

Dental Finance

EDITORIAL

Firstly, best wishes for the New Year from all of us at Dental Finance.

The UK economy gets no easier and potential good news constantly seems to be mixed with bad.

Having said that, many of the practices we work with expressed increasing optimism in the latter part of last year and we all obviously hope that this comes to reality.

Maximising the take-up of treatment will continue to be important and we are always here to help. If you feel that too many patients are leaving to think about it or if you would like our thoughts as to how offering finance could assist you in attracting new patients please contact us and we will be happy to assist.



NEW DEVELOPMENTS

We are always looking for ways to make offering finance easier and more straightforward for you and your Patients, so here is a round up of some of our recent developments.

PAYMENT OPTIONS APPLICATION

If your staff have had difficulties in understanding the options available or the calculation of monthly payments and interest then this is for them.

Our combined calculator, application and information sheet simplifies the whole process. It was introduced in October and many practices are now seeing the benefits of using it. If you are not yet doing so we recommend that you give it a try! Read more on page 2.

ADDITIONAL LENDERS

Whilst it is not possible to accept every application we all know how disappointing it is when applications are declined. Our main lender continues to be Hitachi Capital Consumer Finance and with them we constantly achieve acceptance levels of around 80%. However we now also work with other lenders providing us with greater options – contact us for further information.

CREDIT LIMITS

A recent innovation at Hitachi has been the introduction of 'credit limits'. Whenever an application is approved they will assess the maximum amount that they would lend the applicant and if it is more than the amount approved they will now let us know and we include the Credit Limit within our e-mail to you. The sum to be financed can easily be increased up to this figure, provided the increase is requested within one month of the date and prior to the signed credit agreement being returned. It is a nice 'add-on' for patients who are thinking about more extensive treatment or where something additional is required within the treatment plan.

INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK

In this newsletter you can find out more about Dental Finance and how we can help you and your practice to provide affordable payment options to your Patients.

If you would like more information about any of the articles or you have any suggestions for what you would like to see in future editions, you can contact us on our new 'local-rate' number **08452 591091** or send us an email to dentalfinance@financingfirst.co.uk

Best wishes

The Team

at Dental Finance

PAYMENT OPTIONS APPLICATION

Ideally, whenever a practice discusses the finance options with a patient they should have available the various payment alternatives, including the interest rates, the monthly payments and the total sum repayable. Based upon the telephone calls we receive it is clear that many staff are uncomfortable with some of the calculations and to overcome this we have introduced this combined calculator, application form and patient information sheet.

The way it works:

The document is available in Microsoft Excel where it can be accessed and printed using the three tabs at the foot of the sheet –

Payment Options (calculator)

The calculator shows a total cost of treatment of £4,000.00 and a finance required of £3,000.00. It provides a table of monthly payments and total amounts repayable for terms of 6, 12, 24, 36, 48, and 60 months. For example, a 24-month term results in a monthly payment of £137.72 and a total amount repayable of £3,305.28.

Patient Application Form

The form includes sections for:

- PLEASE USE BLACK INK**: Total Price of Treatment (£4,000.00), Deposit to Practice (£2,000.00), Finance Required (£3,000.00).
- Personal Details**: Name, Address, Date of Birth, Marital Status, etc.
- Applicant's Bank Details**: Bank Name, Account No., Sort Code, etc.
- Employment or Self Employment Details**: Employer Name, Address, Salary, etc.

Application Guidance Notes

The guidance notes include:

- Welcome to Dental Finance**: Information about the service and how to apply.
- Before You Make Your Application**: Checklist of requirements (e.g., ID, address history, income).
- Making Your Application**: Steps to follow from application to completion.
- What will happen next?**: Details of the credit agreement and payment process.
- Questions**: Contact information for further assistance.

When we email the Payment Options Application to you it will have all your practice details included on it.

All you need do:

- Access the Finance Options (calculator) and insert the treatment cost and deposit details to produce the 'finance required'
- The calculator will have been prepared to incorporate the payment options you offer at your practice and all of the monthly payment options for your patient will be immediately available
- Use this to discuss the preferred payment option with the patient and this can then be inserted on to the application for completion by the patient
- If the patient is uncertain whether to proceed the three pages can be printed and handed out, enabling them to give this further consideration
- The document can also be used to effectively 'follow-up' on treatments that have not progressed
- The completed document can either be returned to the practice for submission or, if the patient prefers can be submitted to us direct, in which case we will process the application and notify both the patient and the practice.

A 'Payment Options Application' was e-mailed to all practices in October.

However, should you have any questions about this, if you cannot locate it or if you wish to change the terms on it please contact us on **08452 591091** and we will be pleased to assist.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

We try to provide comprehensive management information to assist each practice in managing their applications. This is provided via e-mail and accordingly it is important that we are informed of any changes to practice e-mails. Information provided to each introducing practice includes:

Monthly outstanding application reminder – if you have any applications that have been accepted but we have not received the signed agreement you will receive this reminder in the middle of each month. Helpful for identifying any signed applications that may have gone astray!

Remittance advices – e-mailed direct to each practice whenever a payment is being made. These incorporate the patient's name, the total amount financed, any deductions and the net sum paid.

Monthly Activity Report at the beginning of each month - this report provides details of all recent and active applications and their current status. It can be a very useful tool for keeping track of your finance applications and payments due.

Sendback Report— Occasionally, we or the Lender may need to return a signed agreement to a Practice for a variety of reasons such as the Patient not having signed one of the signature boxes, or the quality of the printed agreement being unacceptable. If this happens you will receive a monthly reminder until the agreement is returned.

Remember – all of this information is forwarded by e-mail. If e-mails change please inform us and we can then ensure the information is directed to the correct person. Just send us an email to dentalfinance@financingfirst.co.uk

MAKING FINANCE WORK FOR YOU – DON'T JUST THINK INTEREST FREE!

The main benefit of offering finance is to achieve an increased level of treatment take-up by making the monthly payments affordable.

To do this effectively the finance needs to be attractive to the patient by way of interest rate and monthly payment. Interest free finance is always attractive over shorter terms with one of our part-subsidised options for longer terms – the option with an interest rate to the patient of 9.9%APR is currently the most popular.

However, one of our lenders is now offering a facility with an interest rate of 4.9% to the patient over 12 and 24 months – it is a very attractive rate for the patient with a lower subsidy cost for the practice than interest free. Contact us if you would like to know more.

BE CREATIVE IN OFFERING FINANCE

Tooth Whitening: We often call into practices where tooth-whitening might be advertised at (say) £300 but heavily discounted down to £200 as a 'special offer', only to find out that very few take advantage of this anyway. Rather than offering the heavy discount consider marketing the whitening on an interest free basis – say 10 months at £30 a month. The subsidy cost will be less than the discount and the number of people taking it is likely to increase!

More sizeable treatments – e.g Dental Implants or Invisible tooth straightening: Both implants and invisible braces are becoming increasingly popular – but there is a cost. Many people will be considering such treatments but will have 'shopped around' and dissuaded by the cost. Advertise them on a monthly basis. For example – don't refer to dental implants from £2000 but think about using the longer term finance options. As an alternative the same implant could be advertised 'from £41.98 a month', or alternatively as 'less than £10 a week'!

ON-GOING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As we mentioned in our introduction, we constantly look to improve what we can do for our supporting practices and to this end want to ensure you are aware of the following:



SAVVI

If you want to increase your marketing activity with no up-front cost you might want to be affiliated to this marketing website operated by our lenders Hitachi Capital Consumer Finance. All you need to include is a 'special offer' providing for a discount of up to £100 on treatment plans. Ask us for more information.