particularly as part of any complaints process.

The aim is to ensure a patient has the information they need to make an informed choice and are able to pursue a complaint fully and appropriately.

The consultation period closes at 5pm on Tuesday, 11 November 2008.

For more information and a copy of the consultation document, please visit our website www.gdc-uk.org. Responses to the proposals should be sent to dbcconsultation@gdc-uk.org.

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Charity at Christmas

Dentists can support two dental charities this Christmas by buying their cards from Admor. For every card purchased ten pence will be donated to charity.

Five pence will go to the Benevolent Fund, a registered charity supporting dentists who are in need of financial assistance through grants and interest-free loans.

A further five pence will be donated to Dentaid, a UK based charity dedicated to improving the world’s oral health.

For more information or to purchase your cards, call 01245 554078 or visit www.admor.co.uk.