

# Patient Plan Direct talking

**Julian English** talks to **Simon Reynolds** of **Patient Plan Direct** about the company's proposition and the payment plan market

**Julian English (JE):** What is your view on the recent acquisition of DPAS by Wesleyan?

**Simon Reynolds (SR):** It was somewhat out of the blue. I actually heard about it on [www.dentistry.co.uk](http://www.dentistry.co.uk). Considering Wesleyan already have a presence in the dental payment plan market via Practice Plan, it will be interesting to see how they decide to manage their collective portfolio of practices and plan patients. Particularly considering both plan providers have different charging structures and what would appear to be different service propositions.

This consolidation in the market may not suit all practices. Some may prefer to work with an independent plan provider, such as Patient Plan Direct.

**JE:** You have reputation for bullish marketing tactics. What do you say to that?

**SR:** It is no secret that a big target area for us is established practices with a volume of plan patients that perhaps do not see value in the fees they pay to their respective plan provider and see very little of the supposed support incorporated as part of their provider's service. Such practices can benefit from a plan provider transfer, opting to work with Patient Plan Direct and taking advantage of significant cost savings thanks to our low cost fee structure.

The provider transfer process is one we have thoroughly refined to ensure patient retention is maximised. Moreover, in managing a provider transfer we work with a practice to look at defining a new plan strategy to nurture further plan growth, assuming this is an objective.

Despite our focus on promoting the opportunity of practices transferring an existing base of plan patients to reduce costs, we're also very well rehearsed in practices looking to launch plans for the first time.

**JE:** How come Patient Plan Direct's fees are so low in comparison to other plan providers?

**SR:** There's no big secret or magic formula associated



with Patient Plan Direct's low administration fees, service or support. It's a business model based on scalability, efficiencies and embracing technology and the cloud.

Our support is focused purely on helping practices reach their plan objectives; ensuring practices don't pay for other elements of support they may not require that's rolled in to an administration fee. Simple. Our team is highly experienced in providing proven advice and strategy to ensure dental payment plan success.

**JE:** What is your view of the future of NHS dentistry?

**SR:** From what I have seen, there are clear funding issues for NHS dentistry and there are big question marks over the quality aspect of a new contract. This has come at the same time as reports indicated for the first time in almost a decade that private dental practice profits have crept ahead of NHS net profits. Moreover, the values of private practices are increasing faster than NHS practices, and the confidence in the NHS from practitioners seems at an all time low.

It's no wonder more practices are exploring options away from the NHS. For the last 12 months we have seen



 **Patient Plan Direct**  
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an increase in dentists converting to private and using a dental payment plan as a vehicle to achieve this change.

**JE:** How do you handle NHS conversions?

**SR:** Our team has an extremely structured approach to dealing with practices or dentists considering a conversion to private to ensure all of the elements the change is likely to impact are discussed and considered, eg, pension, income, patient demographic, communication to patients.

The key to a successful conversion is thorough planning and ensuring the entire team is 'on message', can deal with patient objections or queries, and understands the overall objective.

**JE:** In the next two years, where do you see Patient Plan Direct?

**SR:** The last two years have been the company's best years in terms of growth since our inception in 2009. I can only see us building on this momentum as we further develop our solution in line with client demands. We will continue to bang the drum and let practices know that they do not need to pay excessive administration fees to make a success of their own branded dental payment plan; whether their objective is to launch a private dental payment plan to move away from the NHS, or transfer an existing base of plan patients from another plan provider. **D**



Simon Reynolds is the commercial director of Patient Plan Direct, a plan provider offering a low cost plan administration and support fee of £1 per patient per month. Now working with over 300 practices across the UK, Patient Plan Direct are experts in plan provider transfers, new payment plan launches and NHS conversions.

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