

Prevention in focus

Periodontist Dr Ian Peace owns and runs Peace of Mind – a private referral practice in West Bridgford, Nottingham. He works closely with DCP (hygienist) Amanda Gallie, together developing a successful approach to prevention that appears to be attracting referrals and drop-in patients in their droves.

In just two years, they have created a delightful and inviting 'retreat' style environment within a once residential, well-located bungalow, and developed a simple yet effective ethos that is reverberated by every member of the team.

Preventive Dentistry travelled north to find out exactly how their bespoke system works and their plans for the future.

Interview by Sarah Manolescue

Preventive Dentistry: Please describe the practice structure and team.

Ian Peace: Aside from Amanda and myself, Louisa Cawthan is our practice manager, for want of a better title. I like new ways of defining what people do, but I haven't come across a better phrase for this one yet. She's also our conference co-ordinator. Gail Hunt is our patient care manager and implant co-ordinator. Then there's Pam Ashley who is our DCP dental nurse. In two years we've expanded from Gail and myself to five of us. We have a second surgery in development and a third plumbed in, which I'd like to turn into a dedicated implant suite.

PD: How big is your patient base?

IP: We haven't really got a patient base. Since this is a referral practice, patients tend to return to their dentist once their course of treatment here is finished. There are two key performance indicators (KPIs) that I use, and those are the number of referrals per month and turnover. I find these are the two best KPIs to use at this early stage of development. Basically I think as a referral practice, you do have your regular recall patients, but you also need a constant flow of new work. Turnover has increased here by 50% on last year. We've grown tremendously. In fact this November (2005 - time of interview) has been the busiest month since we started – we've had 25 referrals.

But we get drive-bys too - people see the sign when they get stuck in traffic. People are coming in for implants because they can see from our external signage that we offer this treatment.

PD: How would you describe your average patient?

IP: That's very difficult to define. I'd say somebody who wants the best dentistry and added value, and that's what we try to create here.

PD: Do you appeal to dental phobics?

IP: We don't market ourselves as such.

Amanda Gallie: But we're synonymous with care, time and tranquillity.

IP: One of the patients said to Louise that we've got the perfect combination of professionalism and friendliness, which I think was a great compliment. I don't mean to sound Californian here, but most people don't have enough love in their lives. They need a little bit of attention, a bit of care – someone just taking a few minutes out for them. People really respond to that. We have a medical history questionnaire, but we also ask people for a bit of information about their favourite films, food and so on. People wonder why we ask these questions and there are a few reasons. We might discover a hobby that's affecting their teeth, or find a way to get a very nervous patient to open up.



The Peace of Mind team (from left to right): Pam Ashley (DCP dental nurse), Ian Peace (practice owner and periodontist) and Amanda Gallie (DCP hygienist)

