

PRESS RELEASE



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DENTISTS REMINDED TO PAY FEE OR PAY THE CONSEQUENCES

Dentists risk being removed from the register and denied the right to practise in the UK if they don't pay their Annual Retention Fee (ARF) on time.

Each year, usually in January and February, UK-wide dental defence organisation MDDUS is contacted by members throughout the UK who have not paid their ARF to the General Dental Council (GDC) by the deadline of midnight on December 31. Often dentists unintentionally fail to pay due to changes in their banking details or other personal information.

The advice provided by MDDUS in such cases is unequivocal – dentists who fail to pay will be removed from the register and must cease practising until they are restored.

Doug Hamilton, dental adviser at MDDUS, warns: "If dentists don't pay, they will be putting their registration at risk. It is illegal for an unregistered dentist or dental care professional to practise dentistry in the UK. Therefore, dentists who have been removed from the register must not practise until their name has been restored.

"Reinstatement takes up to fourteen days and even longer if the mandatory paperwork is not in order. During this time, dentists cannot work either within the NHS or privately, leading to significant loss of remuneration and inconvenience to patients."

To complete this process a number of requirements must be satisfied, including the production of a Health Certificate by a medical practitioner together with a character reference by a different referee, neither of whom can be a family member.

"All unregistered dentists are also required to pay a restoration fee in addition to the standard ARF, while those dentists who continued to work after the deadline of December 31 must explain in writing how these circumstances occurred," adds Hamilton.

"However, the expense and disruption incurred by failure to pay the ARF on time goes far beyond the completion of the restoration form."

In view of the penalties for non-payment, Hamilton suggests that members should consider paying the GDC by direct debit. "By setting up a direct debit payment, dentists minimise the possibility of the ARF being overlooked.

"But it must be remembered that individual dentists are still responsible for ensuring the fee has been debited from their account on the designated date. Make sure your bank details are

up-to-date otherwise payments may not be processed and you may unintentionally fail to pay the ARF.”

If members, particularly those who are required to explain why they worked in the UK while unregistered, would like any further advice on this matter, then they should not hesitate to contact MDDUS.

For more information about ARF, including payment methods, visit the GDC website or click on the link: <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Fees/Pages/ARF-FAQs.aspx>.

Ends

For further information contact Richard Hendry on 0845 270 2034 or 07976 272266, or email rihendry@mddus.com.

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.