

August 2012

e update



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Read all about it



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Oh crumbs



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www.apexezine.com

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Contact us

Association of Dental Administrators and Managers
3 Kestrel Court
Waterwells Business Park
Gloucester GL2 2AT

t 01452 886364
f 01452 886468
e denise@adam-aspire.co.uk

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News

Free mini lectures offered at Showcase

Delegates can benefit from a series of complimentary mini lectures, sponsored by Oral-B, at this year's BDTA Dental Showcase in London in October.

Taking place throughout the show, which runs from 4th-6th October at the ExCel, the range of topics will include handling medical emergencies, CEREC and Computer Guided Implantology, and financial management for your practice.

The latest list of mini-lectures, which will count towards verifiable CPD, is now available at www.dentalshowcase.com

Also being staged is a range of live theatre demonstrations sponsored by Henry Schein Minerva.

Topics include "Hypnosis for dentistry" delivered by Dr John Butler and Sharon Waxkirsch from The Institute of Hypnotherapy for Medical and Dental Practice as well as "Fast, Cosmetic Ortho for GDPs" by Dr. Anoop Maini. Other topics include facial aesthetics.

More than 300 exhibitors and 10,000 delegates make Dental Showcase the premier event for those who want to experience the latest innovations in the industry, make contacts and earn CPD. Admission is free, but a £10 on-the-day entry fee will be charged to visitors who do not register in advance. Register now at www.dentalshowcase.com.



Book a space on our exclusive free webinars

We have teamed up with The Dentistry Business with the support of DPAS, to bring members exclusive access to three one and a half hour webinars to be broadcast in the autumn.

Aimed specifically at addressing our needs as practice managers, the series, entitled "Your role in running an effective and efficient practice", is designed to help all those with management responsibilities to implement practical strategies that will make practice life more rewarding.

The webinars, which will take place on the evenings of September 13th, October 11th and November 1st, will cover three specific topics in turn:

- *Front desk and operational control* will focus on the identification and measurement of key indicators and help managers understand why these metrics are now so important.
- *Effective team equals effective practice* offers practical tips on how to optimise staff meetings, how to make good recruitment decisions and how to use

appraisals effectively.

- Finally, *Attracting new patients and keeping those you have* will present ideas for new patient scripts, give tips on how to handle complaints and address the vital issue of how to retain patients through the current tough economic period.

The webinars will be presented by the partners of The Dentistry Business - Lester Ellman, Carl Parnell and Sim Goldblum. Lester and Carl are both highly respected practitioners with experience of both NHS and private practice and Sim is a business executive with extensive knowledge of business planning, marketing and finance. Between them, they have encountered every type of practice situation, making them uniquely qualified to help those with management responsibilities avoid the pitfalls encountered in running a modern dental practice.

- **To reserve your free place at any or all of the webinars simply complete the online form available at www.thedentistrybusiness.com/adamwebinars or email sim@thedentistrybusiness.com**



Remote prescribing reminder

Following a recent announcement by the General Medical Council that doctors are to be banned from prescribing Botox remotely, the General Dental Council (GDC) is reminding its registrants that guidance on this was issued last year.

The GDC already states that remote prescribing shall not be used in the provision of non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as the prescription or administration of Botox or

injectable cosmetic

The GDC guidance was issued in response to concerns that registrants may use remote prescribing inappropriately and to achieve consistency with the approach of other healthcare regulators in this area.

The guidance can be found on the GDC website at www.gdc-uk.org

Corporate benefit set to grow patient numbers

Denplan is once again using its unique brand positioning to help drive new patients into member practices – this time through a new scheme designed to provide its corporate members with access to Denplan practices.

For over 10 years, Denplan's Corporate Division has been providing a range of employee benefit plans to companies nationwide. Denplan now has over 1,900 companies (covering over 180,000 employees) using its dental insurance products as part of their staff benefit packages. Denplan wants to encourage these employees to choose member practices and is inviting member dentists to participate in its Company Cover Network – providing corporate members with access to Denplan practices through an exclusive website.

All practices that wish to participate in this free network, and can offer a discount from their private fees to the employees of local companies with Denplan corporate plans and will be promoted via the secure

website. Practices are free to choose the level of discount they want to offer and Denplan will communicate with companies informing them of all the participating dentists in their area.

