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Conference Bulletin

Report of the LDC Conference held on 9 June 2006

Conference Chair's Report

Last year's Chair Susie Sanderson introduced a new style of e-mail report of LDC Conference designed for easy dissemination by LDC secretaries to their respective patches. This was a great success and I am following the same procedure this year.

It was my great pleasure as this year's Conference Chairman to invite representatives to the 55th Annual LDC Conference, held at the Gauman Tower Hotel, London. The hotel, which I can remember being built in the early 1970's, is delightful inside, has views to die for and the

capacity to fit us all in but externally shows all the ugly features of 1960's "brutalist" design and, as I said in my welcoming speech at the dinner, the architect should have been hanged at its unveiling.

After a difficult and challenging day I hope that this conference will be remembered as one where delegates were truly empowered to make their feelings and opinions heard without any restriction. It has been the only Conference in my memory where BDA/GDPC insiders hardly spoke to the motions "to guide the

vote" and left delegates to express their anger and their ideas over the issues.

For myself, this was the third major conference that I have chaired (the first dental) and, having chaired a successful LDC Conference I do not intend to continue in any form of dental politics. It has been a great pleasure

The Social Side

LDC Conference is the major forum for political expression within the profession but its social aspect should not be understated. The eve of Conference dinner and the opportunities for networking and sharing ideas with practitioners from all over the country in a social setting are

sometimes as fruitful as the formal business of speaking and voting on motions.

The dinner was a triumph of organisation by Katherine Fort and the Agenda Committee. The food had been tested on the Committee, none of whom had died, and they

democratically voted on the menu. It was the first Conference dinner I've been to where it looked like the plates had been licked clean. The guest speaker was Sir Paul Beresford MP and dentist and music (alleged) was provided by the B.Skinner duo.

Diary Dates

The LDC Officials Day will be held on Friday 1 December 2006 in London

The next LDC Conference will be held on Friday 15 June 2007, with the dinner taking place the evening before.

The Minister's Cancellation and the Fallout

The major cause of delegate dissent arose from the Agenda Committee's meeting with the Minister.

For the second year running the late cancellation of her booked appearance by the Minister Rosie Winterton left a hole in the agenda which caused much concern and discussion within the Conference Agenda Committee. On this occasion, however, she had offered a spot for a small delegation to visit her at the Department to put to her the questions that had been sent in by delegates.

As Chairman, on Tuesday 23rd May I provisionally accepted the Minister's invitation to meet with her believing we had a duty to put our delegates' questions and report back. I'm sure that if we had decided not to go, hiding behind lack of explicit authority in Standing Orders, we would have been roundly condemned by the majority of the delegates for missing a rare opportunity of meeting the Minister herself and expressing the anger and disappointment of ordinary GDPs with the new Contract.

The Committee accepted the invitation at our regular meeting on Friday 26th May by a democratic vote, one member dissenting. Of

the two members not present and consulted later, both past Chairs, one agreed and one dissented. Before we met with the Minister I had already received a late motion which I accepted in order for the Conference to democratically pass judgement on our decision *'This Conference believes the Agenda Committee exceeded its authority under Standing Orders in agreeing to send a small delegation to meet with the Minister'*.

The delegation was frankly amazed at the understanding shown by the Minister of the details of the contract. We were most impressed by the depth of her present knowledge and her ability to pick up minutiae of which she had previously been unaware. We were delighted to see her major advisors gasping for answers in front of her.

As part of their Conference presentation Tony Jacobs and Cyril Ordman reported that the widely held perception of her in the profession as uncaring and vague on detail was in our view untrue. Incidentally we also found her very personable and we came away hoping that our concerns, unfiltered by her advisers, were being listened to.

