

BGM Chair Report September 2021 – September 2023

Welcome to my second Chair report and sadly my last as I am moving on to pastures new, however you will all be glad to read that the rest of the fabulous four LDC representative for the time being are remaining. A great many thanks to all the support and help you have provided us all over the last 2 years.

Where to start It's always good to start where you left offSo a little recap of my last 3 points in previous report:

1. I have concerns with regards to what the contract holds in April 2022 and the monitoring in Quarters 3 and 4.
2. Who will be the new CDO and will they continue the previous work of Colette Bridgman?
3. What will the workforce look like in another 3-6 months?

The last 2 years have been busy again with change and uncertainty the only two constants!!!!

This period has been referred to by Welsh Government as the **Recovery Phase of NHS Dental Services** - to GDPs working through this period it has been a minefield with many last-minute unpredicted surprises and goal posts changing to suit Government agendas.

Recovery Phase / Contract Variation

Although over the last 2 years we have seen a return to "normal practice" - no FFP3 masks, surgical gowns, triaging so forth .. Covid has left its ugly mark on practices with GDPs catching up with patients lists, increased demand on access, reduction in staff having left for alternative careers, massive increase in cost of living and the list goes on...

All the above has made dentistry harder and made us all reflect on the future.

Contract Variation - 4 new targets - simple you would have hoped but oh no - you needed a degree to understand these in the first place let alone implement them into the daily running of a practice. Not to mention working blind with the new software Eden figures - it's amazing how so many survived.

Engagement events put on for GDPs by Welsh Government were well attended - over 200 Dentists and DCPS . However, feedback was mixed - "Disappointment at not focusing on end of year contract reform", " further frustration and disappointment in that these events had not resulted in changes in contract reform", "too much focus on Cluster development, Duty of candour and workforce updates" to list but a few.

Probably from an LDC point the most concerns raised by members were over the late communication from Welsh Government to LHBs and then onto practices - on guidance over end of year performance, actual release date 22.03.23 to SBUHB Contract holders!!! And let's not forget Historic patient Targets being unrealistic for some practices.

For many these issues remain unanswered and uncertain times continue. As an LDC we will always try and support you and your teams and continue to raise these issues at our meetings locally with LHBs and nationally with Welsh government - our fight continues to raise your concerns.

New CDO Andrew Dickenson

Andrew Dickenson was appointed the new CDO in Wales on 1st April 2022. He was very engaging with LDCs across Wales attending many virtual meetings. It was clear from early on he was a good listener and wanted to hear solutions to issues not be ranted at with problems. As a result, Morgannwg LDC worked hard to produce "an unintended consequences" document highlighting issues with contract reform and offering solutions. Sadly, many of the issues raised remain unresolved and leaves many of us feeling overlooked and unheard. This was evident at the Engagement evening where again GDPs and DCPs felt they attended under false pre-tenses as end of year contract metrics were not discussed or even on the agenda!!

Looking forward 2023-24 "Second and hopefully last contract reform action learning year " - Andrew Dickenson. Trying to remain positive and hopeful for the next 6 months we are still awaiting communication from Welsh Government with regards to what awaits us in 2024 as after all they need to let us know 6 months in advance as recommend in the recent report.

Workforce

Morgannwy LDC or more accurately Roger has been amazing again and has worked tirelessly to develop a report on the workforce in SBUHB with some interesting results. Roger recently presented it at an LHB LDC -liaison meeting which was attended by the CDO and found to be very informative. Well done Roger big thanks.

Nationally the first Dental Workforce Development Newsletter was issued this month online.

New recruitment initiatives run by HEIW to attract future dental trainees to take up positions across rural Wales has been launched (Welsh Enhanced Recruitment Offer) an enhanced support package for trainees includes a £5000 and rural living grant, weekly study day programme, Royal College membership exam fees covered by HEIW and £600 study budget towards exam preparation, well-being support and access to free online learning resources.

Locally issues continue for recruitment and retention of staff leaving some practices with empty surgeries sadly - ever hopeful - perhaps LHB can support these practices financially as more needs to be done with regards to this matter.

And finally ...

I would like, along with many of our members to thank Roger, Huw, Jenny and Imtiaz for their support and contribution to the effective running of the LDC over the last 2 years. You have all been amazing many thanks and made my experience a pleasant and enjoyable one.

Thank you all, and as Roger always says to me at the end of our conversations **BE GOOD!!**

Allison Walker
Chair, Morgannwg LDC