Marketing your membership

www.bda.org/goodpractice
Welcome to BDA Good Practice

Marketing your Membership

Congratulations on achieving membership of BDA Good Practice!

Here you will find suggestions for promoting your membership of BDA Good Practice to new and existing patients, other professionals and the various regulatory bodies.

- BDA Good Practice member plaque
- BDA Good Practice member logo
- BDA Good Practice commitment plaque
- BDA Good Practice member products
- Writing a press release
- Contacting the press
- Practice advertisements
- Writing an advertorial
- Practice newsletters
- Presentations
- Practice website
- Practice open days

If you have any questions about how to promote your membership of BDA Good Practice, please contact the Good Practice team:

Tel: 020 7563 4598 | Email: goodpractice@bda.org
Having the BDA Good Practice plaque on display in your practice allows your patients, and potential patients, to see what you have achieved and acts as a reminder of your professionalism and high standards.

The plaque remains the property of the BDA and must be returned if you cease to be a member of BDA Good Practice.

Being recognised by the BDA is a powerful message for your practice and your patients. As members of BDA Good Practice, you are entitled to use the ‘BDA Good Practice member’ logo on your stationery, business cards, website and advertisements. The logo can help you to differentiate your practice and demonstrate your commitment to quality dental care.

When using the logo, you must make sure that you do not mislead patients and that they understand the limitations and scope of BDA Good Practice. If used on external signage, the logo must be proportionate and approved by the BDA.

Guidance on the use of the logo can be downloaded as well as the various versions of the ‘BDA Good Practice member’ logo

- For general use
- For use by professional print suppliers
- For use online

Note: If you decide not to renew your membership of BDA Good Practice or your membership is withdrawn by the BDA, you must remove the Good Practice logo from your stationery, business cards, website and advertisements and ensure that you do not present the practice in a way that suggests continued membership of BDA Good Practice.
BDA Good Practice Commitment

As members of BDA Good Practice, all members of the practice team have made a commitment to:

- Provide care of consistently good quality
- Work with patients to provide care that meets their needs and wishes
- Make treatment comfortable and convenient
- Check for mouth cancer and tell patients what you find
- Look after the general health and safety of patients
- Follow current infection control standards
- Keep their skills and knowledge up to date
- Monitor the quality of your service to identify opportunities for improvements.

You can embed these commitments into many aspects of your practice – for example, your practice leaflet, your website, patient and staff welcome packs and even your contracts of employment.

BDA Good Practice member products

Patient information leaflet

The leaflet describes what BDA Good Practice means for your patients and can be used alongside information about your practice and include in your patient welcome pack. As a Good Practice member, you must always have these leaflets available for patients. The leaflets can be purchased with or without a stand.

Commitment plaque

The BDA Good Practice commitment plaque can help your patients to understand what you have achieved and how it affects them. The commitment plaque has been designed to enhance and complement your Good Practice membership plaque.

If you would like to purchase a commitment plaque or patient information leaflets, please download and complete the Good Practice product order form.
Press releases are commonly used to attract media attention and provide publicity to announce news items, promotions, or new products and services. They are an ideal way to raise awareness of your achievement in becoming a member of BDA Good Practice.

Press releases should grab the reader’s attention and be drafted to give the journalist minimum work in making it ready for publication.

The essential elements are:

- A snappy headline
- The news in the first sentence
- The story developed in the subsequent paragraph
- A quote from a public figure, someone with a high profile or in authority
- A photograph
- Background information in a ‘Notes for Editors’ section at the end
- Contact telephone number

Local papers look for stories with human interest, so getting patients or staff involved (with their consent) is a good idea. Dentistry is newsworthy and it is usually not difficult to get coverage if you have an interesting story to tell and your membership of BDA Good Practice is a good news story!

Resources
Here you will find:

- an example of a press release that you can adapt to announce your recent membership of BDA Good Practice.
Contacting the Press

When you have produced your press release or advertorial, you will need to decide where you want it to be published. The local press is usually more willing to publish information about the local neighbourhood, especially where it involves services or professionals from the community.

To find out which papers are published in your area, visit www.localmedianews.org and use the ‘search local newsbrands’ function. The website allows you access to a lot of useful information about local media, including circulation figures for all newspapers.

Alternatively, go to the website of your local paper and find their ‘Contact us’ page. Here you will find telephone and email contact details for the newspaper. Depending on what you are sending them, you will normally need their news, features or advertising contacts.

Do make sure that when you send your press release or advertorial, you include high quality digital images of the practice staff, the BDA Good Practice membership plaque and details of any patients that have agreed to be quoted.
Advertisements can be an effective way to promote your practice and attract new patients. Even if your practice is established, you will still want to market your services to existing patients; it helps to maintain relationships and encourage recommendations.

