



Our Ref: OQ59398

Llyr Gruffydd MS  
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5 June 2023

Dear Llyr,

I am writing to clarify comments I made in responding to questions you asked at the Oral Questions session in the Siambr on 26 April 2023. When responding to your question on access to dentists for children, I said:

*26/04/2023 15:06:36 paragraph 131 – “Evidently, we’re in negotiations for the next contract, and it is difficult because what we see is that some dentists are leaving the NHS and going private. Well, they are individuals; they don’t work directly for the NHS—dentists have never worked directly for the NHS—and so, we can only go as far as we can afford to go to pay these people to work in our system”.*

On reflection, what I said could be interpreted to be referring to all dentists and that the move to private is financially driven which is not what I intended. Many dentists work in hospital and community dental services and are directly employed by the NHS. My comment was intended to refer to high street or, to use the proper terminology, those dental practices with an NHS contract to provide general dental services (GDS).

The point that I was trying to make was to acknowledge that there has been some movement this year by GDS contract holders towards private only care and that as independent contractors who are not employed directly by the NHS, this is a choice they are free to make based on their own circumstances. An NHS contract has many benefits for the dentist such as: guaranteed patient demand, a reliable revenue, pension and maternity leave. However, some dentists feel that providing a service to private patients only gives them flexibility to provide a wider range of dental services that are financially more advantageous and/or require them to see fewer patients. Ultimately, it is difficult in an age of financial constraint for the NHS to offer more or equivalent money compared to what a dentist can earn privately.

I also need to clarify that the negotiation process for the new contract has started but the negotiations, getting around the table, are due to start this month. My hope is that this will provide the opportunity for government, NHS and trade unions to work together to develop a new contract that makes undertaking NHS contracted activity attractive for the long term.

I have copied this letter to the Llywydd for this letter to be appended to the Record of Proceedings for the Plenary discussions on 26 April.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services