Clawback payments reach £120m

Social networking site launch

‘Bochted’ reforms fail 1.2m people

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Around half of dental practices have fallen short of the targets and will have to pay back money back to their local health authorities.

The ‘bochted contract’ is forcing dentists to give back £120m to the NHS because all the targets agreed with local health authorities.

The British Dental Association fears these clawbacks may put some practices out of business and could lead to more dentists quitting the NHS.

Figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by DPAS, provider of dental insurance that supports practices in off of the list, reveal that 80 per cent of primary care trusts responded to a survey that found a total of 411 contracts where targets were missed by £50,000 or more.

Peter Ward, the chief executive of the BDA, said that dentists who failed to meet their targets in the first year were likely to have failed to do so again last year, creating a ‘roll-over effect’.

He said: ‘Once again this highlights problems with a target-driven contract that contains one crude measure of performance, which has long been criticised by the profession and patient representative groups.’

Quentin Skinner, the chairman of DPAS, said: ‘For those dentists who fell rather short of the mark, the future for them in the NHS certainly looks bleak.’

Mike Penning, Shadow Health Minister, said: ‘These figures show, yet again, why we need to rip up Labour’s bochted contract and move towards a registration system based on clinical need, one that is targeted at preventing dental ill health rather than reacting to it.’ The BDA requested an amnesty for dentists who had completed a significant amount – but not all – of their units of dental activity (UDA) for 2006/07.

However the Department of Health has said it will not consider waiving financial clawbacks for dentists.

Dental awards the innovative teachers

A trio of inspiring and innovative teachers won awards at this year’s Dental Defence Union Educational Awards.

Alison Grant at Bristol Dental School, won the award for DCP (dental care professionals) Teacher of the Year. Ms Grant said: ‘It’s great to receive this recognition. I was first inspired to go into dentistry by the enthusiasm of a hygienist who treated me as a teenager and I want to thank her. DCP teachers are not just teaching students to pass an exam; we are teaching them to become dental hygienists and I believe that communicating our enthusiasm is an essential part of this.’

The award for Dental Teacher of the Year was won by Professor Dayananda Samaranwicrama at Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Professor Samaranwicrama dedicated the award to his students, colleagues and school and said: ‘I have been humbled by this experience and I’m obviously very pleased to have won. My late father used to say that education is the best gift one can give so it is particularly rewarding to see that education is being valued by my peers for all my efforts over the past 12 months and the previous 18 years. I’d like to thank my vocational trainees, my course advisor and the Oxford Deansery. Having been nominated a couple of years ago, it’s wonderful to have actually won the award this time.’

Rupert Hoppenbrouwers, head of the DDU (Dental Defence Union) praised the winners and said: ‘Their commitment to dental education over many years and their level of experience is clearly so crucial in enabling them to communicate effectively with their students and DPs (vocational dental practitioners) in the classroom or surgery.

They provide an informed and invaluable source of advice and guidance to young dental professionals at the start of their careers.’

The winner in each awards category received £1,000 towards the cost of educational materials for their schools or Vocational Training (VT) schemes.

The theme of the day was ‘Education, Ethics and Aesthetics’ and after the finalists’ presentations, Derrick Willmot, professor of or-thodontics at Sheffield University and dean of the faculty of dental surgery and Richard Ashcroft, professor of bioethics at Queen Mary University of London addressed the issue of whether purely cosmetic dentistry and where aesthetic treatments may have a therapeutic outcome.

Nicholas Peacock, a barrister from Halitham Chambers, spoke about the factors to bear in mind when providing cosmetic treatment, to help avoid a complaint to the General Dental Council or a claim.