

NEWS RELEASE

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The latest survey of dentists' attitudes to the new NHS dental contract, introduced in April 2006, shows that one in four intends to quit the NHS.

A survey of dentists carried out by the Dental Practitioners' Association in May 2008 has confirmed anecdotal evidence of high levels of dissatisfaction with the new NHS dental contract introduced in England on 1st April 2006

- 30 per cent of dentists said that they did not meet treatment targets last year.
- 65 per cent are having money clawed back.
- Only 4 per cent have received funding to accept new patients.
- 95 per cent said that compulsory registration of nurses will increase staffing costs.
- 95 per cent said that access to NHS treatment has not improved.
- 85 per cent said that the system of paying by 'units' is unworkable.
- 26 per cent said that they do not intend to stay on the NHS after April 2009.

CEO of the DPA Derek Watson said "These figures are very worrying as they show that the drift of dentists away from the NHS is likely to accelerate in April 2009. This is exactly the reverse of what was promised by the Department of Health. It confirms what we are hearing from our members, which is that they are using the three-year period during which their earnings are guaranteed to plan an exit strategy from the NHS.

"Unlike the old system where funding followed the dentist and provision could be expanded, at the moment dental funding is based on historical spending. From April 2009 all bets are off and PCTs will have absolute freedom to tell dentists where to work and who to see while taking none of the business risk. Dentists are continuing to drift into the private sector due to the large disparity in terms and conditions between the NHS and private sectors. This transfer of risk will cause many dentists to reconsider working in the NHS.

"We do not expect all 26 per cent of dentists to quit the NHS, but even a loss of 10 per cent of the dental workforce will cause a severe supply-side shock. The job of commissioning has been delegated to Primary Care Trusts and Health Boards; but responsibility lies fairly and squarely with the Department of Health which dictates the system in which dentists and PCTs must work."

Notes for Editors

[Download the full survey results here \(pdf\).](#)

The Dental Practitioners Association represents general dental practitioners in the UK.

The Report: House of Commons Health Committee: Dental Services, (HC289-1) published on 2 July 2008 found that 900,000 fewer patients now have an NHS dentist, and the April 2006 contract failed to meet even one of its four stated objectives.

Contact Information / News Release Archive

Dental Practitioners' Association
61 Harley Street
LONDON W1G 8QU

T: 0207 636 1072
F: 0207 636 1086 (by arrangement)
M: 07983 717 223 (24h)
E: info@UK-Dentistry.org
W: www.UK-Dentistry.org

Archive http://www.uk-dentistry.org/releases/mr_index.htm
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