Advertising is about defining your target market, formulating your message, and choosing the most appropriate media. Consider including a call to action (‘ask us today’) or an incentive that gives the reader a reason to respond immediately, such as an offer on examinations and consultations.

How you style your advert is a matter of personal choice but researching the adverts of other practices might generate some useful ideas and help you define your style and content.

You can advertise your membership of BDA Good Practice in a wide range of media – cinema advertising, radio adverts, online adverts, and local newspaper adverts, for example.

Do follow the GDC’s Guidance on advertising.
Writing an advertorial

In addition to paid-for adverts, you can pay for advertorials – articles that appear in the local paper about local businesses with related advertisements alongside. These are written in the same style as an editorial but should have wording to make clear that it is an advertisement – for example, ‘Advertisement feature’.

The benefits of advertorials include:
- Space to describe the practice and its benefits
- A practice that has something new – BDA Good Practice membership, for example
- Freedom to include a photograph
- Selecting a newspaper that matches the practice’s catchment area and patient base
- The suggestion of endorsement by the newspaper, even though this may not necessarily be the case
- The opportunity to check the text before publication
- Team motivation (by having their practice featured in the newspaper) and patient interest

Before contacting your chosen newspaper to talk about an advertisement feature, have a look at some back copies and the articles that appear.

Advertorials allow you to include a wider range of information about the practice. For example:
- Practice philosophy
- Atmosphere
- Special clinical services
- Practice history, if it gives an impression of growing success and positive developments
- Staff and interesting things they have done
- NHS/private availability
- General information such as opening times, address, telephone number, website/email. Include a photograph of the team
- Accounts of patients’ experience (looking at it from their perspective)
- Anything new happening in the practice, e.g. BDA Good Practice membership
- Oral health tips

Consider whether the practice will benefit from this type of advertising and whether it will reinforce the practice message to those patients who might read it. Also think about the costs and whether the money could be used more effectively to improve customer service and have a more lasting effect.
Practice newsletters

Many practices produce simple annual or biannual newsletters or regular email bulletins for their patients incorporating:

- Practice news such as membership of BDA Good Practice
- Updates on staff changes
- New private schemes
- The latest dental treatments
- Promotions and offers
- NHS registration and responsibilities
- Dental health information
- General health/diet articles
- Interesting dental facts
- Glossaries of dental terms
- Success stories

Newsletters can also explain the cost of dental care at the practice including the private fee scale and general examples of NHS charges and exemptions.

The newsletter need not be all about dentistry. Competitions (with oral health prizes such as electric toothbrushes) and puzzles could be included.

Patients often share the same concerns and newsletters can be used to answer those questions that patients may not like to ask because they think the dentist is busy. Patients can be encouraged to approach any member of the team with their concerns or questions. Regular updates will help to keep patients interested in the practice and its services. Newsletters contribute to creating the impression of a responsible, caring practice that keeps patients informed, and they can also be used to encourage patients to make an appointment.

The BDA Library has a number of books on marketing your practice and on practice management. You can contact the BDA library on 020 7563 4545 or email library@bda.org.

Resources

More information about practice newsletters is available to BDA Expert members in the section on Patient communications.
Presentations in the practice

Many practices use television screens to display information about the practice. It is a good opportunity to communicate any important information to patients, including membership of BDA Good Practice.

Consider using information from your practice leaflet:

- Services and treatments offered
- The dental team, roles and responsibilities, and photos
- BDA Good Practice overview and commitment
- Opening hours and emergency care
- Oral hygiene messages – brushing and flossing regularly, healthy eating

**Resource**

This template [PowerPoint presentation](#) explains how to present information on your practice and BDA Good Practice and provides opportunities to add staff photographs and practice logos.

**Key messages**

Having achieved BDA Good Practice membership, you will want to share your achievement with your patients. The following key messages may help:

- Our practice is a member of BDA Good Practice
- We keep up to date with standards of good practice and provide the best care for our patients
- We are assessed periodically by the BDA to ensure our practice continues to comply with the requirements
- We involve our patients in all aspects of their care and ensure that their needs and preferences are considered and that they can make informed decisions
- We ensure a safe environment by undertaking risk assessments and managing potential hazards within the practice. We follow current guidelines for preventing cross-infection
- We recruit staff that are competent to undertake the duties associated with their role and provide training where required. We encourage on-going professional development for all members of our team
- We monitor the quality of the service we provide and seek the views of our patients to identify opportunities for improvements.
Practice website

A professionally-designed and informative website helps the practice attract new patients and retain existing ones. A good website is an opportunity for practices to differentiate themselves from competitors and provide easily accessible information on the treatments and services offered.

