



*January 4<sup>th</sup> 2012*

**Dental market a honeypot – don't get stung**

Firms of professional advisors new to dentistry are encroaching on the dental market, according to Nick Ledingham, Chairman of the National Association of Dental Accountants and Lawyers (NASDAL). He advises dentists to be wary about handing over their affairs to anyone without extensive experience of working with the dental profession.

The impact of the recession on many professional firms makes acting for dentists an attractive prospect, he says. Unlike many other businesses which are struggling as a result of the economic climate, dentists working in the NHS, in particular, have a steady predictable income.

“What’s happening is that many firms of accountants and lawyers in fields such as construction and the retail trade are losing clients and they are then attempting to begin acting for dentists in order to replace that lost income. In many cases, in order to break into the dental market they are offering to undertake work at less than cost price,” he points out.

He urges UK dentists not to be tempted to put their faith in someone new to the market. They may be very good at what they do, he says, but without the in depth knowledge and experience that NASDAL members have of dentists, their advice may not be sound.

As examples of the complexities of dental business he mentions: -

- The NHS pension Scheme
- The risks of incorporation for NHS principals and associates
  
- The NHS contract, which is constantly evolving
- Dental practice goodwill
- Associate/performer contracts

Ray Goodman, Chairman of the NASDAL Lawyers Group, said that on a regular basis, specialist lawyers were having to unravel the mistakes made by lawyers with no experience in the dental market place. "Dentists should be very cautious if a non-specialist lawyer is dramatically under-cutting a specialist. If they are planning to complete the job in less time at a lower cost, without fully understanding the technicalities of the work they are doing, it's almost certainly not in the best interests of the client," he commented.

**Note to editors**

NASDA was set up in 1998 by a group of accountants with a specialist knowledge of, and interest in, the finances of General Dental Practitioners. By pooling statistical data on an annual basis, NASDA accountants have an insight into what makes a profitable, well-run practice. This anonymous information is shared with clients and dental organisations to help support and enhance understanding of dental practice business and taxation issues.

In 2010, the NASDA Lawyers Group merged officially with NASDA, creating NASDAL. This brought the total number of dental specialists in the association to more than 50. In order to join NASDAL, an accountant or lawyer must demonstrate that they have a thorough understanding of dental practice issues and have enough dentist clients to ensure their knowledge is kept up-to-date.

For more information, call Caroline Holland on 020 8679 9595 or 07974 731 396