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Pain Relief for Dentists

DENTAL ARTICLE

**PROTECTING YOUR NHS DENTAL CONTRACT
JANUARY 2014**

• **Background**

On 1 April 2013, NHS England (formerly the NHS Commissioning Board) assumed responsibility for the commissioning of all NHS Dental Services. NHS England is supported by 27 national NHS England Area Teams who replaced the former local 51 NHS Primary Care Trust's. All Dental Providers holding NHS GDS and PDS contracts, transferred to NHS England in April 2013, along with the responsibility for commissioning secondary care and community dental services.

With the new Dental Contract on the horizon there are ever-growing demands of compliance and national statutory pressures. The Clinicians we are working with are finding that the demand to compete with fellow Dental Practitioners in attracting and retaining a solid patient list (i.e achieve their annual baseline UDA contract target), and dealing with patient's expectations, Primary Care Dentistry has never been so competitive.

• **Annual Units of Dental Activity (UDA's), Contract Under/Over Performance**

During the course of the summer/early autumn, Area Team's may have advised Contractors who had underperformed against their NHS contracts that they would have, potentially, an opportunity to carry forward up to 4% of their baseline NHS Contract. Ascend Contract Management Ltd have been working with Dental Providers to consider the implications of how Practice's UDA contractual achievement will affect their Practice in the next financial year, including the 4% carry forward. Initial FP17 claims submitted in April will 'pay off' the carry forward debt. Only once the carry forward number of UDA's are completed will subsequent claims count towards your 2013/14 contract target. Therefore, if during 2013/14 your Practice only achieves 96% of your recurring contract, your actual achievement will be 92% leaving a threat of a recurring contract reduction.

With the end of the financial year (March 2014) only three months away, are you on target to achieve contracted activity? Have you been repeatedly underachieving on your NHS contract?

If so, it is advisable that you, as Dental Providers, consider developing a business case detailing how you are going to demonstrate to the Area Team Commissioners why you should retain your current contract level.

• **Plan of Action**

By commissioning Ascend Contract Management Ltd, we will work with your Practice to develop a strategic approach of how you are going to demonstrate to the Commissioners that your dental contract is delivering value for money, and protect your NHS Dental Contract from a recurring financial contract reduction. With our experience in commissioning (along with contractual, performance and financial responsibility for Dental (including Orthodontics) NHS contracts), we will analyse and work with your Practice to consider contributing reasons for UDA underperformance. This will include areas such as branding (in competition with other Dental Practices in your locality), attracting and retaining patients, limited/miscommunication with patients, and Clinicians not achieving their individual UDA targets. Once areas of concern have been identified we will develop a Practice Business Plan with you to aid in mapping out your Practices direction of travel and key objectives.

As the end of the financial year is only three months away, this is your opportunity to demonstrate to your Area Team Commissioners the quality of services you provide, and how you are compliant with the national performance indicators (e.g. vital signs/clinical indicators). It is essential to prepare your Practice covering all business, clinical and financial aspects.

- **Summary**

It is of vital importance that, if you are concerned for the security of your NHS Dental Contract, then the time to act is now! It will be too late to develop a case to defend your Practice's position when your year-end data is released in June/July 2014.

If you are interested in how Ascend Contract Management Ltd can support you with your Dental Contract then please contact us on 01458 241061 or email rwood@ascend-cm.co.uk

Richard Wood, Director, Ascend Contract Management Ltd

'Richard Wood is a former Primary Care NHS Associate Director, with extensive experience in supporting and commissioning services for Primary Care Dentistry ranging from large corporates to single chair practices, and has sat on national groups in regards to Dental Pilots and the proposed new NHS Dental Contract'.