Consider what content to have on the site. Some content is mandatory –

- Name and address of the practice
- Email address, and telephone/fax numbers
- The name of each dentist at the practice, their professional qualifications and country of qualification
- Registration information, including the GDC registration number of each dentist and contact details of the General Dental Council with a link to its website
- A reference that the dentist adheres to the GDC’s Standards for the Dental Team (with a link to the website)
- Details of the practice complaints procedure and information about who to contact if they are not satisfied with the response to their complaint – including, for private patients, the Dental Complaints Service
- An indicative price list and any credit schemes offered
- The date when the page was last updated

Optional content includes:

- Opening times, directions and transport links (including links to a map)
- Facilities at the practice, including physical access
- Special interests – orthodontics, children, nervous patients, for example
- Practice news page with the latest developments and future plans
- Involvement with BDA Good Practice (and any other schemes)
- Photographs of the practice and the practice team
- Patient testimonials
- General oral health information
- Frequently asked questions

Links to other useful websites can be useful – for example, the BDA, BDHF, CQC, NHS 111 (England), NHS 24 (Scotland), NHS Direct (Wales), Health and Social Care (Northern Ireland).

You can include the BDA Good Practice member logo and the BDA Good Practice web banner on your practice website.

Practices in England may want to add the CQC widget to their website to embed information about their latest CQC inspection.
Practice website

Domain names

Your domain name (your unique web address) needs to reflect what you do, so it should include your practice name or refer to dentistry in some way. It should be short and easy to spell. Domain names are easy and cheap to obtain and add to the professional image of the practice. The registration body for the UK is Nominet and its website has a wealth of information about how to register a domain name. Use the WHOIS service to check whether the name that you want is already in use.

Make it easy to find your website

Many patients now use the internet to search for and compare dental practices. Google is the most commonly used search engine (90 per cent of UK searches are via Google) so you want your website to rank highly in its search results and preferably high up on the first page of results. Your position on the first page will also affect the number of visitors to your website; the first website listed in Google’s search results attracts almost a third of web visits from that page.

Google My Business can help you to promote your practice on Google Maps, enhance your results in Google search and make the most of Google+. It is well worth investing time in this.

Social media

Social media has become almost ubiquitous and younger patients, especially, increasingly expect businesses to have a presence on social media websites such as Facebook. Social media websites encourage interaction and engagement, so are useful for disseminating information quickly and can be great for starting a dialogue, getting feedback and building long-term relationships with patients that keep them engaged and loyal.

Although there are thousands of social media websites, most practices really only need to concern themselves with Facebook and any relevant local community websites.

Resources

- The BDA News article, 10 easy steps to your killer Facebook page, has advice on creating a Facebook page for your practice and attracting new patients.
Practice open days can provide an excellent opportunity to promote the practice to new and existing patients, especially if you have recently gained your membership of BDA Good Practice.

For open days to be successful in attracting lots of patients and members of the public, it can be helpful if:

- The practice is on a high street or other area where there are lots of passers-by
- The practice is large enough to accommodate a number of people, ideally with an outside area or garden
- It is held at the weekend when people have more time
- There is an incentive to attend – free goodies, appearance by a local celebrity, children’s entertainment
- The day does not clash with another local or national event
- Local people are interested in health, and oral health in particular
- The day is well publicised to patients and non-patients

**Themed events**

As well as providing you with an opportunity to explain your membership of BDA Good Practice, you could have an additional theme for the event, for example:

- Cosmetic dentistry
- Improving your smile
- A charity day
- Seasonal theme
- Age-related theme

Activities during the open day can then be focussed on the particular theme. If you focus on children, you could have a children’s entertainer and give children the opportunity to play safely in the surgery. For older people, you could think about an information session on caring for teeth, implants, tooth whitening, or reducing oral side effects of medication.
To ensure that you get the most out of your Open Day, you should plan it at least two months in advance. Appoint a member of staff to organise it and give them authority to bring in others to help. Brainstorm ideas at a practice meeting. When you have a plan, write it down and then put it into action.

Incentives

Publicity is vital for a successful Open Day and there are a number of ways that you can promote the day:

- Notify patients through the practice newsletter/email
- Send personal invitations to selected guests
- Put a poster outside the practice entrance and in the reception area. Make sure it is eye-catching and gives basic information about what is happening
- Send out a press release two weeks prior to the event or use an advertorial
- Ask local businesses to put posters in their public areas, particularly the local GP / optometrist / pharmacist
- Highlight it on the practice website
- Toothbrush exchange with free toothbrush
- A local celebrity to open the day (which might attract the local press)
- Having a charity fair with the opportunity to look round the practice (records and drugs should be locked away)
- Free refreshments
- Vouchers for a discount on their next dental treatment at the practice.

Don’t forget your staff

Organising and hosting an Open Day in addition to normal responsibilities will involve extra work for the team. Thank them afterwards and possibly hold a thank-you event. If the Open Day is taking place on a day when people do not normally work, give time off in lieu or pay overtime.

Be aware of

- Security - particularly valuables, records and drugs
- Hazardous substances and other hazards are identified and removed or controlled. Any that are around should be supervised
- Food hygiene standards, if food is being served