



## ***Regional European Organisation of the FDI***

### ***National Report on the activities of 2024***

***Country: United Kingdom***

***Association: British Dental Association (BDA)***

*Please classify your national report by following subjects:*

#### ***Changes in the association and its organisation***

The BDA is facing a major change at the time of writing this report as it is giving up its building in Wimpole Street. There is not currently a permanent new home for the Association, although it is hoped one will be found.

December 2024 saw triennial elections across the BDA's committee structures, and the newly-constituted committees are in the process of electing their Chairs and Executive Committees as well as their priorities for the next three years.

The BDA President from May 2024 to May 2025 is Richard Graham; the BDA President from May 2025-May 2026 will be David Cottam.

#### ***Trends and developments: - in professional politics***

2024 has been another extremely busy year in professional politics. National Health Service (NHS) dentistry, its workforce and funding problems, have been at the forefront of public awareness thanks to the BDA's campaigns and actions in the last few years. Dentistry was one of the key political themes in the July 2024 General Election, and the new Secretary of State for Health met with us within three days of coming into office. Since then, conversations about dentistry and contractual reform continue but are marred by concerns about the available public funds to improve access. The Long Term NHS Workforce Plan and specific dental recovery plan published by the last government are also being reworked. As the initial proposals were not properly costed and there was doubt about many of them from the start, we are waiting to see which parts of the workforce plan will be taken forward in the 'refresh', expected for the summer.

#### ***- in health and social politics***

The new government is undertaking a wide-ranging spending review which is likely to affect some aspects of dentistry. Beyond this, workforce issues are the main issue and driving force of most issues in health and social care.

### *- in educational politics*

There are a number of areas in the UK that wish to develop new dental schools. Setting up a new dental school is extremely complex both in terms of the legislative requirements to be complied with, and the funding to ensure not just the set-up but permanent financial stability. We are monitoring developments in this area.

### *- in the insurance system (incl. the public health insurance and private insurance schemes)*

The government published its intentions for a 10-year plan to save the National Health Service (NHS) in October and has since run a wide-ranging public consultation exercise. The new plan will be based around three main changes:

- moving more care from hospitals to communities
- making better use of technology in health and care
- focusing on preventing sickness, not just treating it

The BDA has contributed its views around contractual reform, workforce and education matters to the exercise.

## **Corporate Dentistry**

*position of NDA towards dental chains*

*problems with dental chains*

*possible solutions*

Dental corporate bodies are a reality in the UK; they range from small practices who have become limited companies, to small or medium chains of practices, to the big, sometimes internationally known companies. The BDA published research about the development and activities of dental corporate bodies in 2019. We do not have a specific political position about corporate dentistry in the UK. We provide advice to member dentists working in dental corporates on contracts and work arrangements and believe that the General Dental Council should start registering (and therefore regulating) dental corporate bodies in the UK. Where appropriate, we work with the individual corporate bodies or their representative organisation, the Association of Dental Groups (ADG); however we also hold different views to them on some issues. A more recent development is that some corporate bodies and their representatives have been vocal in supporting intense and easier recruitment of dentists from abroad to deal with workforce shortages. The BDA believes that overseas dentists make a hugely important contribution to dentistry in the UK; however, intense proactive recruitment is neither fair – as the processes to become registered are long, onerous and costly – nor helpful as they undermine the need to address the actual reason for the workforce shortages, namely the unworkable NHS contractual arrangements. We are concerned that overseas dentists recruited through the corporate networks are often not well-supported and sometimes indeed exploited.

*Changes in fees: n/a*



## *Information regarding promotion of the World Oral Health Day:*

*We provided a social media video on 'dental care is healthcare':*

<https://x.com/TheBDA/status/1902621533677482138>

## *Further information (activities):*

### ***What are your 3 main concerns?***

- Workforce issues, the related issues of patient access to dentistry, and the need for contract reform.
- Improving the work of the dental regulator especially in relation to fitness to practise processes
- The rapid developments in AI and its effects in dentistry

### ***3 points you would like to discuss***