Steve Gates, Denplan Managing Director, said: "At Denplan we appreciate that these are economically difficult times and our absolute focus is on continuing to deliver good value and using our unique consumer brand to help drive patients into member practices. We've been growing our corporate offering for more than 10 years now, so providing our member practices with the opportunity to market themselves to this audience seems like a logical next step for Denplan and it's something we're very excited about."

For more information about how to get involved with Denplan's Company Cover Network, please contact your Denplan Consultant or call its Practice Support Team on 0800 169 9962.

Extra dates set due to demand for implant course

The Association of Dental Implantology has successfully held four one-day Original Dental Nurses' Courses in the past year. The popular course, which aims to increase the understanding of dental implantology to dental nurses, caters for the inexperienced dental nurse, offering them the knowledge and confidence to support the operator with surgical implant placement and subsequent restorative appointments.

Due to the resounding success of this course, the ADI has added a new London date: Saturday 13 October 2012 and has created an Advanced Dental Nurses' Course.

The one-day advanced course entitled 'Surgical Dental

Implant Procedures for Dental Nurses' has been created for dental nurses who are experienced in assisting with implant placement or have completed the Original Dental Nurses' Course.

The course aims to examine the dental nurses' role in assisting with advanced surgical procedures in implant dentistry.

The Advanced course is being held on Saturday 22 September in London and Saturday 19 November in Edinburgh. Please note both Original and Advanced courses are booking up fast. For more information visit www.adi.org.uk or call the ADI on 020 8487 5555.



Get in touch. Send your news & views to denise@adam-aspire.co.uk

Training & development diary

Date & location	Name of event & provider	Cost & notes	Contact details
September London & Leeds	ILM Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management. UMD Professional Ltd	Call Penny Parry on 020 8255 2070 for fees	email penny@umdprofessional.co.uk
September London & Leeds	ILM Level 7 Diploma in Executive Management. UMD Professional Ltd	Call Penny Parry on 020 8255 2070 for fees	email penny@umdprofessional.co.uk
September London	ILM Level 7 Award in Strategic Leadership UMD Professional Ltd	Call Penny Parry on 020 8255 2070 for fees	email penny@umdprofessional.co.uk
September London & Manchester	ILM Level 7 Certificate in Coaching & Mentoring UMD Professional Ltd	Call Penny Parry on 020 8255 2070 for fees	email penny@umdprofessional.co.uk
6 September Newcastle	Maintaining motivation – practice staff training. Denplan	From £75 for Denplan members. £50 discount for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/event-sandtraining
7 September London	Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (am) and Safeguarding Children (pm). Dentabyte	£75 per module. Early bird offer	www.dentabyte.co.uk
7 September London	Medical emergencies for the whole dental team	£100 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
13 September Your desk at 7.30pm	Front desk and operational control. ADAM webinar from The Dentistry Business	FREE for ADAM members (sponsored by DPAS)	www.thedentistrybusiness.com/adamwebinars
13 September Winchester	CQC Essentials – giving you the know-how & confidence to meet CQC requirements. Denplan	From £75 for Denplan members. £50 discount for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/event-sandtraining
13 September Cambridge	Maintaining motivation – practice staff training. Denplan	From £75 for Denplan members. £50 discount for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/event-sandtraining
20 September Nottingham	The receptionist – day-to-day challenges. Denplan	From £75 for Denplan members. £50 discount for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/event-sandtraining
20 September High Wycombe	Managing team performance – business training. Denplan	From £75 for Denplan members. £50 discount for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/event-sandtraining
21 September London	Child protection: the dental team's responsibility. BDA with Rosie Carter and Tim Newton	£100 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
21 September Manchester	Reception and telephone skills for the whole dental team. BDA with Heather Dallas	£100 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
22 September London	Advanced dental implant nursing. ADI	£95 ADI members, £140 non (membership is £37 p.a.)	www.adi.org.uk
27 September Peterborough	Managing clinical success. Denplan	From £100 for Denplan members. £50 disc for non-members	www.denplan.co.uk/event-sandtraining
27 - 28 September London	The essentials of staff management: a two-day intensive course. BDA with Alison Miles-Jenkins	£200 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
28 September Manchester	Working smarter - not harder. ADAM workshop with The Dental Business Academy	£75 for ADAM members, £150 for non-members	Jan@ thedentalbusinessacademy.co.uk
12 October Your desk at 7.30pm	Effective team equals effective practice. ADAM webinar from The Dentistry Business	FREE for ADAM members (sponsored by DPAS)	www.thedentistrybusiness.com/adamwebinars
12 October Glasgow	Reception and telephone skills for the whole dental team. BDA	£100 for practice managers	www.bda.org/training
1 November Your desk at 7.30pm	Attracting new patients & keeping those you have. ADAM webinar from The Dentistry Business	FREE for ADAM members (sponsored by DPAS)	www.thedentistrybusiness.com/adamwebinars



