

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

### ***National Report***

**Country: United Kingdom**

**Association: British Dental Association**

**Venue:**

**Year: 2019**

*Please classify your national report by following subjects:*

#### ***Changes in the organisation***

- The BDA launched a professional indemnity product for its members in June 2019. The product includes a contractual right to cover and a unique blend of cover with a financially secure insurer with member-focused 24/7 dentist-to-dentist advice. It is only available to BDA members.
- Peter Ward, BDA Chief Executive since 2005, led the development of the indemnity product and will be retiring from the BDA in March 2020. Martin Woodrow, Director of Member Services since 2012, has been appointed as the new CEO.

#### ***Trends and developments:***

- a) in professional politics
  - Following many years of conflict with the profession, the independent dental regulator (General Dental Council) has, in recent years, embarked on an improvement strategy which has included changes to its processes to make them fairer and more workable for registrants within the current legislative framework. The BDA continues its policy of support where appropriate while calling out issues of concern.
  - The reform of the contract for dentists working in National Health Service general dental practices is moving slowly. The BDA continues to discuss with government any results from the pilot practices that have been working in potential new arrangements in the last few years.
- b) in health and social politics
  - Brexit causes a number of concerns about the recruitment of health and social care staff, from the EU/EEA in the future. While current EU staff can apply for settlement in the UK, the government is currently devising a new immigration system, the detail of which has been discussed over the last year but has not been fully decided at the time of writing (February 2020). The BDA is watching all areas related to Brexit and the ongoing negotiations between the UK and EU closely.
  - The Government launched a long-term NHS plan for England earlier in 2019. This was followed by an 'Interim NHS People Plan'. The BDA welcomed much of the overall approach to workforce planning set out in the latter in relation to the future dental workforce. The document covers contracts, training, and workforce integration. It makes a clear link between contract reform and workforce planning, which had been overlooked in the first phase of the Advancing Dental Care project (ADC) run by Health Education England (HEE). The BDA also welcomed recognition of the importance of the Adult Oral Health Survey in workforce planning and commissioning, and the pledge to support the business case for future work. The Association remains concerned about a number of aspects relating to a review of dental training which is linked to the plan, however. We expect further information on any plans during 2020.

- c) in educational politics
- A review of the dental education sector is currently being undertaken from a workforce and needs assessment point of view (ADC). It is based on the realisation that the needs of the ageing population and the availability of the dental workforce are diverging significantly. The review is 18 months into a three-year process but while there are some concerns about the approach, there is little detail and progress seems to be slow.
  - The General Dental Council (GDC) undertook research into the preparedness for practice of young graduates. A report is expected for the summer.

## ***Corporate Dentistry***

**Position of NDA towards dental chains:** 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 but support the tenet of the Council of European Dentists' (CED's) resolution on the matter. 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.

**Problems with dental chains:** in early 2020, a small dental chain (Finest Dental) went bankrupt, closing its doors suddenly and leaving patients and staff who worked at its practices in an uncertain situation. This issue was ongoing at the time of writing (February 2020).

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

In 2020, we expect the results of a public survey on the oral health of five-year-olds to be published during the week of WOHD, and our communications will lead on this issue.

## ***Further information (activities):***

- The BDA launched *Health Assured* in September 2019, a mental health support service for members. Stress in the profession is currently one of the main themes in dentistry, and the Association is pleased to be able to provide this support to its members. It was also announced by government in October 2019 that the Practitioner Health Programme, a publicly funded support programme for doctors and dentists, would be extended across England and be made available to all dentists, whether they work in the National Health Service or in fully private practice.
- The BDA was pleased to secure a parliamentary inquiry into deficiencies in dental access, funding and strategy, and provided written evidence in the summer. The December General Election means that the health committee charged with the inquiry was disbanded and a new one is being formed. We hope that the full inquiry will still go ahead during 2020.
- The BDA welcomed official confirmation from Public Health England that the vaccination programme against the human papillomavirus (HPV) would start in September 2019 for 12-13 year-old boys, and called on government to redouble its efforts on parent education, given the drop in uptake among females and rising profile of 'anti-vax' campaigners.
- In September, the BDA launched a new toolkit to support the safeguarding of children and young people who miss appointments, often for reasons beyond their control. The approach recognises that children do not 'call the shots' on whether they attend appointments. The 'was not brought' pathway, 'WNB-CYP', was published in the British Dental Journal and is now available for all dentists and teams to use via the

BDA website. The pathway was first developed by Community and Special Care dentists at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals.

- The BDA is part of a cross-organisation working group on sustainability in dentistry.
- BDA Northern Ireland organised an *Oral Health Matters* summit at Stormont (Northern Ireland Assembly) in October 2019 which was attended by over 80 key stakeholders including dentists, public health representatives, health spokespeople from the main political parties, policymakers, advocates and charities. Following the event, oral health featured prominently in the Health Funding in Northern Ireland report, published by the influential Westminster Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. Among the recommendations contained in the report, is a recommendation: 'that the Department of Health commits to developing a new oral health strategy for Northern Ireland, in collaboration with the dental profession, to be published in draft by early 2021'.
- Early in 2019, the Health Secretary launched a new plan to meet the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The plan sets out the government's ambition to contain AMR by 2040. UK dental practices have made huge strides to make sure that antibiotics are used appropriately in oral health care. Dentists are nevertheless still responsible for 5.2% of all prescriptions. The BDA has taken a lead role in developing measures to help dentists to reduce dental antibiotic prescribing and has contributed to the Department of Health and Social Care's Human Health AMR Stakeholder Group, which has been developing this strategy and vision to address AMR. In December 2019, the BDA (amongst other organisations) encouraged dentists to participate in a new survey of antibiotic prescribing in dentistry.
- Across the UK, work is being undertaken to look at publicly funded dental systems. In Wales, piloting of a variation on general dental practice payments is under way, moving away from a system based purely on activity measurement towards a more mixed payment method, including a capitation element. In Scotland, the government is looking more widely at its public dental system, having published two years ago an Oral Health Improvement Plan. Consideration is now being given to various changes flowing from that Plan, for example in relation to care for older patients and the introduction of oral health risk assessment.

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

- Dental contract Reform in England and Wales, and underfunding of National Health Service dentistry
- Brexit and the uncertainties created by its potential effects on the regulatory and economical system underpinning many areas of dentistry
- Stress and burn-out in the profession