**LDC conference 2023 – Harrogate**

Agenda

The event took place over 2 days for the first time since 2019. It was held in the beautiful town of Harrogate and this year, NWLDC was able to take 4 members of the committee, Jeremey, Dan, Pam and Mike. The event was all about information sharing and learning about how changes to contracts across the United Kingdom were affecting dentists and their teams.

Day 1 – Thursday

We had the initial introduction by Mark Green, chair of this year’s conference who, as a practicing GDP in the north of England was able to give a clear position as to the developments of contract change in England and the effects it has had on the workforce. The alteration in UDA weighting has still been unable to cover up the failing of the broken UDA system and practices continue to struggle to hit targets as well as accept new patients.

Shawn Charlwood – Chair of GDPC

Shawn spoke more strategically around dealing with government and the department of health. He made clear the lack of engagement from both parties’ event though he has presented clear evidence to the health select committee earlier in the year. He spoke specifically on the situation in England and made clear that the statistics for practices leaving and reducing their NHS contracts was something that had not been seen in a generation. He was also clear that, at present, there was little chance of a breakthrough and that was more to do with the political landscape we are facing and the fact the current government was unwilling to address the pay discrepancy we are all facing on the NHS and the likely uplift would be no more that 5%, at best.

Presentation from the Nations

We heard from Ciara Gallagher from NI who spoke clearly and concisely about the state of NHS care in Northern Ireland. The issues are no better there, and they are also seeing a huge shift in provision from NHS to private. The contract is unable to be dealt with at all at present as their in no sitting government in Stormont.

Wales was represented by Russell Gidney and he emphasised the point that there is a huge discrepancy from what is actually happening on the ground and want the health minister reports. Discussions are year to commence with the Welsh assembly over the contract reform or system change but they hope to be completed within the next 6 months. Something that Russell does not feel is realistic.

Charlotte Waite soke on behalf on the Scottish GDPC as director of BDA Scotland. Charlotte, being brand new to post, was clear that their fee per item system is no longer fit for purpose and access continues to be a huge problem. They are also having governmental   
issues with the Scottish nationals having internal struggles so again does not feel that dentistry is especially high on the priority list.

Motions

Throughout the conference the LDCs were able to submit motions to the floor for debate and consideration. North Wales LDC submitted the following motion:

**This Conference calls for the complete removal of NHS dental targets for the contract year 2023-24 in Wales and for that to remain until a new and negotiated contract is provided by Welsh Government that demonstrates robust and well thought out metrics that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based (SMART).**

Wales

Supporting statement:

*It has become clear to all that the current reform system has a limited basis in evidence and is responsible in part for the exodus of practitioners and practices from the NHS. It has demonstrated that the time previously used for treatment is now being eroded by more and more data collection and with the lack of clarity from Government, software companies continue to provide quick fixes to changes rather than being given time to develop more effective and longer-term solutions. This motion directly calls on Welsh Government to stop developing a contract on the hoof and to sit down with the profession over the next few months to create something that is fit for the post-covid era. Whilst this process is being undertaken, there should be no hard targets to achieve, and Health Boards should be allowed to work with providers to support their recovery from the pandemic in a positive and transparent way.*

The motion was carried, thankfully but the Welsh contingent that, unfortunately, only number 5 voting persons.

Friday

We Heard from Lord Toby Harris, Chair of the GDC, on how the demands of dentistry were being met by the regulator and how they are endeavouring the streamline systems and processes, including the FTP process. This was followed by a presentation from Sara Hurley and Jason Wong, CDO and dept CDO from England, we seemed to have a different perspective from the room on how the NHS was working in England. MS Hurley also made clear that she was stepping down from her role and wished the negotiation team all the best for the future. They did show the plans for the new contract reform in England base of risk and need which was interesting having been a part of the Welsh program for over 5 years.

There was a fascinating talk by Brian MacGregor from the Regional council of the BMA and yes, doctors are feeling the pain to. He discussed the pay issues and disparity amongst colleagues, the recruitment crisis they are suffering along with the lack of consultants and the increase in retirements they are seeing. It certainly left the room feeling very empathetic with our medical colleagues.

Further elections were held for positions in conference and other representative and the final presentation was given by Amanda Bloor from Humber and North Yorkshire integrated health board (same as an OHB effectively). Although yet to fully begin her post, she discussed commissioning and the importance of local commissioning and flexibility. This being something of great interest to us in North Wales.

**Summary**

The event was certainly a success in terms of getting groups together and sharing experiences and ideas. The one issues was the lack of Welsh colleagues at the event. To make a concerted different for our patients, teams and colleagues, we need to have a full complement of officers from each of the LDCS. This is something that needs to be fed back to WGDPC and encourage LDCs to send their representative in order that votes, and opinions can be discussed and debated in a more consensual manner.

Next year the meeting will also be held over 2 days in Brighton and the chair elect is Agi Tarnowski.

Please find below a link to all motions passed during the conference this year:

<https://www.ldcuk.org/documents/current-year/download-file?path=2023_LDC_Conference_motions_carried.pdf>

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