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Column

Venue is revealed

Here we are into August and the school holidays and we are excited to confirm our 2013 dates and venue for Conference. The theme is "Elements of a dental practice achieving platinum success" to mark the Association's 20th year. The dates are Friday 7th and Saturday 8th June 2013 and the venue is The Oxford Hotel.

Back by popular request we have Andy Toy who will be discussing clinical governance issues such as CQC and we have a speaker joining us from Wesleyan to give us all some advice about the compulsory pension scheme. We definitely hope to see you there.

It's also time to start planning your award entry for our ADAM Awards, sponsored by Denplan. The closing date is Friday 15th February 2013. The categories, like last year, are Practice Manager of the Year, Treatment Co-ordinator of the Year and Administrator of the Year.

We are pleased to announce that we will be presenting an

Welcome to my regular column. Each month I hope to keep you informed about ADAM news and to talk about issues that affect, annoy and delight us as practice managers and administrators. *Jill*



award to our immediate past president, Amelia Bray, at the BDA's Honours Awards Dinner in London on 21st November. Amelia has made an outstanding difference to our association and I am sure you agree that she is a worthy candidate to receive our Outstanding Commitment Award.

Hannah, Niki, Sarah and Janine will be staffing the ADAM stand at BDTA Showcase on 4th, 5th and 6th October. We always enjoy meeting and chatting to members, so please ensure that you pop along and say hello.

Hot spot

Welcome to the second of a series of features focusing on YOU. Each month we will ask a practice manager, administrator or treatment co-ordinator various questions about themselves and their hobbies, as well as asking how they came to be doing their job. If you would like to feature in this section, please get in touch with Denise at the address at the top of this page. You can also nominate a colleague! We look forward to hearing from you.

Name: Paula Ward *Age:* 35 *Town:* Grantham
Hobbies: When I'm not at work most of my time is spent with my family. I enjoy cooking, reading, socialising and of course the odd glass of wine!

Job: Practice manager

How I got my job: I got an apprenticeship as a dental nurse after I left school.

How I ended up working in dentistry: All through school I wanted a job connected to French Business Law. After gaining my A levels I obtained a place at university, however being a naive young village girl the thought of leaving home petrified me. I decided to defer for a year however during this time I started the apprenticeship and decided dentistry was where I wanted to be. I qualified as a nurse and shortly after began studying for a practice manager qualification.

What I enjoy most about my job: Being an organised person, I love the systematic approach I can apply to my work – not



always of course. I work with an amazing group of people and as a team we all get on extremely well. One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is seeing a treatment plan from start to finish with a patient, especially such things as smile makeovers. Seeing the delight on a patient's face is wonderful and actually knowing that in many cases we will have changed their life.

What is the most challenging part of your job? The ever-changing legislation and keeping up to date with things.

Would you recommend a career in dentistry?

Definitely, I find most people in dentistry really enjoy their job.

If you weren't working in dentistry, what would you be doing? A reception school teacher. I think this is because it was my favourite stage of my son's development – watching him start learning and building his own friendships – and of course him getting an opinion (which now at 13 is not so likeable!)

**Pencil this date in your diary
Friday & Saturday 7 & 8 June 2013
ADAM Awards & Conference**



**Fancy this trophy on your desk in recognition
of your hard work and commitment?**

**Stay tuned for the launch of the 2013 ADAM Awards,
proudly sponsored by Denplan**



Employment contracts explained

What is a contract of employment?

