BDA fights the good fight

Dents up and down the country are eagerly wait- ing to see if the High Court is going to rule in favour of an appeal by the Department of Health, that gives health bosses the right to terminate dental contracts without cause or notice.

The DH lodged the appeal earlier this year after Eddie Crouch, an orthodontist in Birming- ham, won a Judicial Review which said that primary care trusts were wrong to insert a clause in the NHS dental con- tracts without cause or notice.

The DH was battling it out in the High Court, against the British Dental Association (BDA) which is backing Dr Eddie Crouch, as Dental Tribune went to press.

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Dr Crouch contested the con- tract offered to him but signed it in December to ensure he could continue to provide NHS care to his patients.

He said the DH appeal ‘must send shivers down the backs of all practitioners’.

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‘Botched’ reforms fail 1.2m people

More than 1.2m fewer people saw an NHS den- tist in the two years up to June this year than in the last two years under the old dental con- tract, according to figures from the NHS Information Centre.

However the data also shows that NHS dentists are carrying out more treatments for the patient they do see, with a rise of 1.4 per cent reported by the Information Centre.

The report, NHS Dental Sta- tistics for England: Quarter 1, 2008, shows that in the two years up to the end of June 2008, 28.8m people — which equates to 52.7 per cent of the population, saw an NHS dentist.

The percentage of people seen by an NHS dentist varied from area to area with a higher percentage of people tending to see an NHS dentist in northern strategic health authority (SHA) areas compared with those in the south of England.

The World’s Dental Newspaper · United Kingdom Edition

PUBLISHED IN LONDON

BOOK A U T I O N

One of the first books on den- tistry, written by King George III’s dentist, is up for auc- tion. Thomas Berdmore, wrote the book A Treatise on the Dis- orders and Deformities of the Teeth and Guns and the Most Rational Methods of Treating Them in 1779. It is bound in its original calf skin and is being auctioned in Derby. It is ex- pected to fetch £500. It con- tains advice such as straight- ening teeth using gold wire.

If that fails, the alternative was to ‘break the teeth into or- der by means of a strong pair of crooked pliers’. Children with milk teeth are told in the book to ‘chew upon coral, wax and suchlike bodies’ to pre- vent decay.

MBE award

A dentist in South Tyneside has been awarded an MBE for his ‘services to NHS dentistry’. Matthew Gill, a partner at Dean Road Dental Practice, was presented with an MBE by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace in London.

Mr Gill, from Whitburn, who has no idea who nominated him for the honour, said: ‘It was a special day, a fabulous experience and something I will remember for my whole life. I feel lucky and very priv- ileged to have received this honour; I would love to thank the person who nominated me as I still have no idea who they are.’

Prince Charles gave him a big smile, according to Mr Gill who said: ‘His teeth were very good, slightly crowded but very clean.’

Super surgery

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Health Secretary Alan Johnson has opened in England.

Yorkshire, is the first of 152 super surgeries that NHS England.

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Top-hole school

When it comes to scooping awards for being the UK’s best dental school, size doesn’t matter. Head of dentistry explains why.

Book auction

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Recommended reading
Clawback payments reach £120m

Social network site launch

DDU awards the innovative teachers

A trio of inspiring and innovative teachers won awards at this year’s Dental Defence Union Educational Awards.

Alison Grant at Bristol Dental School, won the award for DCP (dental care professional) Teacher of the Year. Ms Grant said: ‘It’s great to receive this recognition. I was first inspired to go into dentistry by the enthusiasm of a hygienist who treated me as a teenager and I want to thank her. DCP teachers are not just teaching students to pass an exam; we are teaching them to become dental hygienists and I believe that communicating our enthusiasm is an essential part of this.’

The award for Dental Teacher of the Year was won by Professor Dayananda Samarawickrama at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Professor Samarawickrama dedicated the award to his students, colleagues and school and said: ‘I have been humbled by this experience and I’m obviously very pleased to have won. My late father used to say that education is the best gift one can give so it is particularly important to me that I have won this award for my work as a teacher.’

While Stephen Brookes of the Oxford Deanery scooped the Vocational Teacher of the Year award. He said: ‘It’s very gratifying to be recognised by my peers for all my efforts over the past 12 months and the previous 18 years. I’d like to thank my vocational trainees, my course adviser and the Oxford Deanery. Having been nominated a couple of years ago, it’s wonderful to have actually won the award this time.’

Rupert Hoppenbrouwers, head of the DDU (Dental Defence Union) praised the winners and said: ‘Their commitment to dental education over many years and their level of experience is clearly crucial in enabling them to communicate effectively with their students and VPs (vocational dental practitioners) in the classroom or surgery.

They provide an informed and invaluable source of advice and guidance to young dental professionals at the start of their careers.’

The winner in each awards category received £1,000 towards the cost of educational materials for their schools or Vocational Training (VT) schemes.

The theme of the day was ‘Education, Ethics and Aesthetics’ and after the finalists’ presentations, Derrick Willmot, professor of orthodontics at Sheffield University and dean of the faculty of dental surgery and Richard Ashcroft, professor of bioethics at Queen Mary University of London addressed the issues of what is purely cosmetic dentistry and where aesthetic treatments may have a therapeutic outcome.

Nicholas Peacock, a barrister from Hailsham Chambers, spoke about the factors to bear in mind when providing cosmetic treatment, to help avoid a complaint to the General Dental Council or a claim.

Mike Penning, Shadow Health Minister, said: ‘These figures show, yet again, why we need to rip up Labour’s botched contract and move towards a registration system based on clinical need, one that safeguards our patients and prevents dental ill health rather than reacting to it.’ The BDA requested an amnesty for dentists who had completed a significant amount – but not all – of their units of dental activity (UDA) for 2006/07.

However the Department of Health has said it will not consider waiving financial clawbacks for dentists.

‘Botched’ reforms fail 1.2m people

However, while the number of people seen by an NHS dentist fell across all areas, figures suggest the number of courses of treatment delivered to patients by NHS dentists increased from the same quarter last year.

In the first three months of 2008-09, NHS dentists delivered 9.2m more courses of treatment, an increase of 125,400 (1.4 per cent) in the same period of 2007-08.

NHS Information Centre chief executive Tim Straughan said: ‘Despite the fall in the number of people being seen by NHS dentists, the report also highlights an increase in the number of treatments being delivered to patients who see an NHS dentist.’

Shadow Health Minister Mike Penning said: ‘These statistics simply unacceptable’ and said: ‘Patients have now to endure more than two years of a failed dental contract, and because of Labour’s complacency access is still continuing to decline.

More than 1,200,000 people have already been referred to the Government’s botched reforms. Rather than persisting with such a ludicrous approach, Ministers must instead focus on patient care in order to make warm words réalité.’

However Barry Cockcroft, Chief Dental Officer claimed that ‘the access statistics are old’ and said: ‘They cover a two-period looking backwards that does not reflect the extra £200m investment in NHS dentistry this year and all the new NHS dental services that are opening now.’

He added: ‘Our latest figures show that there were 655 more NHS dentists in 2007/08 than in the previous year. There are now 1350 dental practices opening all the time with dental companies as well as individual dentists bidding to provide more NHS dental services around the country. This proves our reforms are working.’