

## The New Contract and Specialist Services

The arrival of the 'New Contract' for the general dental service is scheduled for April 2006, the new name for the contractual arrangements is *n*GDS and the currency of the contract is a new animal – the UDA (unit of dental activity.) Any members who have provided Oral Surgery under current GDS (General Dental Service) arrangements will be entitled to *n*GDS contracts, but contract values will have been calculated from the 2004-5 prescribing profile and will reflect the fees allowed for 'extractions of special difficulty' in the current SDR (Statement of Dental Remuneration,) which does not recognise Minor Oral Surgery.

From April 2006 PCTs (Primary Care Trusts) will be expected to commission Specialist as well as general Dental Services ('Mandatory Services') from the budgets being devolved for NHS dentistry; Minor Oral Surgery, along with Sedation and Domiciliary visiting (both non-specialist activities) is specifically mentioned. PCTs are advised to look at 'cross-border' requirements with neighbouring Trusts within SHAs (Strategic Health Authorities) and with other SHAs to assess the level of need for Specialist Services, and to commission appropriately. The obvious problem here is the existence of adequate provision within the Secondary Care Sector, so that PCTs who consider the provision adequate will probably not wish to duplicate services by agreeing contracts with Specialist Practitioners.

The only advice the Association can offer is that Individual practitioners must negotiate with their PCTs *either* to establish new PDS contracts for Oral Surgery *or* to identify the level of specialist service within a GDS contract, and request the PCT to commission that service provision **separately**. The only PDS *pilot* model is the South Derbyshire arrangement and would be a starting point for negotiations.

### BAOS advises:

- Read 'Primary care Dental Services: Commissioning Specialist Dental Services' [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) gateway ref. 5865 (revised 08.12.2005)
- Enter negotiations with your PCT (or PCTs) to establish a new PDS contract for the provision of Surgical Services
- Ensure that the Contract Value and the Service Level are acceptable
- Seek advice from your LDC as to the general acceptability of the contract before signing.
- Don't continue to provide Specialist Services under a *n*GDS contract

We are entering uncharted waters here and it seems that it is up to each 'Service provider' to negotiate the best deal they can within this new framework of 'Local Commissioning.'

The New Contract is extremely unpopular with GPs and is widely seen as a means of 'cash limiting' the NHS Dental Service.