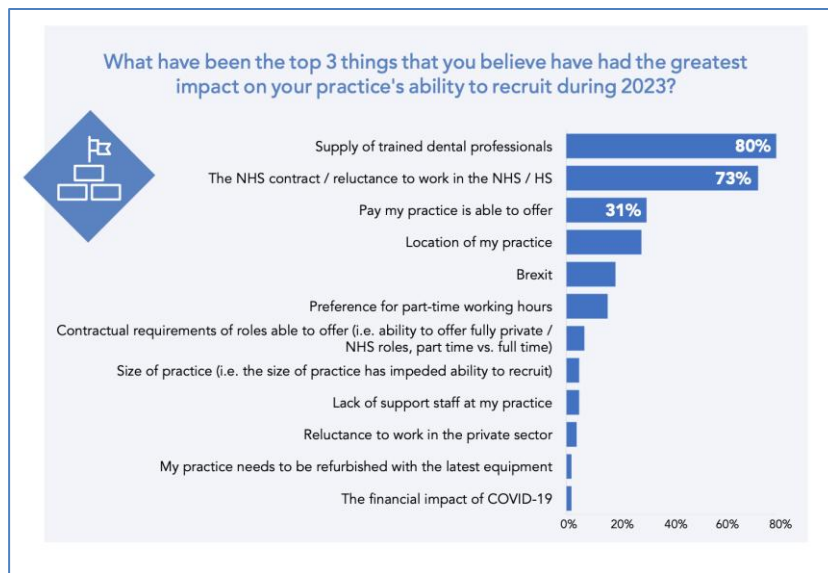


**ADG’s workforce gap warning affirmed in white paper
80% of practices impacted by lack of dental professionals**

A white paper published on 16th January 2025 by the British Dental Journal Jobs (BDJ) ‘*The Future of Dental Recruitment in the UK: Trends and Predictions for 2025*’¹ reveals that the ‘supply of trained dental professionals is the top thing they believe had the greatest impact on their practice’s ability to recruit during 2023’, with 80% of those polled saying this was the number one issue.



Source: BDJ Jobs recruitment white paper 2024

Throughout the ongoing crisis in dentistry, the Association of Dental Groups (ADG) has been saying time and time again that the priority issue is the huge gap in the dental workforce. Repeating a mantra of ‘recruitment, recruitment, recruitment - and retention’, the ADG has flagged the significance of the gap in the dental workforce. Data published by NHS England for the period to March 2024 show there are 2,749 full-time equivalent (FTE basis) NHS dentist vacancies, which make up 87% of total dentist vacancies currently open - at 3,160 (FTE basis). These are roles that have been open for an average of 180 days per post, and most are more than three months old. Furthermore, with 411 private vacancies (FTE basis) still open, it is clear that irrespective of the need for NHS contract reform, there is a system-wide shortage of dentists in the UK across the profession’s ‘mixed-economy’. The result of this huge gap in the dental workforce means that there is an issue with the number of patient treatments that can actually be carried out.

The ADG emphasised the importance of shoring up the dental workforce in their input to the National Audit Office (NAO) review both at a meeting and in writing as they prepared their report into the failings of the dental recovery plan. The ADG has been clear throughout that the dental workforce is the number one

¹ https://partnerships.nature.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/BDJ_Recruitment_Whitepaper_24.pdf

issue. However, when the NAO report came out, it did not reflect a proper picture of the dentistry landscape or the issues. It focused on the NHS contract - and not the lack of dentists in the UK.

Now the Public Accounts Committee has called for a public inquiry - something the ADG demanded earlier this month. The ADG has made their submission to this call for input, which closed yesterday.

Neil Carmichael, Executive Chair, Association of Dental Groups said: *“The NAO report was a terrible waste of public funds and has brought us no closer to a solution to fix the crisis in dentistry. The ADG called for a public inquiry and we now welcome this proper examination of the issues. We have ensured the committee has the insights from our Association’s members who are living day-to-day struggling to recruit trained dental professionals. Let’s hope they listen! We can then move forward to rescue UK dentistry and deliver to patients the care they deserve.”*

Ends

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Notes to editors:

Read more: [BDJ Jobs recruitment white paper 2024](#)
Read more: [Public Accounts Committee Fixing NHS Dentistry](#)
Read more: [NAO report](#)
Read more: [NHS England dental workforce](#)
Read more: [gov.uk changes to GDC international registration legislation](#)
Read more: [ADG Seven Steps to Save UK Dentistry](#)

About ADG:

- The Association of Dental Groups (ADG) is the trade association for groups of dental health and care practices and organisations working with and on behalf of members, representing their view and progressing improvements in the working environment for groups of dental providers of oral health care.
- The ADG has 28 members including some of the largest groups of dental practices in the country, but the Association also represents smaller providers with fewer than 5 practices. Of the 2,000 practices which members operate, approximately 1,800 are in England with the balance spread across the devolved nations.
- Across ADG’s members there are approximately 10,000 clinicians delivering NHS, community and private dentistry to more than 10 million patients every year.
- ADG members adopt and share best practice to enable their peers to deliver the highest quality service to patients.
- The leadership of ADG members are often experienced dentists themselves, with involvement in professional and vocational training, enabling them to provide expertise as trainers and advisers.
- Areas of focus include working on sector improvements for dental groups, including sharing consistent best practice, supporting innovation, and encouraging the investment and skills development of all dental professionals. The ADG aims to do this by shaping policy, raising awareness and influencing key stakeholders.
- The ADG is involved in policy development, encouraging policy makers to make evidence-based decisions.
- The ADG takes a solutions-focused approach to create the most supportive environment for dental groups where teams feel valued and are able to provide the highest quality dental care for patients.
- The ADG supports, promotes and encourages a prevention approach to improve oral health.
- Workforce support includes campaigning for more dentists to be trained in the UK, identifying key strategies to improve recruitment and the retention of dental professionals from the UK and abroad, including streamlining onboarding processes.
- The ADG works with key stakeholders to contribute to undergraduate, foundation and DCP training and provide opportunities to create a learning and supportive environment for dental teams.
- When it comes to commissioning, the ADG influences in key areas to ensure both private and NHS dentistry are developed in a financially sustainable way.
- The ADG’s strategic objectives are:
 1. Developing an agile, inclusive, and professional workforce across dentistry.
 2. Fighting for fair access to quality NHS Dentistry.
 3. Supporting the work of private dentistry.
 4. Promoting the work of dental groups in public, private, and community operations.
 5. Shaping public policy to improve oral health in the United Kingdom.