Morgannwg
Local Dental Committee
www.morgannwgldc.org.uk

Biennial General Meeting of GDPs, 9th October 2026.

Secretary's Report

Introduction

It is just over three years since our last Biennial General Meeting in September 2023. With the new NHS General Dental Services contract due in April 2026, the LDC considered 2025 an inappropriate time to elect a new Committee and agreed to postpone the BGM until autumn 2026, allowing continuity through consultation and early implementation.

Few of us could have anticipated how much of the following three years would be occupied by Contract Reform. Throughout this period, the LDC has sought to ensure that the views and concerns of General Dental Practitioners in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area have been heard locally and nationally.

The New GDS Contract

The new GDS contract has inevitably dominated our work. When Welsh Government formally consulted on the proposals during 2025, the LDC undertook its own survey of local dental professionals.

Thirty-four responded to 25 questions, expressing concerns particularly around continuity of care, the Dental Access Portal, high-needs patients, care packages, contract segmentation, repair and replacement responsibilities, patient charges, administrative workload and recruitment and retention. A detailed report and summary were produced and shared with colleagues and those developing the contract.

Despite concerns expressed by the profession, implementation proceeded on 1 April 2026. Detailed information became available very late and considerable uncertainty remained about how the arrangements would work in everyday clinical situations.

Throughout this period, we maintained close collaboration with BDA Wales on national contract matters, sharing information and ensuring that local concerns contributed to wider representation of the profession in Wales.

Early Experience of the Contract

Following implementation, many earlier concerns remained and the LDC undertook a further survey during May and June 2026.

This produced 100 responses representing 47 practices or practice locations, including owners, associates and members of the wider dental team. There was widespread uncertainty about claiming and interpretation, software and NHSBSA problems, and concerns about periodontal care packages, urgent treatment, laboratory fees, patient charges and increased administrative workload. Of particular concern was the effect upon morale and future commitment to NHS dentistry.

At approximately two months, only 24% of respondents estimated achieving 50–75% of expected pro-rata contractual performance, with the remaining 76% estimating 25–50%.

A detailed report, summary and short video were widely circulated. Our practical requests included a single authoritative source of guidance, worked examples, a national question and answer mechanism, attention to software problems and a pragmatic approach to early contract monitoring.

Engagement with Welsh Government and SBUHB

The LDC has maintained regular engagement with Welsh Government, SBUHB and others involved in NHS dentistry.

Representatives have continued to attend our open meetings, enabling colleagues to hear information directly and ask questions. We have corresponded regularly with the Chief Dental Officer and his team over concerns raised by colleagues.

Locally, our close relationship with the SBUHB Primary Care Team, Dental Director and Dental Practice Advisers has continued to provide an important route for communication. We particularly thank Mr Karl Bishop and the HB DPAs for their continued engagement and invaluable support.

Engagement with Senedd Members

We have continued to engage directly with our elected representatives.

Following publication of our 2026 survey report, information was provided to Senedd Members. Mike Hedges MS and Dr Gwyn Williams MS attended an open Zoom meeting on 9 July to discuss the findings and early experience of the contract and subsequently requested a Members' Debate at the Senedd on a motion written by us in collaboration with BDA Wales.

Such engagement helps ensure that those making and scrutinising decisions about NHS dentistry understand their practical consequences for patients and those providing their care.

Other Work of the LDC

Although the new contract has occupied considerable time, members of the Executive have continued to represent GDPs at Health Board meetings and on committees, groups and networks concerned with primary dental care.

Issues have included urgent dental care, referral pathways, orthodontic waiting times, workforce matters, professional collaboratives and dental clusters. More recently, we have been involved in discussions with SBUHB over proposed changes to the Dental Out of Hours Service.

Individual problems affecting practices have also been raised with us and, where appropriate, taken up with the Health Board or other organisations.

LDC Meetings and Communication

Remote meetings remain an important part of our work. Opening many meetings to all GDPs and, where appropriate, other members of the dental team enables considerably greater participation than traditional Committee meetings alone.

WhatsApp, email and the LDC website have also become increasingly important in keeping colleagues informed, particularly when information has changed rapidly.

The 2026 BGM

Postponement of the 2025 BGM means the present Committee has served for an unusually long period. Nominations have now been completed and those newly elected will serve from this BGM until 2030.

With the new contract now six months old, the incoming Committee will need to continue monitoring its effects upon patients and practices and ensure that unintended consequences are brought to the attention of SBUHB, Welsh Government, BDA Wales and our elected representatives.

Finally

The last three years have probably been amongst the busiest experienced by the LDC for many years.

I thank members of the Committee and Executive for the considerable time they have given to representing colleagues, and all those throughout the SBUHB area who have attended meetings, completed our questionnaires, provided information and raised issues with us. Without that engagement, the LDC cannot properly represent the profession.

My thanks also go to colleagues within SBUHB and other organisations who have engaged with us and responded to our concerns, and particularly to Sarah Griffiths, our Minutes Secretary, for her continued support.

There remains considerable uncertainty about the future direction of NHS dentistry in Wales. What is certain is that General Dental Practitioners need effective local representation and a means by which their collective experience can be communicated to those responsible for dental services.

That remains the purpose of Morgannwg Local Dental Committee.



Roger Pratley,
Secretary,
Morgannwg Local Dental Committee