

# Questions of conversion

Andrew Warren has some answers.

As the spectre of April 2009 looms large, the question of 'to convert or not to convert' is top of the hot topics list for most National Health Service dentists.

Questions of attracting and retaining patients – always key concerns for those who convert – are made all the more important when seen in the context of job losses, reduction in disposable incomes and the re-ordering of financial priorities.

Having made the decision to convert practitioners should seek help from appropriate external sources. 'Partner' organisations which can assist with your conversion is an obvious, but often ignored area. You should also make sure your financial projections are discussed with your accountant and bank manager to make sure you benefit from their experience.

Knowing and understanding your market is a key success factor for all businesses, including dentistry. For those on the verge of conversion, the ability to manage patient reaction to, and expectation of, their changed circumstances, requires an insight into their needs. Conduct a brief analysis of your current patient data base; age, sex, demographics, attendance and so



your dental plans

Your practice. Your patients. Your choice.

on. Such analysis will give you a base-line to work from, help you set realistic financial targets and understand where your private practice should be positioned.

Retaining the loyalty of your patients through the conversion process is important to the early success of the 'new' practice and keeping patient numbers consistent provides a level of confidence and also offers security in the stability of income levels. Easing patients through your conversion by providing financial solutions and maintaining regular communication with them, is important.

Patient payment plans are one method of ensuring just such security and are also a welcome tool in encouraging patient loyalty. By offering a payment plan you can encourage your patients to budget wisely for their dental care and help them maintain a good level of oral health. It is easy for patients facing a bleak financial outlook to consider a one-off visit to the dentist as a costly and if they are not in pain, an unnecessary expense.

As a payment plan administrator it is in our best interests to make

sure your conversion runs as smoothly as possible and at DPAS we have developed a sophisticated marketing system to help with many of the issues raised during conversion. We are here to help and I would encourage anyone thinking about conversion to contact DPAS for impartial, friendly advice on any aspect of their conversion process.

DPAS is a UK leader in providing dental practices nationwide with cost-effective independent, practice-branded

payment plans. They have unrivalled experience in helping NHS

dentists who are under increasing catch-up or claw back pressure from primary care trusts. DPAS has pioneered a fast-track conversion process, helping dentists complete the journey to the private sector. The DPAS team has a wealth of experience supporting forward-thinking dental practices in offering a range of dental plans under the practice's own identity and control. ■



**Andrew Warren**  
is sales director at DPAS.

For more information on DPAS call 01747 870 910, email [enquiries@dpas.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@dpas.co.uk)