

LDC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017.

This year's LDC Annual Conference in Birmingham was tempered by the tone of the General Election....to which lack of sleep was attributed as we watched results coming in. There was an atmosphere of contemplation, an underlying acceptance that change is necessary and a need for a more integrated NHS. But there was an air of apprehension and early retirements may loom as we venture into unknown unknowns!

We had Claire Stevens, paediatric consultant from Manchester and President of BSPD, quoting Gandhi "...a nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members..." and Prof Nairn Wilson admitting that £50 per capita doesn't buy a lot of dentistry and reassuring us with "just remember when you think all is lost, the future remains."

Claire Stevens the first speaker opened by discussing the future of paediatric dentistry, and this was followed by a 'question time debate'.

Claire introduced the new initiative, Dental check by one (#DCBy1.) This has been designed to educate and create awareness for parents, the profession and collaborating partners to make screening of children by the age of one the norm rather than the exception as currently only 19% of 0-2 year olds attend an NHS dentist. It also aims to create capacity in the system, to make the system fair for practitioners and to measure progress. The initiative also aims to redefine the UDA to allow for acclimatisation of a child who may be un-cooperative for an examination to ensure children get into the system which allows key preventative messages to be delivered. The goal is to achieve 30% uptake by September 2018, which would equate to each provider seeing four 1 year olds!

The panel of the 'question time debate' included Sara Hurley, the Chief Dental Officer, Henrik Overgaard-Nielson, the Chair of the General Dental Practice Committee, Nikki Patel, a young dentist, Professor Nairn Wilson and Paul Worskett, a prototype provider. Topical debating issues included the progress of new NHS contract, remuneration, how new graduates see their role in the future of dentistry and the effectiveness of the general dental practice committee at representing the interests of the profession.

On the second day, Henrik Overgaard-Neilson gave an update on last year's motions followed later by John Milne, the Care Quality Commission's Chief Dental Advisor updating us on the regulatory role of the CQC and Nairn Wilson gave a lecture on the future of dentistry.

John Milne first gave an overview of what the CQC look for when they inspect a premises. The five questions that they ask include:

- 1) Are they safe?
- 2) Are they effective?
- 3) Are they caring?
- 4) Are they responsive to people's needs?
- 5) Are they well led?

The key themes highlighted with regard to safety were basic health and safety, cleanliness, infection control, medical emergencies and emergency drugs, mental capacity act, safeguarding, staffing levels and recruitment, incident reporting and clinical waste management. When looking at whether the practice is well led, the CQC will look at leadership, management and whether responsibilities are understood, information sharing, audit, quality of the records and learning from mistakes.

It was also pointed out that Health Watch has created a useful statement on dental complaints that can be given to patients to ensure that they are given the correct information and direction. Further information can be found at http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20161123_statement-on-dental-complaints.pdf

Nairn Wilson's lecture on the future of dentistry reinforced the importance of changing with the times to integrate with general healthcare provision and to utilise the potential of the current dental

workforce better by upskilling. He talked about dentists becoming oral physicians, carrying out preventative and minimally invasive dentistry and promoting healthy living and self care. It was suggested that other areas of healthcare could also be integrated into the dental curriculum such as transcultural healthcare, non-communicable disease screening, oral healthcare in extreme old age, oral and dental aspects of mental illness, and participation in practice-based research. He discussed reasons to be optimistic and the differences between the younger members of the profession and how they view their career paths.

Motions, motions, motions.....

There were twenty-six motions debated and only one motion was passed unanimously. *“Northants LDC calls for the removal of the multiple layers of legislation and red tape imposed on dental practices to be removed and replaced with a single method of inspection”.*

The conference condemned the multiple jeopardy suffered by practitioners who fall foul of one regulatory body.

Five motions were defeated after much debate.

- The immediate suspension of current prototypes.
- The targeting of current NHS dentistry to those who receive free care.
- That indemnity providers should increase the annual subscription in line with inflation for those with no claims in the previous year.
- That the GDPC should radically update its working processes.
- That affirmative action should be instituted to elect more women to the BDA PEC and GDPC.

Amongst those that were passed fifteen had more than a 90% majority. These included

- The removal of VAT on defibrillators.
- A referral service hosted on a secure portal and not via NHS.net.
- That contract reform should find another way to measuring activity with more time to deliver care.
- A reassessing of undergraduate skills to demonstrate a minimum nationally agreed quantity of each procedure
- An occupational health service for all dental practice staff that is free at the point of delivery.
- That training by equivalence should be equal in standard to Satisfactory Completion of Vocational training.
- That LDCs should be free to set their own levy independent of other LDCs.
- To have the CQC registration fees reimbursed by NHSE.
- That the NHS should adopt a transparent protocol which maximizes the return of claw back to the GDS.
- That fluoridation be considered by Local Authorities as a medium-term strategy of the NHSE Starting Well Programme.
- A vote of no confidence in CAPITA to process performer number applications in a timely and professional manner.

An excellent after dinner speech from the Chair of Conference, Alisdair McKendrick, designed to lift the spirits, raise moral and help us to inspire our young dentists, the future of the profession! Money raised from betting on the length of his speech was split between the Benevolent Fund and Dentists Health Support Trust. Kevin Lewis gave an entertaining talk about the changing times of dentistry. Our “unsung heroes” awards this year were Allan McCulloch from N Staffordshire and Marc Friedmann from W Hertfordshire.

Next year the Annual LDC Conference convenes in Belfast.

Liz Hartle & Cheryl Woods