

The British Association of Dental Nurses

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Chief Executive:
PAMELA A SWAIN, FIAM

Please reply to:

Mrs. H. Carpenter RDN
Dental Nurse Training Office
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Lauriston Place
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EH3 9HA

29th March 2004

Dear Mr Watkins,

Re Modernising NHS Dental Services in Scotland

BADN appreciate the opportunity to comment on the above document and would like to highlight the following points.

- Registration will ensure all dental nurses will undertake Continuing Professional Development and could therefore carry out an extended range of work, following appropriate training where necessary. Several post-qualifications already exist, including the Certificate in Oral Health Education. Dental nurses holding, or working towards, this qualification would be in an ideal situation to promote oral health and offer guidance and support to patients, thus helping to address Scotland's poor oral health status. Mandatory unit D8YL - "Offer information to individuals on the protection of their oral health and support them in doing so" – will ensure that all dental nurses have the knowledge and competency to deliver the correct basic messages. This complements a switch from a treatment-based service to one of prevention.
- Similarly, post-qualifications in sedation, orthodontics and special care dental nursing ensure those working within these fields have a greater depth and knowledge of the skills required when working within the oral health care team providing care for these groups of patients.
- Dental nurse training has undergone major changes in recent years with the inception of the Modern Apprenticeship qualification, available in some areas of Scotland. This is an ideal opportunity to promote dental teams working together to ensure the best possible care for patients. VT/GPT training is already proving to be beneficial to new graduates, as they have the support from more experienced members of the team and the SVQ/MA would work in a similar way – support for the student dental nurses from both their employers and work colleagues, and the training providers, who have undergone rigorous checks to ensure provision of a quality training programme. However, funding mechanisms for this would have to be addressed. Practices could be offered incentives to take on trainees and support their training, with the trainees having to agree to working within the NHS dental service for a set period following qualification.

- There is a U.K. wide problem with the recruitment and retention of dental nurses, the major factor being pay. The proposed bandings for dental nurses in the Agenda for Change document do not reflect the work we do. This will have to be addressed. The way it stands at present fails to demonstrate: -
 1. A career progression for dental nurses
 2. A fair reward for skills and expertise
 3. Awareness of statutory registration due to commence 2004/2005
- A previous BADN survey strongly demonstrated that the public perceives all members of the dental team to be suitably trained and qualified. At present, the funding for training does not appear to be fairly distributed – some nurses have to self fund their basic qualification as well as undertake this in their own time. No other members of the team have to do this. Following registration, dental nurses will have to show evidence of continuing development. Time and funding for this should be on a par with the rest of the team.

I look forward to hearing from you on the outcome of the consultation document.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Carpenter
President BADN