Get the right advice

As the work involved in obtaining or maintaining an NHS dental contract increases, the role of dental accountants in supporting dental practices is expanding, says Caroline Holland

Paul Kendall, National Association of Specialist Dental Accountants (NASDA) founder, was asked by one of his dentist clients for help in achieving an uplift to her PCT contract. She was worried she would be railroaded into accepting the contract in its initial form and wanted him to join her for a meeting with the PCT.

He explains: “The client had no idea how to negotiate and felt out of her depth. I was happy to support her at the meeting because I see it as being part of the overall relationship, to get involved with management issues.”

“Initially, the PCT did not react favourably to my presence but, as the meeting progressed, realised I was acting in my client’s best interests. I was able to point out that they were overlooking a period of maternity leave, which had deflated her income, which they were using to base her contract on.

“Obviously there was a charge for attending the meeting, but the client thought it was good value because I helped secure an uplift in the UDA value. Now she consults us on a range of management issues.”

A similar experience

Alan Suggett of UNW also strongly believes that accountancy is about more than compliance work. As a member of NASDA’s technical committee, he carries out the quarterly survey of good will values and helps clients with valuations and buying and selling.

He recalls attending a meeting with a client who wanted to incorporate. He was there to explain the implications and as a result, the PCT gave its blessing to the change in the dentist’s business status.

He concludes: “I anticipate that this trend will continue because so much is now expected of dental practices and they need to have the right advice at the right time. If the PCT is committed to access for local people, it should be ready to work with dentists’ representatives to make sure everyone involved in dental provision is satisfied with the contracting process.”

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