



General Dental Practice Committee

2 October 2026

Report of the General Dental Practice Committee

The General Dental Practice Committee met on 2 October 2026. The meeting was chaired by Vice Chair Vijay Sudra, due to Shiv Pabary's ill health.

Dental Contract Reform and general contractual issues

I reported to the Committee regarding recent meetings with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England. We noted that our first meeting with the new minister responsible for dentistry, James Frith MP, had acknowledged that the current system was not working. While the meeting was positive, it is inevitable that the change of ministers has slowed progress. Members expressed concern regarding the apparent pause in progress towards fundamental contract reform.

I updated the Committee on our recent discussions with the DHSC. These meetings had become less focused upon contract reform following the formation of the new cabinet in July. Recent discussion had instead focused primarily on implementation of the interim contract changes.

In our monthly meetings with NHS England we have raised a number of issues regarding the implementation of the contract changes. In particular, we have raised the presentation of claims data on Compass and eDen, and the difficulties that these are causing practices. Following corrections to data entered and the DDRB uplift, the BSA has 'recycled' all previous claims to ensure that they have been processed correctly.

We also expressed our concerns regarding recent Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag (RADF) requirements placing administrative strain upon practices. Further information is expected as to how practices can comply with this shortly.

We have also met with the BSA to receive an update on the implementation of the new NHS Dental Services Portal, which will replace Compass. It is scheduled to go live in February 2027 and the BSA will share information with contractors about the sign-up process soon.



UDA contract changes

Tom King, Head of the BDA's Policy and Research team, presented findings from the BDA's recent survey of the interim contract changes, which received more than 400 responses from members. We noted significant dissatisfaction with the reforms, with many respondents reporting that the changes had not improved NHS dentistry and indicated intentions to reduce their NHS commitment. Members responding to the survey had expressed particular confusion regarding the complexity of unscheduled care payments to associates. I restated that these results reinforced the need for meaningful contract reform rather than incremental changes.

There was clear feedback that change is needed to the Complex Care Pathways, and we will develop proposals to take to NHS England.

Pay, expenses and costs of service

Following the DDRB repeating its recommendation that the departments should create an 'Index of Dental Costs' to use as the basis for uplifting the expenses element of contracts and fees, we met with the DHSC to discuss this proposal. We reinforced our concerns surrounding the ongoing usage of the GDP deflator, which is an inflation measure entirely unrelated to the costs faced by dental practices. We're willing to work with the DHSC on an Index of Dental Costs, but it is clear that funding any uplift arising from such an index is the main concern for the Department.

Ciara Gallagher presented the Northern Ireland cost-of-service review. Ciara explained the review's process and conclusion that current remuneration remains significantly below the level required to be financially sustainable for practices. The review concluded that NHS dentistry in Northern Ireland needed to be able to generate £145 an hour, but was currently paid at less than £100 per hour. Ciara noted the Northern Ireland Department of Health had accepted the review's findings, but it was yet to be seen how it would respond further to the present crisis in funding.

Reports from the Devolved Nations

We received reports from the devolved nations. In Wales, members reported significant concerns regarding the implementation of the reformed contract, including uncertainty regarding contractual requirements, administrative burdens, and increasing levels of contract handbacks, reaching 42 in 2025/26. Engagement with new ministers remained limited.

In Scotland, Charlotte Waite updated us regarding ongoing discussions on expenses and remuneration following payment reforms. We also noted the publication of plans for wider NHS reform in Scotland and the opportunities and risks this may present for the profession.

NHS tie-ins

I updated the Committee regarding the DHSC's ongoing proposals for NHS tie-ins for dental graduates. The government remains wedded to this approach; despite the strong objections we have made. It is anticipated that there will be some form of public consultation on the plans to confirm the final arrangements that will apply to students starting dental school from September



2027. Members strongly supported the BDA's position of opposing the tie-in and agreed that incentives to continue NHS work would be preferable to compulsory arrangements.

VAT

We discussed the implications of the recent VAT ruling in the Align Technology case and its accompanying definition of a dental prosthesis as a dental appliance that replaced a missing or damaged tooth. Members expressed concern regarding uncertainty in the interpretation of the ruling and the potential impact on practices if VAT requirements were widened. I affirmed the ongoing efforts to seek clarification and asked members to share examples of VAT being applied to lab bills.

Associate terms and conditions

We discussed proposed GDPC negotiating positions regarding associate terms and conditions. Members supported the package of proposals developed by the Executive and Associates Sub-Committee, noting the importance of transparency, retention and improved support for associates. We agreed that the proposals should be adopted as the policy of the BDA moving forward.

Private Practice

I updated the Committee regarding the Competition and Markets Authority's study into the private dental market. We noted publication of the interim findings had displayed that the CMA was now widening its investigation to include the transparency of private dental plans sold to patients. I also noted the submission of additional evidence regarding remote orthodontics, teeth whitening and dental tourism ahead of the CMA's final report expected in March 2027.

Local Dental Committees

Zoe Connelly, the LDC Conference Chair, updated the Committee on preparations for the 2027 LDC Conference in Leeds. Zoe stated the current proposed theme was "Progress?" Members were encouraged to promote the use of observer places within their Local Dental Committees.

Shiv Pabary

Chair, General Dental Practice Committee
October 2026

