

CASE STUDY

Daleys Dental Practice, Liverpool

BACKGROUND

Daleys Dental Practice in Liverpool has been in existence, in some form, since Nick Daley's grandfather established his first surgery back in 1921. Since then, it's been very much a family affair. Nick's father, two uncles and a brother, have all worked in these practices over the years. In fact, after Nick qualified from Liverpool University, he went more or less straight into the family business.

Today there are two practices. One in Norris Green, which is predominantly an NHS practice with 25,000 patients, and one in West Derby which has around 1,000 private patients. Nick divides his time between the two. He says he has "A foot in both camps", but remembers how things were when he first started.

"It was very different in those days. People's aspirations have changed so much in the last 20 years. Health awareness has increased. There's more interest in procedures like tooth whitening. It's a lifestyle change. Back in the old days people were happy if you could relieve their toothache."

But it wasn't just the patients who were changing. Over recent years, Nick has noticed a disturbing change in the industry he joined.

"There was, of course, a family history in dentistry, but there was no pressure on me to join in. I was interested in the clinical side of work, but what I really liked was the sense of independence you had back then in a general practice, that and the business side. But in the last few years there's been a definite loss of independence with the NHS. That's not what I joined dentistry for. I decided that I wanted to see if I could make it on my own."

And to make matters worse still for Nick and the practice, he was facing very substantial clawback which was having a dramatic effect on the practice and putting the business under considerable financial strain. It was time to reconsider his position.

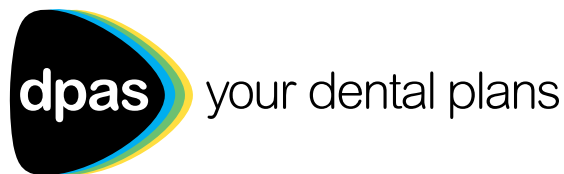
SOLUTION

In late 2003 Nick informed the local PCT of his decision to convert one practice to the private sector. To begin with he signed up with another provider of practice branded payment plans. It went quite well, but for price reasons he decided to switch to DPAS and its more cost-effective services.

"I'd seen the DPAS guys at their stand at the BDTA dental showcase. What they had to say made sense and I liked what I saw. They seemed low key and not pushy. Going with DPAS also meant making a substantial cost saving."

The process of switching began in late 2007. After a review of the practice and its running costs, DPAS contacted the patients to let them know about the changes.

To ensure the smooth transition from one plan provider to another, DPAS held several meetings with the practice, some involving the whole team.



CASE STUDY CONTINUED

DALEYS DENTAL PRACTICE, LIVERPOOL

“The staff seemed quite happy. I knew the conversion might initially cost me money, but I wanted to see if I could make it work on my own. As far as the patients were concerned, we were in the unusual position of being able to offer every one of them a place at our NHS practice in Norris Green if they wanted it. DPAS wrote to them all to let them know what was happening.”

The process of switching plan provider coincided with the West Derby practice relocating. The old surgery had been above a shop, with no disabled access. The practice closed for two months before reopening in a newly refurbished building, down the road, which was formally a convent. Finally, the practice was re-branded with the old Daley family name.

BENEFITS

The 1,000 patients at the Daleys Dental Clinic have benefited in several ways from the move to DPAS. There's emergency, in-house out-of-hours cover, supplied by one of the dentists on a rota, appointments are longer and Nick feels the overall quality of care has improved. Before the conversion there was one dentist, one receptionist and a nurse. Today there are two dentists, a part-time hygienist, two nurses, a practice manager and a treatment coordinator.

“There's a more positive feel in all areas of the practice. We were already with one provider but we're very happy with the way that DPAS has dealt with the switch. Our staff members are all generally more content. They have more time now to look after each patient and offer them more of a personal touch.”

But the most important aspect of all the changes is the fact that Nick Daley feels he has his independence back. He hopes that the practice will continue to grow, develop and stay in 'forward gear'. What advice would he give to a dentist considering converting or switching provider?

“Well, I'd say give it some serious consideration. Do it if you really want to maintain your independence and genuinely look after your patients.”

To find out more about the Daleys Dental Practice conversion and how DPAS can make your existing payment plan administration work more efficiently, please visit www.dpas.co.uk or call us on 01747 870910.