**BDA fights the good fight**

Dentists up and down the country are eagerly waiting 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 Birmingham, won a Judicial Review earlier this year after Eddie Crouch, an orthodontist in Birmingham, won a Judicial Review which said that primary care trusts were wrong to insert a clause in the NHS dental contracts allowing them to terminate the contract without cause or notice.

The DH was battling it out in the High Court against the British Dental Association (BDA) which had challenged the legal appeal saying such notice clauses are unlawful and unreasonable.

Back in April 2006, South Birmingham Primary Care Trust included a without grounds termination clause in Dr Crouch’s contract.

A spokesman for the BDA said: ‘The judge has retired to make his decision. We have no idea yet as to when this is going to be.’

The BDA has challenged the legal appeal saying such notice clauses are unlawful and unreasonable.

If the DH wins the appeal, PCTs would have the power to end dentists’ contracts with as little as one day’s notice.

**‘This appeal must send shivers down the backs of all practitioners’**

Dr Crouch contested the contract 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’.

**‘Botched’ reforms fail 1.2m people**

More than 1.2m fewer people saw an NHS dentist in the two years up to June 2008 than in the last two years under the old dental contract, 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 Statistics 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.

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**Book auction**

One of the first books on dentistry, written by King George III’s dentist, is up for auction. Thomas Berdmore, wrote the book ‘A Treatise on the Disorders and Deformities of the Teeth and Gums 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 expected to fetch £500. It contains advice such as straightening teeth using gold wire. If that fails, the alternative was ‘to break the teeth into order by means of a strong pair of crooked pliers’. Children with milk teeth are told in the book ‘to chew upon coral, wax and succhiike bodhes’ to prevent decays.

**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 Whiburn, 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 privileged 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 clean.’

**Super surgery**

The first super surgery housing dental and maternity services under the same roof as traditional family doctors has opened in England.

Health Secretary Alan Johnson officially opened the first one stop GP-led health centre in West Yorkshire.

The Hillside Bridge Health Care Centre in Bradford, West Yorkshire, is the first of 152 new ‘super surgeries’ – one for every primary care trust in England.

The new centres will open from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week and patients will not have to register to be seen.

The government claims that the super surgeries will have a strong focus on promoting health, particularly for hard to-reach groups, and on reducing health inequalities.

**Small change**

A PCT in Cornwall has wasted £50,000 on renting empty, purpose-built NHS dentist rooms over the last two and a-half years.

**Xmas credit?**

This Christmas the credit card will be swiped the world over, so it’s worth knowing what deals are out there before you start.

**Mr Dean**

Working in the Navy, launching dental courses, supervising training – is there anything he can’t do? Meet Professor Lambert-Humble.

**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.

www.dental-tribune.co.uk

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_The World’s Dental Newspaper · United Kingdom Edition_
The ‘bolched contract’ is forcing dentists to give back £120m to the NHS because all 2006/07 targets agreed with local health authorities.

Around half of dental practices have fallen short of the targets and will have to pay money back to their local health authorities.

The British Dental Association fears these clawbacks may put some practices out of business and could lead to more dentists quitting the NHS.

Figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by DPAS, provider of dental insurance that supports practices in order to fund practice-based plans, reveals that although thousands of patients are still on waiting lists for NHS treatment, five million fewer treatments were carried out in 2007/08 than were budgeted for by the health service.

In Leicester, for example, more than 25 per cent of UDLAs (units of dental activity) have not been delivered and 21 dental practices face repayments of £50,000 or more.

Across the country, 89 per cent of primary care trusts responded to a survey that found a total of 414 contracts were targets that were missed by £50,000 or more.

Peter Ward, the chief executive of the BDA, said that dentists who failed to meet their targets in the first year were likely to have failed to do so again last year, creating a ‘roll-over effect’.

He said: ‘Once again this highlights problems with a target-driven contract that contains one crude measure of performance, which has long been criticised by the profession and patient representatives.’

Quentin Skinner, the chairman of DPAS, said: ‘For those dentists who fell rather short of the mark, the future for them in the NHS certainly looks bleak.’

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

Dental 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 humbly 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 Deaneys 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 advisor and the Oxford Deaneys. 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 VDPs (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, Derek 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 issue of ethical concerns when treating cosmetic patients and where aesthetic treatments may have a therapeutic outcome.

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

Social networking site launch

A social networking site has been launched for dentists.

Dentist Network is a social network dedicated to the dental profession.

The site provides related content, discussion and practice, and users are encouraged to interact by providing and uploading their own video and picture content, along with polls, blogs and forums.

Dentist Network (www.dentist-networks.com) has already attracted keen interest from dentistry students using the site as a resource to study and learn from fully trained professionals.

Dentist Network has also joined forces with the International Association of Dental Students (IADS) giving members the chance to network globally over their common profession.

Tomaz Spindler, president of the IADS said: ‘Having the idea of the website as soon as I saw it, it is fantastic that such a resource has been created and will be a huge benefit to dentistry students worldwide, allowing them to interact and compare practices and procedures, as well as getting first-hand advice from those in the know.’

He added: ‘Our latest figures show that there were 655 more NHS dentists in 2007/08 than in the previous year. There are new NHS 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.’

Clawback payments reach £120m

The ‘bolched contract’ is forcing dentists to give back £120m to the NHS because all 2006/07 targets agreed with local health authorities.

Around half of dental practices have fallen short of the targets and will have to pay money back to their local health authorities.

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

Mike Penning, Shadow Health Minister, said: ‘These figures show, yet again, why we need to rip up Labour’s bolched contract and move towards a registration system based on clinical need, one that reflects the privately providing 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.

In the first three months of 2008-09, NHS dentists delivered 9.2m fewer treatments than in the same quarter last year, 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.’

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.

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