

# More than your money's worth

**B**y the time you are reading this, our member ballot to decide whether BADN should merge with Community will have closed. Hopefully, members will have done the sensible thing and voted for the merger, so that BADN can continue to support dental nurses and the dental nursing profession long into the future! If not, the Association has a year or two at the most before it has to close and dental nurses will be left without anywhere to go for support.

It is not only BADN that is suffering from the apathy of the younger generation of dental professionals – I've heard that one professional association is down to fewer than 100 members, and even the BDA is struggling. We increasingly get calls from young dental nurses who haven't bothered to join their professional association but, as soon as they have a problem, expect us to assist them. These individuals seem to think they can benefit from the Association without making any contribution to it themselves.

But it costs money to run an Association and BADN is funded solely by dental nurses' membership fees. We do not receive funding from the Government or from any other source. So, expecting us to assist you when you don't contribute by joining is unrealistic! Why should you benefit from the membership fees paid by fellow dental nurses when you don't contribute yourself?

BADN Full Membership currently costs £55 per year – just £1.06 per week. What else can you get for £1.06? Not even a cup of coffee.

For £1.06 per week to BADN gives you free legal advice, free CPD, a free CPD Activity Log/Personal Development Plan, a quarterly online Journal, free advice sheets/advice, discounts on courses, special member rate indemnity, discounts and special offers on homes/car/travel insurance, holidays, travel, shopping, cinema, days out, eating out, motoring, white goods and

more. It's a no-brainer! Not to mention that BADN represents dental nurses' interests in discussions with the GDC, the BDA, HMFG etc. – so all dental nurses benefit.

Essentially, if you are working in dentistry – whether you are a dental nurse, a dentist or one of the other DCP groups – and you are not a member of your professional association, you are riding on the bus without paying your fare; being carried by those who do bother to support their professional associations! ■

**About the author**  
**Pam Swain MBE is**  
**Chief Executive of BADN**



Pam Swain MBE, Chief Executive of the British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN) recently joined us for this episode of *The Probe Dental Podcast*, sponsored by R A Medical, to discuss the association's history and what's next as it looks to merge with Trade Union Community, as well as the current state of dental nursing in the UK. Pam tells us about the changes she's witnessed and shares wisdom she's picked up along the way. The BADN team are the course of three decades of shaping the BADN ship, while we also take a little time into Pam's background prior to joining the UK's dental nursing association, which includes work at NATO.

Watch or listen at [the-probe.co.uk/podcast](http://the-probe.co.uk/podcast) or by scanning the QR code.

*The Probe Dental Podcast* is also available on YouTube and Spotify.

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**Pam Swain MBE**  
 Past, Present,  
 and BADN Future



## So, what are you going to do about it?

**W**orking with dental teams across different practices – whether that's supporting growth, helping restructure, or sometimes managing the more difficult process of letting people go – you start to notice a pattern. Most of the challenges in practices don't arise overnight. They creep in slowly and, more often than not, they're there people have been aware of for a while but haven't quite tackled properly.

That's where the real question often sits: so, what are you going to do about it?

It's easy to talk about standards, behaviour, culture and expectations. It's a lot harder to act on them when it involves people you know, or people who have been around a long time or when you're already stretched and trying to keep everything else moving.

Most owners and managers I work with genuinely care. They want to be fair. They want to be decent employers. They want to follow the right processes and do things properly. But sometimes

that desire to be kind ends up tipping into avoidance, and that's usually where issues start to settle in and grow.

Lateness is a good example. Not the odd genuine situation, but the regular pattern of people arriving late with very little explanation, and even less awareness of the impact it has. What often stands out isn't just the behaviour itself, but the fact the person involved doesn't really see it as an issue. Because, in their experience, nothing has ever really been said about it.

And that's where culture starts to shift.

If something is not challenged, it slowly becomes acceptable.

The individual often isn't thinking they're being disruptive. They're just working within the boundaries they've seen given. If no one has raised it, and there haven't been any real consequences, it's easy to assume it's fine.

What sometimes gets missed is the ripple effect this has on everyone else. Lateness, poor attitude, lack of ownership – these things don't just

affect the rota or the workflow. They affect how the rest of the team feels. People notice. They notice who is pulling their weight and who isn't. And, over time, that starts to chip away at morale.

Your stronger team members are usually the first to feel it. The ones who are consistently on time, who take pride in their work, who care about standards. When they see poor behaviour being ignored, it doesn't go unnoticed. It sends a message, even if no one says it out loud.

This is where leadership can't just sit back and hope things improve on their own.

Being a supportive, kind and fair manager doesn't mean avoiding difficult conversations. If anything, it means having them sooner, not later. It means being clear about expectations and following through when those expectations aren't being met.

There are processes to follow, of course, and they matter. But within those processes there's still leadership. Still judgement. Still the responsibility to protect the culture of the practice.

And sometimes, even with support and opportunity to improve, things don't change. At that point, it becomes less about one person and more about the wider team. Because allowing poor behaviour to continue doesn't just affect performance – it starts to shape what everyone else thinks is acceptable.

That's the part that often gets overlooked. So, when you ask, 'What are you going to do about it?' it's not just about dealing with an individual issue. It's about deciding what kind of culture you want to maintain, and whether you're willing to step in and protect it when needed.

Because in the end, culture is built less on what we say, and more on what we allow to continue. ■

**About the author**  
**Lisa Bainham**  
 is President at  
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