

LDC CONFERENCE REPORT

MANCHESTER 16/17TH JUNE 2016

This year's annual LDC Conference took place in Manchester and was a success with excellent speakers and changes which made it a more manageable and productive two day event. The introduction of iPads for all to view presentations and vote on has brought us up to date with technology at last.

All the speakers' presentations are available on the LDC Website. Even though the minister, Alastair Burt, pulled out at the eleventh hour, Tony Grime from PCSE, Sara Hurley the CDO and Matthew Hill from the GDC were worth the journey. Nick Stolls, the Conference Chair, was kept busy managing the queues at the microphones as there were a lot of delegates with questions. The speakers all answered candidly what questions they could and Sara Hurley stayed til the close of Conference answering questions and mingling with delegates.

The opening speaker was Henrik Overgaard-Neilsen, Chair of GDPC at the BDA. He led us through a presentation on the current prototypes, of which there are 82 (3 salaried, 58 rolled on from the pilots and 21 from UDA system), he clearly favours Blend B, which has the higher capitation element. He introduced MPIG (minimum practice income guarantee) into the debate and stressed that prevention was an activity, discussed the risks of DQOF and claw backs. It has been debated at GDPC meetings that NHS dental practices are being used as tax collectors for the government and alternatives are being sought. The prevalence of caries in adults has decreased over the last 11 years.....thanks to the continuing good work of the dental profession not the government!

Tony Grime from PCSE followed, that afternoon, and he was very careful to stress that he only worked for the PCSE side of Capita not Compass. (Compass which is having so many "fixes" it might actually be fit for purpose one day!) PCSE is aiming to answer 80% of calls within 3 minutes. Hopefully they will sort out their stock levels and we will all see Citysprint vans approaching before we actually run out of supplies. The question was asked ...will we one day be charged for stationery supplies? It went unanswered.

Motions were debated and voted throughout the two days the majority were passed 21, 1 unanimously and 6 defeated. Passed unanimously was motion 22 proposed by Enfield & Haringey LDC:

"This Conference demands that when new software is developed for the NHS all contractors dependent on that software should be automatically indemnified against financial penalty or breach notice until an agreed period following either introduction of the software or agreement that the software is fit for purpose."

Food.....Catering for dentists must be fun! Can't complain as it was all very palatable this year. The after dinner speaker was Stephen Hancocks OBE, who came out with some hilarious jokes and some very Mancunian humour....at one particular celebrity's expense! There is a cocktail in his honour served

on a strip of Astroturf! Nick Stolls, conference chair, delivered a brilliant end of dinner speech that really laid out the key issues for dentists and was received with a thunderous applause and many favourable comments by delegates the following day.

Next morning, back to work. Elections and motions! With military precision Sara Hurley CDO appeared at the podium to speak at 9.20 on the dot! As usual she presented a lot of material and issues that she is advising on currently. She referred to integration of dentistry within the NHS, FYFV, rebalancing regulation, The Guardian's article "The secret life of a dentist" and the looming elections. She feels that we the profession should be offering the Government some of the solutions. There is competency and desire at LDN level but the question is do they have the capacity and capability to answer the questions and the accountability to deliver the solutions! Nine months into her new job she is still talking the talk but is it time to turn that advisory roll into a more influential one? Representing the interests of dentists within the constraints of the CDO job spec was never going to be easy.

Matthew Hill, from the GDC, was next up and as he prepared for what many would perceive as a difficult audience.....He showed us that he has the desire to improve the culture at 37 Wimpole Street! He admits it is going to take some time to turn the GDC into a "high performing official regulator that has the confidence of the patients and practitioners". He was applauded for his views on the current "regulation" and how punitive it is and wants to turn this into a system based on learning and promoting good behaviour! He recognizes that improvements are needed to the FTP system and that we need more local resolution and better management of the GDC budget. This autumn there will be a major GDC consultation. He has volunteered to visit LDCs all around the country as part of the reformation process. Not quite what we were all expecting.

As usual there were presentations from BDG, DHST and the Ben Fund. All these bodies do extremely good work supporting dentists working for the profession and in looking after professionals in their hours of need. Kent LDC is as always amongst the most generous contributors and it is hoped that all LDCs will contribute £20-25 per dentist. Legal opinion has been sought on whether the Statutory Levy can be used to support these bodies. The regulations are above the guidance and they stipulate that the Statutory Levy can be used to fund these activities as it is "representing and supporting local practitioners".

Many thanks to this year's sponsors and organisers. Lots of work to keep GDPC busy trying to action the motions that succeeded. Next year we will be in Birmingham with Alisdair McKendrick in the Chair. Jo Hendron from Wakefield LDC following in the esteemed footsteps of John Milne and Mick Armstrongthey do breed them like that up in Yorkshire..... was voted in chair elect for 2017 after a close contest.

Elizabeth Hartle.

Kent LDC and GDPC member.