

PRESS RELEASE



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AUDITS WILL BE AUDITED, WARNS MDDUS.

Scots dentists risk breaching their terms of service if they don't follow the new rules on clinical audit.

The UK-wide dental defence organisation MDDUS is reminding practitioners that a shake-up of the system saw a new three-year clinical audit period begin on August 1 this year. The Scottish Government has decided not to punish any dentists who failed to meet audit requirements before this date.

But MDDUS dental adviser Doug Hamilton warned dentists not to get complacent. He says: "Don't mistake this compromise for leniency.

"Firstly, all NHS dentists' compliance with the updated regulations will be checked by their Health Board, probably around the middle of 2012.

"Secondly, those who 'got away with it' in the past will be subject to a special provision - they will be required to complete five hours of audit by next summer."

MDDUS points out that participation in this aspect of clinical governance has long been recommended to all dentists. Since 2001, those who work in the NHS have been placed under a positive obligation to complete 15 hours of audit activity every three years.

But despite the explicit nature of this regulation, carrying out audits has not always been a high priority for all practitioners. Earlier this year, the Scottish Government moved to simplify the rules in a bid to encourage more dentists to carry out audits.

A recent Scottish Government Health Directorates memo details the changes being made.

It states that all practitioners can now start with a clean slate from the start of August 2010 and dentists who join a list after that date will have the number of required hours reduced proportionately.

Doug Hamilton adds: "It is particularly important for those joining a list for the first time to identify clinical activities that would benefit from scrutiny and positive development as soon as possible, as they will now be required to undertake five hours of audit in their initial year."

However, for those considering leaving the NHS, it is worth noting that practitioners can claim a Clinical Audit Allowance for the first 15 hours of audit activity in any cycle. This is also available to those working for dental bodies corporate.

Ends

For further information contact Colin Calder on 0141 616 2677 or 07850 510881.

Note to editors

MDDUS (The Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland) is a medical and dental defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medico- and dento-legal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK.

For further information on MDDUS go to www.mddus.com.