It's a collection of terms and rights that relate to a contract, service or apprenticeship. It can be made up of both written and oral terms. Custom and practise can also form part of your contract.

I don't have a contract - should I?

Everyone who is employed for a period of a month or more is entitled to a written statement of terms and conditions. You are entitled to receive this before the end of your second month of employment.

What should it cover?

Your contract should include basic details such as name of the employer and employee, dates when the employment commenced, the pay and holiday entitlement, the hours of work and a brief description of the work.

What else should be included?

Additional items are normally added in instalments and these should include entitlement to sick pay, pension arrangements, notice and length of contract (if not permanent).

What notice period am I entitled to?

There is a minimum statutory notice that you are entitled to receive from your employer. This starts at one week and then after two years continuous service equates to one week for each complete year of service up to a maximum of 12 weeks after 12 years' service.

How much notice do I have to give?

There is no statutory requirement here. It is specific to your contract of employment. Typically this will be one to four weeks but may be longer, particularly for more senior roles.

Is there anything else I am entitled to by right?

All employees have a statutory right to have access to a disciplinary and grievance procedure. These are often contained in a staff handbook. But not all policies with the



handbook will be contractual. This will be made clear within the text. It is normally the case that bonus and commission payments are made at the discretion of the company and are not guaranteed.

Can my employer make changes to my contract?

Even though your contract may indicate a right to make changes, these cannot be made without your employer going through a proper process. The safest way for them to do this is with your agreement. Sometimes an incentive may be offered for you to agree to the changes. At the very least they would have to consult with you over the proposals, explaining the business case and giving you reasonable time and opportunity to respond. As an extreme, an employer may choose to terminate your contract and offer re-employment on new terms, but this is quite rare.

What should I do if I have a problem with my contract?

Speak to your manager/employer. Most problems can be resolved quickly and easily. They will normally be able to provide additional information or the explanation you need but as part of your contract you will have access to a grievance procedure, which is another effective way of resolving more significant problems.

Richard Mander is a freelance HR consultant with over 20 years' experience in strategic and operational HR. He specialises in providing support to SMEs and aims to deliver cost effective, pragmatic and practical solutions. For more about this topic, or advice on other HR matters, contact Richard at www.manderhr.com 07715 326 568.



Don't be crumbled by cookies

We dare say that you have heard about the new EU Cookie Law, although you might not know what to do about it yet! In fact it isn't a new law at all; it was introduced in 2011 when we were all given a year to comply. Whilst a fine is threatened for websites that do not fulfill the new regulations, don't panic. Read this article so you understand a bit more about what you need to do and then contact your web support company to find out what happens next.

What are cookies?

In essence, cookies are little text files used by websites to remember their visitors. There is, of course, an option to block all cookies with your browser, but this has historically made some websites difficult – or impossible – to use.

The new law became enforceable from May 26, 2012 and requires website visitors to be asked for their consent to the use of cookies, unless a limited exception exists.

In its guidance to businesses the ICO says: "At present, most browser settings are not sophisticated enough to allow you to assume that the user has given consent to allow your website to set a cookie.

"Also, not everyone who visits your site will do so using a browser. They may, for example, have used an application on their mobile device. So, for now we are advising organisations which use cookies or other means of storing information on a user's equipment that they have to gain consent some other way".

The guidance continues: "You need to provide information about cookies and obtain consent before a cookie is set for the first time. Provided you get consent at that point, you do not need to do so again for the same person each time you use the same cookie (for the same purpose) in future".

How do I comply?

The ICO suggests various ways of obtaining user consent and encourages businesses to develop their own approach. Here are some of their suggestions:



- Use pop ups or similar to ask for consent
- Enable preferences that users choose when visiting your website as a means of gaining consent
- If you use analytic cookies to gather information about how people access and use your website, it may be possible to add a footer or header to a web page containing text
- If your website allows a third party to set cookies, it is more difficult to obtain consent. Initiatives that seek to ensure that users are given more and better information about the use of information should be used. Anyone whose website uses or allows third party cookies must ensure that the correct information is delivered to users so they can make their own informed choices

Ask your web designer to modify your website to meet the new cookie law requirements and to understand a bit more yourself try visiting aboutcookies.org



Petition to curb illegal whitening

We recently spotted a beauty salon offering tooth whitening just ten paces away from a dental practice. This led us to ask; has the dentist reported them, and if is anything being done? This month the GDC fined a beautician for illegal tooth whitening - but is it doing enough?

