



Mr Tom Ferris  
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**By email**

29 March 2021

Dear Tom

Thank you for the constructive discussion on 9 December last year. Both of our committees have met recently and agreed that we should contact you again about various issues. These are in addition to the issues we raised in BDA Scotland's letter to the Minister for Public Health and Sport on 10 March.

Dental general anaesthetic services

Both the Scottish Public Dental Service Committee (SPDSC) and Scottish Hospital Dentists Reference Group (SHDRG) continue to be concerned that due to the current lockdown, routine paediatric extractions under general anaesthetic (GA) have ceased in many NHS Boards. Lengthy waiting times means there is now a huge backlog of unmet dental care need and it could be many months (perhaps years) before this backlog is cleared.

SPDSC members suggested that waiting lists could be cleared with the help of additional sessions by PDS colleagues, however there was no mechanism to pay PDS staff overtime to allow this to happen. We urge the Scottish Government to work with Boards to find a solution to this situation.

PDS morale and capacity concerns

Our recent BDA survey highlighted a number of concerns relating to the morale of PDS dentists in Scotland. 2020 was a challenging year for us all and we see this reflected in the low morale reported by our colleagues in the service.

- Over a third of PDS dentists in Scotland (35%) would not recommend a career as a community dentist
- Less than two thirds (65%) of PDS dentists said they planned to continue practising as a community dentist in the next 5 years
- Almost one third (32%) also intended to retire during this time
- 70% said their morale was lower than a year ago
- 57% of PDS dentists reported that their morale was either low or very low – the highest percentage for low morale in the UK
- Overall job satisfaction (65%) was the highest among UK countries, but PDS dentists in Scotland reported the largest reduction in job satisfaction in 2020

- While PDS dentists reported the highest job security in the UK (78%), only 41% (the lowest in the UK) said that their pay was fair
- Motivation appears to be particularly low among PDS dentists in Scotland, with colleagues having the lowest levels in the UK for various measures including never or rarely being enthusiastic about their job (16%).

If these issues of low morale are not tackled, then we may see considerable attrition from the service in the years to come as experienced and skilled dentists are lost to the profession. Strategic workforce planning is vital for the PDS and all other branches of the dental profession.

#### Additional items for the SDR

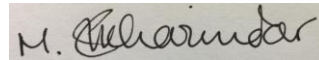
SHDRG members are concerned that inappropriate referrals to hospitals may result in hospital services being overwhelmed. We are therefore keen to contribute to discussions on the future of NHS dentistry, including the establishment of a new long-term funding model, to ensure that it reflects all branches of the profession. The Scottish Paediatric Dentistry Group (SPDG) has already approached the Scottish Government to request additional items for the current SDR such as children's silver diamine fluoride application to arrest caries, as this was recognised as a potential measure to reduce pressure on waiting lists.

We look forward to hearing from you about the above issues, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you again soon.

Yours sincerely



Graham Smith  
Chair, BDA Scottish Public  
Dental Service Committee



Manar Elkhazindar  
Lead, Scottish Hospital Dentists  
Reference Group