Keeping up appearances

Training your staff might be a bind, but it is an essential part of making sure your business becomes, and remains, successful, says Jane Armitage

Since August 1 2008, the General Dental Council (GDC) requires all dental care professionals (DCPs), whose name was on the GDC register on or after July 31 2008, to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD). This is so DCPs keep up to date with current practices and procedures, and also to make sure that best practice is observed and maintained. This is a compulsory requirement for any registered DCP.

The current legislation states that 150 hours of CPD has to be undertaken within a five-year period. Fifty of those hours have to be verifiable by a third party.

Verifiable CPD may only be classed as verifiable, providing it has met the educational criteria requested by the GDC. Within these, 20 hours must be undertaken in the core subjects:

• Medical Emergencies (10 hours per CPD cycle)
• Disinfection and Contamination (five hours per CPD cycle)
• Radiography & Radiation Protection (five hours per CPD cycle)

Verifiable CPD can be gained from other forms of learning activity providing the following criteria are met:

• Clear anticipated outcomes
• Concise educational aims and objectives
• An evaluation feedback form

The practice I work for holds annual team training days. During these days, we try to incorporate two of the core subjects, which are delivered by an appropriate training company. This is followed by a learning activity, which fulfills the criteria set by the GDC to enable the practice to issue verifiable certificates for the time duration specific to the training.

During this day, we will also hold our annual appraisals at which point a Personal Development Plan is produced. I then ask for evidence of CPD for the past year and give them a CPD folder for the coming year, which includes a study folder containing verifiable CPD with multiple choice answers a chart to record verifiable and non-verifiable CPD, ensuring that all their evidence of non-verifiable CPD is saved.

This I feel is a win-win situation. The practice knows that the requirements are being met, plus the DCP gains the appropriate hours, and can rest assured they have fulfilled the criteria.

I aim to hold this training day as near to August 1 as possible, my reasons being all staff are aware of the training day and will have been asked to produce evidence that their GDC renewal for registration has been paid for the coming year.

Gaining new knowledge
Dental receptionists and practice managers are not required to complete CPD; however, for a person to develop, it is still important to gain new knowledge.

Our receptionists collect their own CPD and record articles they have read on subjects relevant to their position.

Although this is not compulsory, it provides development. The majority of our staff, including the nurses, have taken courses on customer care, while senior receptionists have learned about leadership.

Care nurse co-ordinator is the path that one of our oral health educators has taken. From a financial aspect, this is the role that has created revenue. The private income increased by 50 per cent in the first six months. Both oral health educators have taken the Fluoride Application Course.

Managing risk
Health and safety/risk assessment in the dental practice are both essential factors that we all should be more aware of. Courses for both can be held house via an appropriate trainer. An insight to legislation concerning Health & Safety in my opinion is a valuable training area for all dental team members.

First Aid is a requirement and each dental practice must have its own qualified first aider. These certificates last for three years, but must be retaken before expiry of certification. This is usually a three-day course, and it’s a good idea to have two qualified members, which will allow for holidays and time off. Fire ma shall training is another useful course, but it is not compulsory.

I went down the Diploma in Dental Practice Management route, followed by a further two diplomas continuing to gain the assessors award. It might be a bind but team training is an essential part to ensure a successful business.

About the author
Jane Armitage is a practice manager and has almost 40 years’ industry experience. She is currently a practice manager for Thompson & Thoms, and holds a Vocational Assessors award. She is also a BDA Good Practice Assessor, BDA Good Practice Regional Consultant, and has a BDS Certificate of Merit for services to the profession. She has her own company, JA Team Training, offering a practice management consultancy service, which includes on-site assistance covering all aspects of practice management with a pathway if required for managers to take their qualification in dental practice management. To get in touch, contact 0114 2545586.

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