The GDC has successfully prosecuted a beautician for carrying out tooth whitening, because only those registered with the GDC - specifically dentists or dental hygienists and therapists working on a dentist's prescription - may lawfully offer tooth whitening.

On Friday 3 August 2012 Elaine Taylor-Valles of 106 Lord Street, 4 Westminster Chambers, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 1LF faced two charges at Preston Magistrates' Court. She was not registered with the GDC contrary to the Dentists Act 1984 and she unlawfully carried on the business of dentistry when she was not entitled to do so.

The GDC investigated after receiving a complaint from a member of the public about the manner in which her teeth had been whitened. During correspondence with the GDC, Ms Taylor-Valles admitted to being a 'fully qualified beautician', a title which is not recognised by the GDC. The court has fined her £600 on each of the offences above and ordered her to pay £3,277 towards the GDC costs.

We are told that anyone considering having tooth whitening should see their GDC-registered dentist so they can assess whether treatment would be right or appropriate for them. And we are encouraged to report someone we believe to be practising illegally by sending an email to illegalpractice@gdc-uk.org, by calling 0845 222 4141 or by writing to: Illegal Practice, The General Dental Council, 44 Baker Street, London, W1U 7AL

Online petition gains momentum

But this is one of only a handful of cases where those illegally whitening teeth have been brought to justice. Just this week we received an email highlighting a petition on the HM Government website, Directgov to 'Close down the growing number of clinics practicing dentistry illegally'.

It argues that there is a growing problem within the UK with the number of 'clinics' practicing dentistry illegally



and without the correct cross infection procedures. It says these clinics and shops are unregulated and do not have to comply with the correct safety and sterilisation requirements for the provision of dental services, which it argues is putting the public at risk of cross infection.

It wants any clinic that offers dental services to be brought under the remit of the CQC and subject to HTM 01/05 requirements that the Government has decreed as the minimum standard for hygiene for dental procedures.

The petition is being promoted by Adam Vernon from Systems for Dentists. He says: "At present they [the GDC] are investigating and prosecuting those whom they find, progress is slow though. Alas the GDC is understaffed and has a massive backlog of work. Because there is a regulator given the responsibility to enforce the law in these cases the Government is able to deflect any criticism and ignore the problem. Maybe if we work together we can persuade them that this endangerment of the British people should be addressed before someone is seriously injured.

"If you wish to protect people, please add your name to the petition to force these places to conform to the same cross infection standards as the qualified practitioners."

[Click here to see the petition.](#)



Websites look after themselves right?

How often do you update your website with fresh copy? What is the importance of creating a landing page for 'pay per click' campaigns? Do you have internal links on your website? Confused by any of these questions? Marcus Amberton and Faye Louise Harrington from Dental Design are here to help!

The importance of internal linking for SEO

by Faye

Many practice managers who have knowledge of the workings of search engine optimisation (SEO) ask the question- how many links are going to our site? With this, the majority of them would mean external links from other websites; they completely forget (or are unaware of) the importance of on-page internal linking too.

External links are a very important tool in the arsenal of anyone looking to optimise their site for search engines, however if you want to kick start your rankings, start with the easiest links of all - your own!

A good internal linking structure can ensure that your website is properly crawled by Google and other search engines, making sure that all pages are found and appear in the search. It also builds the relevancy of a page as a keyword phrase, in addition to increasing the page rank of an internal page.

So how do you create a good internal linking structure? At Dental Design we do this for all of our new clients during site build anyway, however for your reference, a good internal linking structure does not use images as links to pages. Furthermore, we use the footer to your advantage by adding links to your internal pages. It's a good idea not to make these links appear 'spammy' and to make sure that the links read well to the human eye, so not to alienate not only your customers but the spiders too.

