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1st December, 2008

For Immediate Release

Press Release

DENTISTS CONTINUE TO FEEL THE BITE FROM FAILING NHS CONTRACTS

Alarming new research conducted under the Freedom of Information Act by the private dental plan administrator DPAS has revealed that NHS dentists are facing over a hundred million pounds worth of financial penalties for under delivering on their agreed Contracts with local Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)¹.

DPAS has discovered that some five million Units of Dental Activity (UDAs) have gone undelivered for the year 2007/08 - a rise of 5% on 2006/07. All but one PCT have said that they will be pursuing claw back where Contracts had delivered more than a 4% shortfall, including several that had chosen not to do this last year.

In reality the situation may be much worse, as if extrapolated out to include performance at the other 11% of PCTs who did not respond, then this figure could rise to around 5.5million, a staggering rise of over 15%, representing contractual value not delivered amounting to well over £120 million for the year.

Quentin Skinner, Chairman of DPAS, said: "As alarming as these figures are, they are not unexpected. We could see this coming and, after our research last year on the 2006/07 outcome, I warned that there was a ratcheted treadmill effect built into the

¹ Based on an 89% response rate

new contract – not only would dentists have to work harder in the second year if they were to keep still, but they also had the matter of Year1 claw back to address – the situation was always likely to compound itself.”

As was the same last year, there are many regional variations, but this year Leicester City PCT fared the worst, under delivering by a massive 53% of its UDAs,, followed by East & North Hertfordshire on 22%. As far as the regional extent of large claw backs goes, Leicester again topped the chart with the number of Contracts where the delivery was more than £50,000 short with 21 and Somerset PCT with 18. There were a total of 411 Contracts reported where the under-delivery was greater than £50,000.

Claw back is therefore undoubtedly an ongoing issue, and where this is compounded, things may get difficult for some practitioners.

Quentin Skinner continued: “Almost all of the PCTs that responded to the FOI request said that they would be pursuing redress by this Autumn, and so many dentists may find themselves feeling the pinch. Even those who did not meet their UDA numbers by less than 4% will nevertheless have to do perhaps up to 4% more work for no more money, as well as coping with this year’s UDA contract numbers. A far cry from Rosie Winterton’s suggestion of *“the same money for 5% less work”*.

“For those dentists who fell rather shorter of the mark, the future for them in the NHS certainly looks bleak. Inevitably, these dentists will have to agree to a mixture of increased workloads for less money, as their Year three revenue is reduced by Year two claw back, money already spent on last year’s running costs and drawings. What a nightmare. Meanwhile, dentists should not be surprised if PCTs use such under-delivery to pare down the UDA Contract numbers after April 2009.”

To find out more contact DPAS on 01747 870910 or visit www.dpas.co.uk

Ends

For more information, please contact Matthew Trace or Carrie Lowe at Remarkable on 01962 893 893 or matthew.trace@remarkablegroup.co.uk / carrie.lowe@remarkablegroup.co.uk

Notes to editors

About DPAS

DPAS (www.dpas.co.uk) is a UK leader in providing dental practices nationwide with cost-effective independent, practice-branded payment plans. Operating as a payment collection agent on behalf of dentists, DPAS's services also include the arrangement of dental insurance.

Instrumental in the establishment and growth of private dental plans in the UK, the DPAS team is expert at supporting forward-thinking dental practices in offering a range of dental plans under the practice's own identity and control.

DPAS has unrivalled experience in helping NHS dentists coming under increasing 'catch-up or clawback' pressure from their primary care trusts as a result of under-delivering their contractually agreed units of dental authority (UDA). DPAS has pioneered a fast-track conversion process helping dentists complete the journey to independence. Similarly, DPAS has a proven track record in helping practices move from other plans to its own, more cost-effective plans.

DPAS' flexible plan options mean a brighter future for dentists, their practices and their patients.

About the nGDS

The new general dental services contract was introduced in April 2006, when PCTs were allocated ring-fenced budgets and responsibility for commissioning primary care dental services. The new contract saw the move from a fee-per-item system to one based on locally-agreed contracts between dentists and their PCTs or other primary care organisations. In announcing the new contract to NHS dentists, the chief dental officer for England Barry Cockcroft promised it would deliver an end to the NHS 'drill and fill' treadmill; a guaranteed income; enhanced clinical discretion; and more time for preventative work.