

February 2011

**To: Secretaries of Local Dental Committees  
Members of General Dental Practice Committee**

Dear Colleague

**2011 Annual Conference of Local Dental Committees  
9th and 10th June – Hotel Russell and Grand Connaught Rooms, London**

It is with much pleasure that I, as Chair of Conference 2011, invite representatives to attend the 60th Annual LDC Conference, which this year will be held in London. I am also delighted that Denplan will be supporting the event as the Platinum Sponsor.

It is an honour to have the opportunity to chair your Conference, especially in the run up to what will be a new NHS Dental Services Contract, which will, hopefully, result in an improved service for both patients and dentists.

The new coalition government has agreed to continue with the conclusions from the Steele Report and new pilot studies are now commencing.

In the last few years Conference has been greatly frustrated about its inability to alter what is now widely regarded as a discredited contract, based on the malign spectre of UDAs. The outlook has been unremittingly bleak as we have been unable to gain much concession, especially with more intransigent PCTs.

As I look at the recently proposed reforms to the NHS, I see one of the biggest opportunities for LDCs to play a central role in the local NHS, that has ever existed. As PCTs are closed, their work will be shifted out and onto the GP-led commissioning consortia and the NHS Commissioning Board. Between them, these organisations will wield great power. They will need, perhaps more than ever before, strong representation from the local dental community to support and advise consortia and local authorities, on the way in which local dental services are organised and commissioned at a local level.

The opportunity for LDCs is clear. Now is our time to forge links across contractor professions, now is our time to be proactive rather than reactive, now is our time to play our part in providing genuine local leadership of the NHS.

The challenges are also clear. The administrative burden of general dental practice is now so great that we are seeing some colleagues opting to leave the profession in which we work, whilst there is the constant pressure to work 'efficiently' and keep costs to a minimum.

Both the current opportunities and challenges make this year a critical one for our Conference. Now is our opportunity to change things for the better, the Department of Health has shown a willingness to engage the profession and we in turn should seize this opportunity and engage with them. It is vital that LDCs remain vibrant, well informed and proactive. We must canvas the opinion of our members and formulate coherent policies and counter arguments. I urge you all to submit constructive motions that

will stimulate debate and demonstrate our resolve for a better NHS Dental Service and a working life not encumbered by endless red tape which takes us away from our patients.

The GDPC and the BDA, as our negotiators, should be left in no doubt as to the strength of our views and this will enable them to lead the profession on our behalf, and with a forceful mandate. I will endeavour to make sure that they do.

To enable a final mailing to be distributed in early May , motions should be received by **Monday 4 April 2011**. Early submission will assist the Agenda Committee greatly.

As is the custom, the Conference will be preceded by a dinner on the evening of the 9th June in The Hotel Russell and the speaker will be Dr Kevin Lewis.

I look forward to welcoming you to Conference 2011 and if in the meantime you have a policy query, please contact Will Newport at the BDA ([w.newport@bda.org](mailto:w.newport@bda.org)) or if it is a query about the event, contact Katherine Fort on 01243 780615, [katherine.fort@btinternet.com](mailto:katherine.fort@btinternet.com).

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. C. Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mick Armstrong  
LDC Conference Chair, 2011