

Don't undermine the role of a dental nurse

It is vital to have a cohesive team made up of aspiring team members who are willing to go above and beyond for both the practice and patients, **Lis Hughes** says

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The dental profession is constantly evolving, whether this be through the appearance, technology or the range of general and specialised treatments and cosmetic services provided. As practice owners, it is essential to understand the importance of the individuals who create the teams within the practices. For example, the relationship between a dental nurse and a hygienist, changing the way we view dental nurses, while being aware of what can entice future employees and colleagues to join the team.

Browns Locumlink, a recruitment company (part of the Frank Taylor & Associates group) that specialises within the dental and pharmacy industry over the past 30 years, can analyse and comment on the current status of what employees (in this case nurses) look for in a practice.

Six months ago, we noticed a shortage

of nurse vacancies, for many practices had normalised it for hygienists to work independently without any nurse support. Dental nurses are an integral component to a dental team. Without a dental nurse present at a hygiene appointment, the hygienist is forced between engaging and advising the patient, proceeding with procedures as well as the additional task of sterilising, material preparation and maintaining a clean surgery all within 20-minute back-to-back appointments.

A stress-free environment

In 2019, it is not uncommon for a hygienist to work alone within a 30-minute appointment, however, Browns Locumlink has identified that hygienists are more than willing to work within 20-minute appointments if there is support from a dental nurse.

This allows a stress-free environment and for the hygienists to have their

complete attention on the patient to ensure they have a systematic and professional procedure. If you advertised a job that included nurse support with 20- to 30-minute appointments anything else is a bonus because all an employee wants to do is to excel. This is because without the necessary support and time the reputation of a practice can be at stake.

While all dental-based positions require and vary in intense training and qualifications, nurses are paid on average £8.57 per hour. In comparison, hygienists are paid on average £33 per hour and dentists are paid between £50-£70 per hour (depending on private or NHS work). There is a considerable pay gap between nurses and other roles.

With many dental nurses, responsibilities are increasing while their pay rate stays the same. It is vital to have a cohesive team made up of aspiring team members who are willing to go above and beyond for both the practice and patients. Changing the way we think and investing in nurses at a respectful rate/salary will impact the practice environment.

There is a risk of undermining the role of a dental nurse, which can impact the roles of a dentist and hygienist. Browns Locumlink now offers consultations to a practice and can recruit a new member to join your team, be it a dentist, dental nurse, hygienist, practice manager or receptionist. **D**

CALL THE TEAM on 01707 291823 to discuss your recruitment requirements.

PRACTICE ONE - MIDLANDS

Practice type - this is a fully NHS practice with five surgeries, which has been established over 20 years. The practice is being sold as leasehold with 20 years remaining on a 25-year lease. The principal is selling to release himself from the administrative burden. The practice is situated in a shop-fronted property with free street parking outside. It is being sold as leasehold with a new 20-year lease being created.

Practice gross - the gross income is in the region of £880,000 and the income is generated by the principal working three days a week, two full-time associates, and two part-time associates working a combined seven days a week and two hygienists both working one day a week. They are supported by a full-time practice manager, a full-time receptionist and three full-time and one part-time nurse.

Price achieved - a price of £1,600,000 was achieved, which was in excess of the asking price.

Agent's comments - this practice came to the market as a fully NHS practice with a great UDA rate of £27.50 per UDA. The incoming principal has an ambition to develop a private practice alongside the NHS dentistry undertaken and wanted this practice as there is space to add surgeries to the practice. The demographics of the region indicate significant private growth is achievable.

PRACTICE FOUR - HOME COUNTIES

Practice type - this practice is based in a semi-detached property, within a predominantly residential area of a very busy commuter town. It is a predominantly NHS practice with one surgery and additional space that could be converted into a second surgery. It is being sold as leasehold with 14 years remaining on a 20-year lease.

Practice gross - the gross income at this practice was in the region of £245,000 of which 91% is NHS-GDS contract and 9% fee per item. The income has been generated by two associates working a combined 40-hour week and a hygienist working half a day a week. They are supported by two part-time nurses and two part-time receptionists.

Price achieved - a price of £575,000 was achieved, which was in excess of the asking price.

Agent's comments - this practice shows a reconstituted profit of 75% and for the new owner there is a great opportunity as it is currently an associate run practice. There is enough space to add an additional surgery and develop the private element of the practice.

PRACTICE TWO - GREATER LONDON

Practice type - this is a three-surgery, predominantly NHS, practice based on a busy main road, close to underground and overground station, and with a mix of residential and commercial property. It is being sold with a lease of 15 years, and is being sold to release the current owner to focus on another practice in a different location.

Practice gross - the gross income is in the region of £850,000 and is 30% private and 70% NHS-GDS contract with a UDA rate of £28.33. The income has been generated by the principal working two days a week, five associates working a combined 11 days a week, and a hygienist working one day a week. The team is supported by a full-time practice manager, three part-time receptionists and three full-time nurses.

Price achieved - a price of £1,900,000 was achieved, which was in excess of the asking price.

Agent's comments - this practice has been established for more than 20 years and the outgoing principal has acknowledged marketing opportunities to grow the business have been missed over the past few years as his focus has been on his second practice. In reality, this leaves the incoming principal with a great opportunity to grow and develop the practice.

PRACTICE THREE - BERKSHIRE

Practice type - this is a five-surgery, mixed practice based in a semi-detached property within a busy mix of residential and commercial properties. It is being sold as a leasehold and there is ample parking nearby.

Practice gross - the gross income is in the region of £870,000. The gross has been generated by the current owner working five days a week, three associates working a combined 10 days a week, three hygienists working a combined four days a week. They are supported by a part-time practice manager, four part-time receptionists and six part-time nurses.

Price achieved - a price of £1,800,000 was achieved, which was in excess of the asking price.

Agent's comments - this practice appealed to many of our buyers and resulted in a sealed bid process taking place. Whenever we receive an offer in excess of the asking price, we insist the buyers can evidence they have the ability to pay the premium outside of any bank funding, as we would never expect the banks to provide funding for a premium payment.

