Association of Dental Groups

Creating 'Dental Oases' Launch 18th June 2025

Background:

On 18th June 2025, we published our Creating 'Dental Oases' whitepaper which examines the key issues behind the dental crisis and how shoring up the total dental team is the solution. In 2022, The ADG launched its first report into the dental workforce crisis, identifying and coining what the Association called 'Dental Deserts', areas of the country where patient access to a dentist is almost impossible. Now the ADG presents its 'Dental Oases' report offering solutions. The priority intervention needs to be reform by the General Dental Council (GDC) to allow trained dentists from overseas to practice.

Launch:

Hosted by Jess Asato MP (Labour MP for Lowestoft) and led by Neil Carmichael, ADG Exec Chair, the ADG launched its Creating 'Dental Oases' report to MPs in Westminster with a drop-in session from 10-12 noon in Portcullis House. The thrust of the briefing given to the MPs who attended is that 4.5m[1] patients are going untreated annually due to the 2,749 shortfall in the dental workforce – whilst at the same time, fully trained dentists from overseas who are living in the UK, are having to make ends meet by working in McDonald's and Subway fast food restaurants because of the registration system's 'bottle-neck'.

Neil told attendees that the key solution to creating 'Dental Oases' is to unlock the barriers preventing the 6,000 fully-trained overseas dentists in the registration queue to practice as dentists in the UK, as a matter of urgency. Many of these dentists are here working in unskilled roles. The General Dental Council must reform the Overseas Registration Examination, since currently each exam sitting only has capacity for 600 students. At that rate, it will take years to get them qualified.

Press:

We invited two of trained dentists from overseas who are currently struggling to get through the ORE system to attend and talk to the MPs – as well as giving them a moment each to address the audience with their personal stories. Both Eni Shehu Muco, who has had five failed attempts to get onto the ORE part 1 list and is working as a dental therapist, and Ahmed who has come to the UK from Egypt and is currently working in McDonald's because he can't get onto the ORE part 2 list, told powerful personal stories which the MP audience clearly found engaging.

Read more: ADG Creating Dental Oases whitepaper
Read more: ADG Creating Dental Oases press release
Read more: The Guardian ADG 18 June 25
Read more: Daily Mail ADG 17 June 2025

[1] Approximately 88m Units of Dental Activity (UDA) are commissioned per annum, 72.5m were delivered 23/24 (18.4m adults / 6.7m children) which equals on average 3 UDAs per patient. With an approximation of 5,000 UDAs per FTE basis dentist and NHSE vacancies at 2,749, this totals a gap of 13,745,000 UDAs. Divide this by the 3 average UDAs per patient per annum - and that implies 4.5m patients treated per annum could be treated if all vacancies were filled.