In line links are also good if used sparingly, again be careful not to appear 'spammy' to your customers. Instead, be useful and direct readers to related content on your site which they may not necessarily have found otherwise.

By adding internal links in this way, you are likely to increase your PageRank. PageRank is a Google penned term, one way to measure this is the amount of clicks away from your homepage an internal page is on your site. Therefore, a page which is linked to from the homepage is more likely to have more weighting than a page which is four or five levels deep. Although, this does not mean you should link to every single page from your homepage, as this could look 'spammy' and actually weaken your page rank weighting.

To conclude, improving your site structure in this way will not guarantee page one rankings for every search term you are targeting, however it will help improve some of your rankings and make it easier for both SEO spiders to crawl your site to pick up new content and for your customers to navigate the website.

The importance of 'pay per click' landing pages

by Faye

When discussing potential pay

For further details contact D
or visit www.de





Wrong! Keep yours fresh - here's how

per click (PPC) campaigns many of our clients either don't know what PPC landing pages are or don't see the point in them as they don't fully understand their worth.

The purpose of a PPC landing page is firstly to entice the customer once they have clicked on your ad to either call the practice or to fill in a contact form. This usually raises the question of- 'doesn't my home page do that anyway?'. In this instance, no. This is because usually users are looking for a special offer or a particular treatment which was advertised, not a blurb about how great the practice is or photos of your team.

Therefore, landing pages should be to the point, with a much more simplistic eye catching layout and they should have clear calls to action- which your homepage (quite rightly) may not have.

Furthermore, landing pages are usually key word laden on page, as well as in the sites background coding with phrases which you are bidding for in Google Adwords. This is very important in order to increase your quality score. A definition of quality score provided by Google is:

“Quality score’ is an estimate of how relevant your ads, keywords, and landing page are to a person seeing your ad. Having a high quality score means that our systems think your ad, keyword, and landing page are all relevant and useful to someone looking at your ad. Having a low quality score,

on the other hand, means that your ads, keywords, and landing page probably aren't as relevant and useful to someone looking at your ad.”

The higher your quality score, the more likely your ad will be shown in a higher ad position and will have a lower cost per click. This therefore translates to more clicks for less money and hopefully more contacts from potential new patients if that is one of your PPC objectives.

The importance of fresh web content

by Marcus

If you don't update your business website very often, you may want to rethink your online content strategy.

A little more than eight months after launching ‘Panda’ an update to Google's search algorithm that puts a higher priority on high-quality content, the search giant has announced a new update that aims to provide users with “fresh relevant content and the most up to date results.”

This latest update is expected to affect as much as 35 per cent of all searches on Google, the company says. The Panda update, which had businesses scrambling to stay maintain their search rankings, was said to affect 12 percent of searches.

So how does this update affect your practice? The most likely impact on small-business owners will be that, in some industries, it will be near impossible to get visibility with a small, rarely-updated website. If the business is in an industry where there's regular news, where things change on a frequent basis, it looks like never-updated websites won't have much chance of being visible on a lot of queries.

One effective way for dental practices to generate fresh content for their websites is to create and frequently update a blog. You can write short, informative posts on topics such as industry news or news on your practice's new products or services. Another is to get online reviews for your practice both through Google and 3rd party websites such as Dentist Finder.



Bite-sized, coffee break titbits

Practices fair well with CQC

The CQC has recently published a report of the healthcare providers' performance based on their inspections up to 31 March 2012. Out of the four main sectors (the NHS, independent hospitals, social care and dental providers) dental practices scored the highest of all with 88% of dental practices meeting all government standards.

The results were based on inspections of 16 per cent of registered practices in England. The CQC inspectors did not identify any serious concerns in relation to compliance and did not need to take any urgent actions. 99 per cent of practices met Outcome 1 'Respect and Involvement'. 98 per cent of practices met Outcome 4 'Care and welfare of people who use services'. 93 per cent of practices met Outcome 7 'Safeguarding' and 94 per cent of practices met Outcome 8 'Cleanliness and infection control'.

Is your website compliant?

