

Recd 02/04/04

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NHS Trust

Trauma and Related Services Division

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DEPARTMENT OF PROSTHODONTICS

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Our Ref: IBW/LG/01
Dictated: 16th March 2004
Typed: 17th March 2004

Mr Eric Gray
Primary Care Division
SEHD
St Andrews House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

Dear Mr Gray

Re: Consultation on Modernising NHS Dental Services

I am writing on behalf of the Staff Association of Glasgow Dental Hospital and School.

We welcome the fact that the SEHD are undertaking this consultation with a view to taking forward proposals for changes to the system of rewarding primary care dentistry in order to promote prevention, improve access to services and improve recruitment and retention.

There is no doubt that the major reason for the problems is the shortage of dentists and other members of the dental team. The provision of NHS dental services involves primary, secondary and tertiary care. These are closely inter-related and difficulties and changes in any one branch of the service impacts on the others.

There is an increasing number of patients referred to the secondary dental care services by General Medical Practitioners, hospital medical consultants and others because they are unable to obtain treatment in primary care. The secondary dental care service is available to offer advice on treatment planning and patient care to primary care dentists and to undertake consultant led specialist dental treatment where this is required. The secondary care service cannot and should not see patients whose needs fall within the remit of the dental primary care service.

The hospital secondary care services are undertaken under the auspices of NHS consultants together with, in Dental Teaching Hospitals, honorary consultants employed by universities. In many of the dental specialities in Scotland there has not been an increase in the number of consultants employed despite a significant increase in workload. In some regions in some specialties there has been a reduction in consultant workforce.

The further development of specialist (as opposed to consultant) services in general dental practice and the community dental service would enable wider access to specialist care for patients within Scotland.

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We look forward to hearing the outcome of the consultative process and encourage you to bear in mind the need to take note of the influence of the important and close relationship between primary and secondary services in patient care.

We would be pleased to participate further in the developments on these matters if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim B Watson".

Dr I B Watson
Chairman, Dental Staff Association
Glasgow Dental Hospital and School