

Personal Profile: Jane Armitage – Practice Manager of the Year 2005



Jane accepting her award for Practice Manager of the Year 2005 at *The Probe Awards*.

Jane Armitage is Practice Manager at Thompson and Thomas Dental Practice in Sheffield. During 2005, both the practice and Jane reached the finals for a number of health care awards and went on to become winners of several accolades. Among other achievements, Jane was named Practice Manager of the Year at *The Probe Awards*, and was the first dental practice manager to become a north regional finalist for the NHS Health & Social Care Awards.

In this article, Jane talks to *Team in Practice* about her pride in the practice's recent successes and describes how teamwork has ensured that the practice is true to its mission statement: To provide high quality dental care in a relaxed and friendly environment.

Below is Jane's account of this extraordinary year for both her and the practice.

What a year!

Thompson and Thomas is a mixed NHS and private practice with 13 members of staff, including three dentists, seven dental nurses and one hygienist/therapist. Early last year, the practice decided to enter The Dental Awards 2005, never expecting that this would be the start of a very exciting and rewarding 12 months!

Teamwork is the key

So what exactly did it take to receive these honours? It's difficult to know specifically. However, in my opinion, a major factor has been the way that the whole team has pulled together to achieve results. Each and every team member is valued and staff are encouraged to voice their opinions – we have developed a 360 degree appraisal of the practice partners, which has provided for some great discussions! Furthermore,

Practice achievements in 2005

Winner – Private Employer of the Year, *Private Dentistry Awards*; Sheffield Clinician of the Year, Sheffield West PCT Awards; Sheffield Individual of the Year, Sheffield West PCT Awards

Finalist – Receptionist of the Year, *The Probe Dental Awards*; Best Patient Care, *Private Dentistry Awards*

Highly Commended – Dentist of the Year, *The Probe Dental Awards*

Personal achievements in 2005

Winner – Practice Manager of the Year, *The Probe Dental Awards*, People's Award for Patient Care, *The Probe Dental Awards*; Sheffield PCT Individual of the Year, Sheffield West PCT Awards

Finalist – Practice Manager of the Year, BDPMA Awards; North Regional Manager of the Year, NHS Health & Social Care Awards

the staff are all long-serving (ranging from six to 20 years), which to me reflects their dedication and commitment to the practice. Working procedures and practice pro-

ocols are known by every team member and training is provided in areas that it is felt will improve service. I also endeavour to seek funding for team training wherever possible.

Practice makes perfect!

During the past year, our practice has seen several major changes:

- Induction year of a new partnership
- Became a pilot practice for Personal Dental Services
- Introduced a Private Care Plan
- Implemented Care Nurse Co-ordinator facilities
- Designed and implemented new oral health care room
- Introduced smoking cessation facilities
- Introduced children's days

The appointment of a Care Nurse Co-ordinator has proved particularly successful and helped to increase the practice profile.

Jane Armitage Cert DPM, Dip DPM. Dental Practice Manager



for many years. In 2003, the practice was accredited by Investors in People (IIP) after an initial assessment of the practice and without the need for further development of training programmes or resources. IIP is to introduce revised standards during 2006, particularly with regard to leadership and management, recruitment selection and work-life balance. I feel that these addi-

A private consultation room has been provided for this purpose, allowing consent to be delivered in an environment within which the patient feels comfortable and with confidentiality ensured. The financial health of the practice has also benefited significantly from this initiative as the practice dentists have more time to spend on clinical work.

Other advances within the practice included the ability to offer state-of-the-art prosthetics, with an award-winning technician on hand to help and advise.



offer our patients a high quality service which best suits their needs. Patients are our business and without this in mind, I have requested that we are them we cannot survive. I feel it is hugely assessed against all areas. important to make them feel valued and, I feel I speak for the whole team when to show this, I have introduced several initiatives. These include a 'welcome pack' felt after seeing the practice collect the Employer of the Year at the Private Dentistry Awards in December 2005. I am also incredibly proud of the awards I received last year and could never in my wildest dreams imagine winning Practice Manager of the Year at The Probation Awards 2005.

ings where we discuss any problems or new working procedures, and we look back at the minutes from previous meetings to ensure that issues have been successfully resolved. For my own part, I know that would not have received these awards without the minutes from previous meetings to ensure efforts of a positive and dedicated team. I feel that by offering motivation, providing staff training and being supportive towards all the team members, our practice has been helped to achieve its goals. Looking

I feel that the successful implementation of these changes has thoroughly exercised my management skills! However, I enjoyed the challenge and I'm looking forward to introducing new ventures planned for the coming year. This past year has clearly been terrific for practice staff, though I am reminded of my fortune in working with a great team to whom I owe a lot.



I feel it is essential to maintain good communication with both staff and patients. Our patients' views and comments are taken very seriously as there are always new lessons to learn. By acting on comments and suggestions in our Patients' Book and auditing patient surveys, I feel we can