The GDC guidelines state that in accordance with European guidance, all dental professionals providing dental care and who are referred to on the website, must display their professional qualification and the country from which that qualification was derived, and their GDC registration number. Dental practice websites must also feature the following information:

- The name and geographic address of the practice
- Contact details of the dental service, including e-mail address and telephone number
- GDC's address and contact details, or a link to website
- Details of the practice's complaints procedure and information regarding who patients may contact if they are not satisfied with the response (namely the relevant NHS body for NHS treatment and the Dental Complaints Service for private treatment)
- The date the website was last updated
- It is important to regularly update the information on your website so that it accurately reflects the personnel at the practice and the service offered. A dental practice website must not display information comparing the skills or qualifications of any dental professional providing any service with the skills and qualifications of other DCPs.



- Do not use the word specialist unless a practitioner is on the specialist register. You can refer to someone having a 'special interest in ...'

If you are unsure about the compliance of your website, ask your professional indemnity organisation to review it for you.

CRB has gone online

From May 2012 all applications for CRB checks for registered managers and nominated individuals have to be done electronically. Applications can be made via both the CQC and Post Office website. See <https://cqc.disclosures.co.uk/>

Know the law

A new guide has been published by ACAS and the Equality Human Rights Commission. Titled, 'Managing redundancy for pregnant employees or those on maternity leave', it clarifies to employers the rights of women who are pregnant or on maternity leave when facing redundancy.

The guide outlines questions employers should ask when considering which posts to make redundant. It includes information regarding whether the redundancy is genuine, the best way to consult employees on maternity leave and how to decide the correct selection criteria and whether there is a suitable alternative vacancy. It also contains key facts about managing pregnancy and maternity at work. For further details [click here](#).



Feature

Making tough conversations easier

A survey by the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution found that 63% of managers and employees questioned felt their organisation was not adequately prepared to deal with challenging conversations.

How do you deal with uncomfortable issues? Do you find excuses not to call in a team member who is consistently late; do you face issues head on but find your meetings go on longer than they should without achieving your desired outcome; do you defer performance-related discussions because they make you feel uncomfortable, inadequate, or perhaps even angry?

Managers often make two types of mistakes when dealing with difficult conversations: the first is allowing a conversation to continue so that it unravels out of their control, and the second is not exploring a conversation enough to seek solutions and agreeing a way forward. Knowing when to expand a conversation by seeking clarification and gaining understanding and when to restrict the conversation in terms of determining what happens next, are fundamental to your success. But they are skills you learn through experience so if you aren't having these kinds of conversations frequently, they can remain difficult!

One-to-one conversations about personal, medical or emotional issues require a great deal of understanding and empathy but most of all, they require you to be in charge of your emotions and the situation, and that's where you could find trouble. Speaking from experience, you only need to achieve one successful 'difficult' conversation to feel more positive about the next one. Sure, you may always feel a bit squeamish – any form of 'confrontation' is challenging, but having a positive experience gives you confidence and referring to a checklist ensures you stay focused and in control.

Thankfully, ACAS has recently launched new guidance for managers, assisting them to make difficult conversations, effective for all parties. Here is their checklist:

- Set the right tone
- Explain the purpose of the meeting
- Adopt a calm and professional manner
- Reassure the employee about confidentiality



- Focus on the issue not the person
- State the issues and give evidence
- Tell them about the problem and give examples
- Explain how the problem is affecting the individual and give examples
- Is the problem new or have you spoken about it before? Surprises are harder to handle
- Ask for an explanation
- Listen to the employee's response and try to recognise any underlying causes of unhappiness or stress
- Keep an open mind and do not jump to conclusions
- Introduce your questions and try to explore the issues together
- Avoid emotive language or diverting from the issue
- Agree a way forward
- Ask the employee for their proposals to resolve the problem
- Discuss the options
- Make a decision – you are in charge
- Arrange a follow-up meeting if necessary
- Monitor and feedback on progress and give support
- Document any agreement and give the employee a copy

If you've had to have a 'difficult conversation' recently we would like to hear from you. What went well and what you would change? Email denise@adam-aspire.co.uk and we will print all tips and hints in the next e update. You can view the advice booklet 'Challenging conversations and how to manage them' by visiting www.acas.org.uk/conversations

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