



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Dear Member

We are now four weeks away from the introduction of the Government's reforms of NHS dentistry in England and Wales. This letter is to update you on the BDA's views on these changes. For those of you in general dental practice, we have also enclosed important advice on the new contracts.

In January the BDA's policy-making body, the Representative Body, passed a motion which stated: *The British Dental Association believes that the Government's aims of securing patient access, improving oral health and raising the quality of patient care will not be achieved by the imposition of this target driven NHS contract.* At its meeting the following week, the General Dental Practice Committee called for an urgent meeting with Health Minister Rosie Winterton for a last attempt to alleviate the anxiety, confusion and chaos over the start of the new arrangements.

The BDA's view that the current situation is a shambles for both patients and the profession has received extensive publicity through national and regional media. We have said that the contract will put dentists on a new treadmill which means they will not be able to provide the care and time that they want to give to patients. These arguments have been widely reported.

We have serious concerns about the way the reforms are being introduced and have made representation to Government over the difficulties and anxieties many of you are experiencing, particularly in relation to units of dental activity (UDA) allocation and contract value. At our meeting with the Health Minister, we pressed for the contractual requirement to deliver UDAs to be suspended until the system had been properly tested. This request was refused. We have since written to the Minister asking her to reconsider our request and, at the time of writing this letter, await her reply. In Wales, the situation is equally uncertain for practitioners and we have also made representation on behalf of members.

We are bitterly disappointed over the Government's refusal to respond to these concerns.

The BDA will continue to make public our views and we thank all of you who have become involved in this publicity work. We asked Local Dental Committees to throw their weight behind this activity and many have proved highly effective in ensuring the media, politicians and the public understand the issues and the severity of the situation.

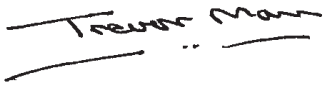
We will continue to give you the best support and advice available. For increasing numbers of you, the BDA website is proving a vital source of up-to-date and authoritative information, and includes material to help you explain the changes to your patients, for example, text for a leaflet and a poster. You can receive individual advice by phoning 020 7563 4161. For information about seminars on converting to private practice, please contact the events office on 020 7563 4590.

Uncertainty about the future and the repercussions of the NHS reforms are also being experienced by colleagues in the salaried services, hospitals and universities. Members working in the salaried services in England and Wales still await the outcome of their respective reviews. For those working in hospital services, the financial pressures faced by Primary Care Trusts and Local Health Boards are already having an impact on the provision of secondary care services in some areas. Clinical academics continue to experience pressures due to workforce shortages in their field. Advice on these issues is available from the policy team on 020 7563 4138.

These are difficult times for all the profession and for our patients as we are confronted with a contract that was imposed on dentists. We will continue to publicise and make strong representation about the difficulties you experience.

We remain committed to providing you with the support you need during this critical period and beyond, as you plan and make important decisions about your future.

Yours faithfully



Trevor Mann  
Chair, BDA Representative Body



Susie Sanderson  
Chair, BDA Executive Board



Lester Ellman  
Chair, General Dental Practice Committee



Janet Clarke  
Chair, Central Committee for Community and  
Public Health Dentistry