

CONFERENCE OF SCOTTISH LDCs

Good Morning ladies and gentlemen,

You don't need me to tell you that this has been a very difficult time for the profession since the Scottish Dental Fund last reported to Conference.

For colleagues who are new to Conference, I should perhaps briefly explain the function of the Scottish Dental Fund. The Fund exists in order to ensure that those dentists who are elected to SDPC to represent the profession in negotiations and discussions with the Scottish Government and other relevant parties in matters of remuneration and conditions are not financially disadvantaged by lost surgery time while engaged in such negotiation.

The funds are ingathered from the LDCs who collect contributions from dentists in their respective Health Board Areas who have completed mandates authorising modest deductions from their monthly remuneration.

The current target amount forwarded to the SDF by the LDCs amounts to £2 per month per dentist on each Health Board list. Unfortunately, in recent times, some LDCs have been unable to fulfil their commitments due to some dentists in their area failing to complete a mandate, and a shortfall in contributions has resulted in our expenditure exceeding our income.

And those Dickens readers will recall Mr Micawber's words of wisdom in David Copperfield, "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds and sixpence, result misery".

The last thing we want is to visit misery on our treasurer.

Fortunately, thanks to careful management of the Scottish Dental Fund, largely due to our Treasurer Jim Law, who has been meticulously preparing the accounts for the last 19 years (since the Fund's inception), a reserve has been built up ensuring that at present, our commitments can be fully met.

As we will discover when Jim presents his report, the fund is currently running at a deficit, a situation which is concerning and which cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely.

I am pleased to see that a motion has been proposed suggesting that practitioners be required to "opt out" of making contributions via their respective Health Boards rather than

"opt in", which, if Health Boards are willing to administer such a system, may well result in an increase in contributions.

I look forward to hearing the debate on this motion.

As you will see from the Treasurer's report, contributions from different parts of the country are uneven, and I would hope that action from those LDCs where there is a shortfall will help to redress the balance and restore fairness to the system where all who benefit from the work of our negotiators will bear their share of the costs.

This is particularly pertinent in a year where Covid has wrought havoc in treatment provision and the benefits of the remuneration package negotiated by our representatives on SDPC are plain for all to see.

If you want to ride on the bus, you need to buy a ticket.

I am happy to take any questions.

Roy McBurnie

Chair of the Scottish Dental Fund

