Editorial comment

This week sees the D-Day for registration with the Care Quality Commission and the new dawn of regulation. The process has been a turbulent one, which to be honest shows no sign of stopping. This is shown in the news front page, where by the CQC’s own admission to providers stated that it was not going to get through all of the applications submitted by this week’s deadline.

Even as we go to press, it is still unclear as to the fee structure practices will have to pay to be registered. Practitioners are feeling increasingly frustrated with the lack of information and are calling for the delay or abandonment of CQC registration for dentistry.

I am not against the principles of CQC. I am a firm believer in monitoring of standards and provision of a high quality service. However those who are being regulated need to have the highest confidence in those applying the rules. This currently is not the case. I can only see more discontent from both providers and the CQC if the situation continues the way it is going. I’m calling on both parties to make this work in a way that is of benefit to patients, providers and the CQC. Am I naive? I really hope not.

Not good news for oral health

The ‘Public Health Responsibility Deed’ published this week sends mixed messages on the Government’s commitment to improving public health and is unlikely to force the pace of change needed to tackle alcohol abuse in particular. According to an oral health charity, the British Dental Health Foundation is concerned that the voluntary nature of the pledges to improve public health are soft options and likely to be overlooked in favour of commercial considerations.

Studies in Scotland have shown that the alcohol industry completely flouts the ban on encouraging young people to drink and has sophisticated and costly campaigns to snare the young and encourage binge drinking. The industry simply has too much at stake and cannot be trusted on these issues with the nation’s health.

The BDHF points to the Government’s own statistics on alcohol abuse to justify a different approach to improving public health. In its recent White Paper – ‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England’ – the Government estimated that alcohol abuse costs the NHS £2.7 billion each year.

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