

To all General Dental Practitioners

Tel : 028 2531 1028
Fax : 028 2531 1029

Web Site : www.hscboard.hscni.net

Email: Michael.Donaldson@hscni.net

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Dear Colleague.

Payment to the GDC of annual retention fee (ARF)

In order to practice dentistry all dentists must register with the GDC. This registration must be renewed through payment of an Annual Retention Fee (ARF) at the end of each calendar year. The GDC gives the option to pay the fee by several different methods.

Each year the GDC contacts the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) to inform it of dentists who have failed to pay their ARF on time. Typically there are 5 to 10 local dentists in this group and the failure is often down to a change of address, a change of bank or a cheque lost in the post. These dentists cannot legally practice dentistry. When the HSCB becomes aware of this situation each dentist is contacted by a dental adviser and advised to stop treating patients (both Health Service and Private) immediately and not to carry out any treatment until they are fully restored to the GDC register. The dentist then has to make alternative arrangements for the patients' continuing and emergency care. It should also be noted that during a period of non-registration the dentist's indemnity is not valid.

In order to reduce the likelihood of overlooking the payment of the ARF, and incurring all the subsequent issues for both dentist and patients, the HSCB would like to remind all dentists to make the payment in good time and preferably to avail of the facility to pay the fee by direct debit.

This option is clearly advertised in the reminder that comes from the GDC for the ARF payment.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Donaldson
Head of Dental Services
HSCB

