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BGM Chair Report September 2019 – September 2021

I can't believe it has been over two years since I took over from Anwen as Chair of Morgannwg LDC. What an eventful two years it has been! All I can say is thank goodness for Roger and the rest of the committee as there have been many a bumpy ride/wobbly moments.

I shall start at the beginning where all was calm and progressing nice and smoothly. Contract Reform was still very much the forerunner and e-referrals were working well within practices although there were some initial concerns over cameras and technology. Orthodontic practices were still working through their legacy waiting lists following the introduction of e-referrals little did all of us know what was about to come re waiting lists!!

The Local Health Board decided to change its name with Bridgend leaving to Swansea Bay University HB (a little trendier). The CDO Colette Bridgman was as ever, enthusiastic about engaging more and more dental practices to engage with Contract Reform and existing practices were being offered to increase to 20% and skill mix was still being actively encouraged with HEIW offering MPWIP and many other online QA programmes.

Then came COVID!

Lock down happened.

Closely followed by a letter off the CDO in March for Dental Practices to enter Red Phase.

Daily messages/updates of PM Boris Johnson to Stay at home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives.

Weekly claps outside on Thursday evening became a regular at our house to support the NHS along with rainbows.

New ways of communicating and technology to stay in touch with colleagues/family developed Zoom / TEAMS meetings had arrived!!

Along came the new acronyms that we all have never heard off as dentists and DCPS were about to experience in our daily working lives.

Triaging, Triple AAA advice, SOPS, PPE , FFP3 Masks, AGPs Fallow time , Air changes, Fit testing, lockdoor polices, hand hygiene, masks.

Emergence of COVID centres, redeployment of staff to wards and testing centres. Suspension of Design to Smile programmes and domiciliary visits to nursing homes. Parkway's enforced withdrawal of GA services for children, Contract reform and UDA/UOA suspension.

Reductions to dental contract values.

Vaccines.

Development of Local practice groups to support local dentists, dental lead groups to pass on information as and when it came through government and CDO. Fortnightly LDC meetings with KB attendance to update us on what was happening within the Local Health Board proved very popular, or it could have been my lovely coloured sofas in the background, that brought members and non-members to the online meetings to over 50!!

Then came Amber Phase (October 2020)

AGP practices to take referrals started.

Parkway started back providing GAs to children.

Practices encouraged to calculate air changes and to invest in extractor fans/ ventilation units The LHB provided grants for this along with bonus for NHS worker who worked through the COVID period.

Technology was encouraged and Attend Anywhere promoted along with Consultant Connect.

EDen introduced and FDS reporting continues.

Uplift to contract to 90 per cent and further uplifts if practices want to commit to LHB requests.

And the list goes on.....

What COVID has shown me is that despite all these changes we as a profession are very adaptable and have pulled together and supported each other during unprecedented times and we all deserve, along with our teams, a pat on the back for our support to maintaining NHS dental services in SBUHB.

I fear, during these uncertain times as I write this report, COVID numbers have been rising and we are heading into another Autumn/Winter. Staff are tired and this time round despite double vaccination are catching COVID due to increased prevalence within the community.

I have concerns with regards to what the contract holds in April 2022 and the monitoring in Quarter 3 and 4.

Who will be the new CDO and will they continue the previous work of Colette Bridgman?

What will the workforce look like in another 3-6 months?

As ever I would like, along with many of our members who have contacted me personally to thank Roger, Huw and Mark for their immense work and commitment to the LDC. We will always endeavour to support our members and engage with the appropriate bodies to address your concerns.

Thank you all, and sorry folks I'm no Jane Austen when it comes to writing reports!!

Allison Walker