

# Our plan for prevention

Kirk and Sheena Young share the story of their success

**E**XPLAINING oral health problems to patients is a vital part of preventive care; it not only encourages them to attend for oral hygiene appointments but also explains how and why they need to maintain a good oral hygiene regime at home.

We fully support the ethos of prevention in the surgery and at home but also believe that if today's dental professionals want to develop their practice they need to have a "plan for prevention".

We both qualified from Dundee University in 1978 and have always had a keen interest in preventive dentistry, favouring this route over the more surgical aspects of dentistry.

This drive for promoting excellent oral care encouraged us to leave Scotland and pursue a career south of the border, and in 1981 we established Young's Dental Practice



in Snaith, East Yorkshire.

For the past 30 years, we have striven to develop a successful preventive practice and a significant amount of time and effort has been put into developing a team and practice systems that provide our patients with a range of services that are of clear benefit.

We have had the freedom to develop this approach by offering our patients a payment plan administered by DPAS, which has proved effective in providing patients with the treatment and support necessary to control dental disease and maintain excellent oral health.

Our relationship with the company started back in 2006 when, like many, we were disappointed with the new NHS contract, believing that their approach to preventive care was not being taken seriously.

DPAS' Andrew Warren was very much in tune with our vision of the future. With his focus clearly aimed at providing high-quality dentistry with an emphasis on prevention, we decided it was time to move to a plan provider that offered us the flexibility to develop a maintenance plan based on tailor-made preventive measures and advice while maintaining the practice

brand. The conversion to DPAS was surprisingly straightforward.

The practice saw a staggering 750 patients join the payment plan within only a few months and this level of membership became a key determining factor for both ourselves and the rest of the team, who had the confidence to progress with the development of the practice.

Our business development manager at the company helped set achievable goals within a realistic timeframe, while also assisting in the production of practice-branded literature and brochures to inform patients of the impending conversion well in advance. This left us with the time and manpower to continue performing quality dentistry while ensuring a stress-free conversion.

Working with a practice-branded payment plan gave our practice our own identity and helped us meet the needs of our patients. Now they feel as though they are a part of the practice rather than a nationally branded scheme.

Admittedly, we mistakenly assumed



*Sheena and Kirk Young, owners of Young's Dental Practice*

that patients knew exactly what services we could provide, when actually they didn't. It took the encouragement of the DPAS team to look at the practice's strengths and advise how these could be enhanced by reevaluating our fees and communicating more effectively with our patients.

We found that patients could be getting more for their money by





paying a fixed monthly fee rather than intermittently paying for costly treatment. We now realise that as dental professionals it is our duty to explain the opportunities available to them by becoming part of a practice-branded payment plan – more prevention, less treatment, less cost.

Completely tailored to the individual characteristics of our practice, converting to the plan proved an effective way of developing sustainability at Young's Dental Practice. Our patients now have the ability to budget for their routine dental care, while we can ensure our appointment books are kept full and patients need less complex treatment.

With one fixed monthly fee, patients at our practice benefit from a range of guaranteed treatments and a level of dental protection that successfully promotes preventive care, all year round. This is attested to by the fact that the practice has not suffered from any major fall in registrations through the last difficult 12 months.

Implementing the plan was the best option for making preventive treatments more affordable for our patients, without compromising the ethos and quality of dentistry.

As a team, we have implemented a "plan for prevention" which has successfully communicated the oral health message to our patients, and are now working together to raise oral health standards and above all else regard prevention as our number one priority.