Tony and Cyril reported the meeting and the Minister's

responses back to Conference which was not in a mood to listen. The "Outraged Democrats" who felt that Conference should have been consulted about the decision to go were supported by the "Contract Rejectionists" who feel that a much harder line should be taken by the profession and were against any contact at all and eventually the motion I mention above was passed by Conference on a split vote and there was an immediate rejection of the Minister's further invitation to meet. On the day I referred to this as "An earth-shattering democratic victory for the forces of impracticality, unreason, hypocrisy and legal hair splitting which they can have a good crow over." On reflection I quite like the sentence as it shows both irony and sarcasm; not an easy combination to achieve.

Since Conference I have received a number of semi-apologies from both elements and a Contract Lawyer's opinion that Standing Orders do allow the Chair to accept such an invitation. Democratic votes on motions don't always come up with the right decision but they are at least democratic. I don't believe that in the future anyone will ever complain that they were gagged at my Conference.

Other motions

Delegates supported a number of scathing motions concentrating on iniquities of the UDA system thus arming our negotiators for the Implementation Review Group meetings.

Presentations

The Special Debate, introduced by Pat York and myself during Trevor Mann's Chairmanship had become very stale over recent years and I decided this year that instead we would have a series of presentations giving delegates the most up-to-the-minute view of various aspects of dental practice.

Linda Wallace gave an excellent overview of the

benefits and pitfalls of Incorporation. Darrin Robinson of IDH traveled the length of the country to speak on Corporates and the new Contract while Susie Sanderson, who under one of her hats has had the alloyed pleasure of visiting Brussels, spoke of the European attitude to Amalgam and Tooth Whitening. The gasp of horror from the audience when she mentioned Euro

proposals to ban amalgam from 2007 showed how valuable the presentations were.

Dan Berry of the BDA gave an interesting presentation on the results of the LDC survey, thus informing delegates of how the Contract situation in their local patches fits into the national picture.

GDPC Report

Lester Ellman, Chair of the General Dental Practice Committee, gave his annual report on the work of the Committee. He reported on the work done by the BDA to prepare GDPs for the new contract and the difficulty of the decision whether to join the Department of Health's Implementation Review Group on the new contract.

John Crocker

This year ended John's nine year tenure as Treasurer of Conference. It has been a very great pleasure working with him on the Committee these last years. His unfailing support for a series of Chairs has allowed the group to function smoothly and has saved many of them, even the least competent of them such as my humble self, from

sleepless nights. And, unlike the BDA, we have never been in the red!

I was delighted to present him with a gift on behalf of Conference. The Agenda Committee picked the gift and democratically voted on the wording of the engraving in spite of Standing Orders not specifically mentioning champagne bowls and goblets.

General

I have received many compliments on the way the Conference was managed but I can only accept these on behalf of the Agenda Committee.

Katherine, Elise, Peter, Dan and the BDA team were fantastic – seamless and

invisible – and it's really excellent not to have the distraction of concerns about the logistics. The rest of the Committee were genuinely mutually supportive and full of good ideas and good humour.

If I say so myself it was a Conference that will live in the memory.

Brian Skinner.
Chair of LDC Conference 2006.



LDC Motions Carried by Conference

Avon LDC. This Conference calls for the link between UDAs and payment to be removed immediately and a new system be devised with the agreement of the profession and fully tested before implementation.

South & West Devon LDC. This Conference deplores the introduction of a contract which places practitioners under a performance target which ignores patient treatment needs.

Tees LDC. This conference believes that the new contract encourages dentists to be UDA generators – and does not reward best clinical practise – with an outcome which will restrict comprehensive dental care and lead to a reduction in the dental health of the most needy in Society

Morecambe Bay LDC. This Conference believes that the introduction of “open market” forces will drive down UDA values to the detriment of patient care and could destabilise small practices particularly in rural areas.

South Cheshire LDC. This Conference believes that, as the new contract has been imposed on the dental profession and patients without negotiation and without appropriate piloting, it is unacceptable for dentist to be held responsible should the system of UDA targets and banded patient charges fail to deliver.

Bury & Rochdale LDC. This Conference advises LDCs to meet their MPs at least annually to maintain a dialogue and to keep their MPs informed of developments in dental politics.

