

LDC LANARKSHIRE CHAIR REPORT 2022/2023

INTRODUCTION

This past year has seen dentists across Lanarkshire adapting to the transition from pandemic to post-pandemic dentistry, managing as best we can to the increasing demands and expectations of our patients as they assume “we are back to normal!” Many dentists feel back on the ‘treadmill’, burned out with long waiting times and extensive treatment plans. Unfortunately, many dentists are leaving NHS dentistry to work in Private Practices/Plans. As a result, recruitment of NHS dentists and staff is at an all-time low and subsequently there is an access crisis in NHS dentistry.

Many feel increased workload and aggressive behaviour from patients is causing mental health problems amongst our colleagues and staff. Now more than ever, we have to prioritise self-care and wellbeing in our own lives and accept we can only do our best. We as a committee have been at the forefront of these issues, taking the concerns of local dentists to higher levels and offering advice and support to those in need of help. In September 2022, this committee sent a letter to the Cabinet Secretary raising these matters and highlighted the poor communication and a lack of urgency or clarity from Scottish Government to the dental profession. This was supported and signed by many LDCs across Scotland and raised at the Executive meeting the following day. As a result, we were involved in securing ongoing financial support.

The year ahead promises a new model of care for NHS dentistry in Scotland.

We hope as a Committee that the profession continues to have the opportunity to provide input into the future of dentistry, to ensure policymakers make the right decisions so that NHS practices can remain viable during these difficult financial times, in order to provide patients with quality NHS dental care.

COMMITTEE

The LDC committee is made up of 15 ordinary GDPs who meet 5/6 times a year. The LDC meetings follow on from the GP Sub Committee meeting and continued to be held virtually as we were unable to meet face to face again this year. The LDC is funded by mandates signed by Lanarkshire GDP'S and from CPD events we organise. The mandate is taken from monthly schedules (£2 per thousand of gross income). This helps fund important work done on behalf of GDPs and we were delighted to see a continued increase in mandate holders over the past 12 months.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

The following is a list of topics which instigated the greatest amount of debate and discussion over this past year amongst the Committee:

- DETERMINATION 1
- FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS (MULTIPLIER/BRIDGING PAYMENTS)
- ACTIVITY LEVELS
- ASSOCIATES & DENTAL NURSES RECRUITMENT CONCERNS
- ABUSIVE PATIENT BEHAVIOUR & STAFF MORALE/MENTAL HEALTH/STRESS
- FINANCIAL PRESSURES DUE TO INFLATION
- DRO REPORTS – LIMITED NOTICE
- OVERSEAS DENTISTRY
- PATIENT WAITING LISTS

- CPD EVENTS & STUDY GROUP
- APPOINTMENT OF NEW DOD & PDS CLINICAL DIRECTOR

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF LDC'S

Lanarkshire LDC are entitled to send delegates to attend the Annual Conference of Local Dental Committees in Scotland. Motions are debated and voted on by the delegates attending conference from other Health Boards. The motions passed at conference are discussed at SDPC. Motions proposed to conference included:

- SG urgently allocates targeted services and resources to address the lengthy waiting times currently experienced by an unacceptably high number of paediatric and special needs patients who can only be treated under general anaesthetic.
- SG revise the wholly inadequate fee structure for restorative items requiring lab work to enable practices to provide viable treatments and to ensure the survival of local dental labs.
- SG commission an independent review of NHS dental fees to reflect the time required to undertake treatments and related paperwork, the costs of materials and general practice expenses.
- SG commits unequivocally to increase prior approval fees in line with item of service fees.
- SG provides concrete support, in the form of funding and incentives, and plans for an increased student intake, to address the recruitment and retention crisis currently affecting all roles within NHS dentistry.
- SG raises the current level of VT trainer salary to reflect the increased workload required to provide adequate mentoring support and training for early years colleagues who have limited clinical experience due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- SG works with administrations across the four UK nations to implement standard, research-based infection prevention control measures which provide consistent and practical guidelines for the improved safety of clinicians and patients.
- SG engage with dental training institutions to provide additional, enhanced training to address the clear lack of clinical experience of undergraduate students - in particular the BDS4 cohort - due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- SG urgently reviews PPE measures and protocols within dental practices to reflect the scientifically accepted reduction of Covid-19 infection risks for patients and the dental team and to reduce environmental waste and expense.

CPD EVENTS

Over the year we have held three very successful CPD events;

- NHS Pension Update (Webinar)
- Partial Dentures (Webinar)
- Improving Dental Trauma Management in Practice (Face to Face)

RETIREMENT

I wish to record the Committee's thanks to Marion Stewart, a long serving and committed member of this committee for many years.

Marion has always been a great listener and an invaluable contributor to debates. Her years of experience in general practice has helped her advise and guide other members during difficult times and with complicated issues. Wishing you a long and happy retirement Marion!

GOODBYES

We would also like to wish Esha Vohra and David Core all the best as they resign from the committee. Thank you for all your input and contribution over the past three years!

Sadly, we are saying goodbye to Andrew Miller as he has decided to stand down as Clerk this year. We are sincerely grateful Andrew for all your help over the past two years! You have provided great support throughout our online meetings, webinars and study groups, couldn't have managed without you!

FINALLY

My final year as Chair has been a challenge. However, I am incredibly grateful to our Vice Chair, Christina, Andrew our Clerk and all the committee members for all their support and guidance throughout the year. Although this continues to be a difficult time for us all, it has seen dental colleagues come together, across Lanarkshire, form friendships, provide moral support and be a source of information and strength to each other. We hope this continues in the years to come!

I am sure that our next Chair, Christina Ferry will take LDC Lanarkshire to new levels with her knowledge, enthusiasm and passion for dentistry. You are all in good hands.

Good luck Christina!

Caroline Pryce - Chair LDC Lanarkshire