

Briefing: A new NHS dental contract

13 February 2026

BDA Cymru

The British Dental Association Cymru is the voice of dentists and dental students in

*Wales, serving as their professional body and trade union. **This briefing follows on from the September 2025 issue.***



The National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts and Patient Charges) (Wales) Regulations 2026

This 'new' dental contract has been [heralded by the Government](#) as the first **major dental services reform** in 20 years. To reiterate this is not a negotiated contract and [these regulations](#) are new under the existing section 57 of the National Health Service Act 2006. The changes to dentists' contracts are being brought in with no formal notice under 'contract variation' by the Health Boards. [See below for the regulations schedule]

What dentists think about the new contract

- **Dentists are angry** they are expected to **carry all the risk** of an untested contract and make such a profound business decision with **insufficient details** in a very short space of time.
- **Dentists are angry** that Jeremy Miles MS says they will receive increased payments when we calculate that many parts of the contract will incur **real losses**.
- It is **wrong** to say dentists earn **£150 per hour** - this is inflated – a fee goes to the practice to cover overheads and salaries and **falls very short** of true costs. Moreover, the contract is **modelled on activity** not time.
- Dentists are in an **information grey zone**; the regulations are just published, but without the model contract that was promised for mid-January. Initial 'vignettes' *guidance* does not substitute for contractual details and parts are in **direct contradiction** of the new regulations. **The Statement of Financial Entitlement** is not yet published, but contract holders need this to complete their business modelling and make decisions.
- This lack of definitive official information and looming deadlines are causing **extreme stress**. There are many aspects that remain **contradictory or inconsistent** between the initial *guidance* and the regulations.
- Based on what they know, **less than 5% dentists** recently surveyed said the contract is currently workable. Over 60% dentists said it is **not workable** and needs substantial revision. Many simply don't know.
- The profession is expected to devise an **untested payment** model for associates.
- The Government should provide **financial guarantees** due to risks of untested metrics.
- The profession is unanimous that the new contract needs **piloting and trials** in a **moratorium year** before full rollout of the new model.
- The cabinet minister had rejected calls for deferral for a year leaving **no hope** of interim arrangements.
- Several practices have **handed back their contracts** already and many more are poised to do so having hung onto the last remnants of hope of salvaging a workable contract.

Legal process and timetable

The process of passing the new regulations into law is being conducted via the negative or annulment procedure as [subordinate legislation](#). This is normally used for executive expediency. We consider this route has been cynically adopted to stifle any debate or scrutiny. It has also been scheduled to be coterminous with the conclusion of the Senedd's current term.

Under the negative procedure Members of Senedd will be able to scrutinise but not amend the regulations. There is an option for opposition to vote for annulment, but the BDA is not seeking this. It would mean the 2006 dental regulations are retained and the contract reverted to UDAs. **We are between a rock and a hard place.**

Summary of Regulations schedule

- Regulations were made on 9 February 2026.
 - Regulations were published on 11 February 2026
 - Regulations (except 42 and 43) will come into force on 11 March 2026.
 - The annulment period will conclude on 29 March 2026 ○
- Regulations in their entirety come into force on 1 April.

For further information please contact the BDA at mediaprandparliamentary@bda.org

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