Avon LDC. This Conference rejects the Department of Health’s assertion that the new contract will benefit patients.

Gwent LDC. This Conference is implored to protect the future independence of LDCs as truly representative of practitioners in their area.

Manchester LDC. This Conference deplores the Government’s failure to acknowledge the concerns registered by the whole dental profession that the new contract is ill-conceived and damaging for both patients and dentists.

Manchester LDC. This Conference believes that it is the Government’s primary objective to drive GPCs and their teams out of the NHS through increased bureaucracy, decreased funding and iniquitous conditions of contracting.

Bury & Rochdale LDC. This Conference believes, following the success of the profession with the media in Spring 2006, pressure should be placed by GPC and all LDCs on the DoH and politically as widely as possible in order to extend the concept of floor funding of dental spending by PCTs beyond April 2009.

Kensington, Chelsea & Westminster LDC. This Conference proposes that, in order for the LDCs in England & Wales to continue their function as statutory bodies, the PCTs should implement a mandatory clause within the nGDS/nPDS contracts for the providers of these contracts to pay a monthly statutory levy. Without these funds the LDC cannot perform its functions.

Gwent LDC. This Conference demands that, in the absence of adequate remuneration, no practitioner will be penalised by the penalty clauses in the new contract for attending meetings etc which support the provision of NHS dentistry.

Salford & Trafford LDC. This Conference calls for the DoH to clarify the charges applicable to referrals of patients between Primary Care professionals so that both patients and dentists can fully and easily understand them. Confusion has been created by the changes introduced at the last minute before the 1 April deadline.

Salford & Trafford LDC. This Conference requires the DoH to make absolutely clear the conditions relating to the circumstances under which apparently discretionary charges, eg for “lost” dentures, apply. This should not be a decision thrust upon practitioners but should have uniform application across the country.

LDC Motions continued

Birmingham LDC. This Conference regrets the way opposition to the contract was conducted by the BDA. It hopes that future policy is more supportive of the wishes of NHS dentistry and hardens its campaign against the enforced new contract.

Brent & Harrow LDC. This Conference proposes that the motions presented at the Conference and the results of such presentations should be distributed to GDPs within one month of the Conference by their respective LDCs.

Kensington, Chelsea & Westminster LDC. This Conference proposes that, as with the GMS contract, performance management and contact performance are distinct and separate entities.

Northamptonshire LDC. This Conference believes that this (O)LDC Conference must become the (N)LDC Conference.

Dudley LDC. This Conference believes that VT should not be target driven by UDAs but remain an educationally based transition from dental school to general dental practice.

Tees LDC. This Conference deplores the policy of trying to break the link between VT and VT+1 where a VDP wishing to remain in their training practice as an associate may find there is no funding available for them to stay unless they move to another practice at the PCT's discretion.

East Surrey LDC. This Conference demands that the DoH provides fully funded and free of charge Occupational Health resources to allow all

medical certificates which will be required for the mandatory registration of DCPs.

North & Mid Hampshire LDC. This Conference proposes that UDA values should be better related to the patient's oral condition.

Northamptonshire LDC and North Tyne LDC. This conference believes the LDC Conference Agenda Committee exceeded its authority under Standing Orders in agreeing to send a small delegation to meet with the Minister

Bromley LDC. This Conference proposes that all dentists should charge a fee for failed appointments, as it is impossible to meet UDA targets unless patients are present for their treatment and there is no provision within the contracts for historical earnings in regard to failed appointments.

Election Results

Congratulations to the following dentists who were elected to posts at Conference:

Chairman Elect of Conference - Dr Eddie Crouch

Honorary Auditors to the Conference –
Dr Mayur Bhatt &
Dr Brett Sinson

Representative to the Conference Agenda Committee –
Dr Alison Lockyer

Representative to the GDPC –
Dr Lester Ellman



Representative to the Board of Managers of the British Dental Guild –
Dr Tariq Mushtaq