

# Lincolnshire: dentistry's hidden gem

In a new mini-series for *BDJ Upfront*, Sarah May Lewis [SL], Leadership Fellow NHS England (Midlands) for Workforce, Training and Education, interviews Kenny Hume [KH], Local Dental Network (LDN) Chair for Lincolnshire and Local Dental Committee (LDC) Chair for Lincolnshire, to find out more about primary care delivery in the region.



Sarah May Lewis



Kenny Hume

## SL: What does a typical week look like for you?

**KH:** I work two days clinically and then spend the remainder of the week working for the LDN and LDC. My main area of focus is orthodontics, where I spend 1.5 days in practice and the other half day in the local hospital. My week is very varied. The LDC is all about representing and supporting dentists within the county and my role with the LDN is to give clinical advice and support to the Integrated Care Board.

## What do you like about having a mix of clinical and non-clinical roles?

I feel that the clinical aspect is really important as you are working on the frontline NHS, and you see how decisions made at a national/regional/local level can impact on patients. Hopefully a good level of knowledge and clinical experience enables me to carry out my non-clinical roles more effectively. Having a non-clinical element to my working week gives me more variety and flexibility and gives me an opportunity to ensure Lincolnshire has a voice.

## What is the most rewarding part of your job?

Supporting colleagues is very rewarding. I also want to feel that I have contributed to making dentistry better at a local level and helped to make changes we need in the area.

## What advice would you give to someone trying to carve out a career in primary care?

Find a practice where you feel there are elements of support, knowledge, teamwork and camaraderie. You want to be in an environment where you feel able to develop your own career but be happy and feel appreciated at the same time.

## Tell me a bit about how you got into your roles as LDN and LDC chairs.

I very much wanted to put something back into the profession and have always had an interest in how dentistry functions within the area. I have been on the LDC for 30 years and started off as a committee member. For the past ten years, I have been the Chair. I feel I have developed a good relationship with providers and practices in the area to help me understand the issues we face in Lincolnshire. Although there are overlaps, the LDN is a different role and one I've been involved in for four years. There is a great deal of learning from colleagues and the opportunity to influence at a local level. My clinical experience and knowledge have been the foundations for me.

## What different opportunities have you had as a result of your roles?

I've had a chance to see how dentistry is delivered from a national perspective and to meet people who are really committed to seeing positive change. I've been able to go

to India to look at overseas recruitment and see how that could impact on workforce in Lincolnshire.

## Why should more dentists get involved in LDCs and their local dental community?

You get to gain knowledge from your peers who work in similar settings. It gives opportunity to connect with others and gain experience of different views but also give back to your local dental community.

## What brought you to Lincolnshire and what has made you stay in the area?

I came to Lincolnshire by accident, after turning down a job at Birmingham Dental Hospital. (Birmingham Dental Hospital was much better as a result!) The longer I stayed the more I became embedded in the community. I played a lot of sport and met people from all walks of life as a result. Lincolnshire is a great county to bring up a family, and I have developed long lasting friendships and worked with brilliant colleagues... all with a bit of humour along the way, which has given me a nice balance.

## Why do you think Lincolnshire is a good place to be right now in terms of dentistry?

It's an exciting time in Lincolnshire with the establishment of two institutes based at Lincoln University: the Lincolnshire Institute of Dental and Oral Health (LIDOH) and the Lincolnshire Institute of Rural and Coastal Health (LIRCH). Lincoln University have ambition for a dental school and as such, there has been a noticeable upturn in interest in working in the area, both now and in the future. LIDOH will focus initially on training dental therapists but in time it is hoped ►►

◀ that training for the whole dental team will be part of the programme as well.

### What makes Lincolnshire different to other areas?

I attended a BDA meeting several weeks ago and was sitting next to a younger colleague who recently moved to the area. He commented that we don't have anything like this in the area where he came from. He was not necessarily referring to the presentation, but the friendliness of those attending the meeting, the sense of camaraderie and friendship, and the desire for everyone there to be inclusive. It is a county that caters for everyone and for all ages; a fabulous and safe place to bring up a family; and it has great education, including a university very much on the up and supportive of all things dental. It has affordable house prices; culture and history throughout the county; accessible sporting and leisure facilities; daily fly pasts by the Red Arrows. I could go on... It was chance that brought me here, but I feel so lucky it did. Lincolnshire truly is a hidden gem. ■

To read more about Sarah May Lewis, visit <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41415-025-9031-6>.

## BDA AGMs



The BDA Middlesex and Hertfordshire Branch AGM will take place on Thursday 5 March 2026 between 19:00–21:00 at the Doubletree by Hilton London Elstree, Barnet By-Pass, Borehamwood, WD6 5PU.

There will be an update from Eddie Crouch, Chair of the BDA's Principal Executive Committee, followed by the AGM and Branch Council Meeting. All BDA members are encouraged to attend.

For further information and to book, please visit: <https://www.bda.org/learning/courses-and-events/middlesex-and-hertfordshire-branch-agm/>.

# Earliest depiction of St. Apollonia donated to BDA Museum

Rachel Bairsto, Head of Museum Services at the British Dental Association (BDA), has thanked Tom Sholl for his donation of this single leaf page from the Nuremburg Chronicle 1497 (pictured, with separate image showing St. Apollonia close-up). The complete chronicle is one of the most important German incunables and is extensively illustrated. This page includes woodcuts of 11 portraits of saints and popes including St. Apollonia holding a tooth in a pair of pincers. Dental historian, Ronald Cohen believed this to be the earliest depiction of St. Apollonia in printed book form.

With grateful thanks to Tom Sholl, a retired general dental practitioner and social historian from Sussex, for providing the following details.

St. Apollonia was one of a group of Christian virgins – a predecessor to the 'nun' – who suffered martyrdom during a local riot against Christians. This was on 9 February, her feast day, in Alexandria, 249 CE during the reign of Emperor Philip the Arab, 244–249 CE. An account of her life was written by St. Dionysius in a letter to Fabian, Bishop of Antioch, 236–250 CE.

She refused to renounce her faith, and protected her virginity, so was tortured by having all her teeth pulled out. Her next ordeal was by fire, so she sacrificed herself by walking into it, thus becoming an early Christian martyr.

Apollonia literally means belonging to Apollo, who was a mythical pre-Christian deity in Ancient Greek, Etruscan and Roman religion. Son of Zeus, he is associated with medicine and healing as was his son Asclepius, god of healing from the 5th century BCE. His emblem, familiar today, is a staff supporting an entwined snake which is still used as an emblem of medicine and curative methods.

Christianity converted many pagan practices as part of its establishment. For example, Christ Mass is at the time of the winter solstice which was previously an ancient pagan festival. Thus, the name of a previously pagan god, Apollo and his function have been re-used. Patron saints



are special protectors over various areas of life, recognised by Catholicism, various Protestants if found in the Holy Bible and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches. They are not worshipped but can, through prayer, be asked for intercession with God.

St. Apollonia is the patron saint of dentists, people suffering from toothache and other dental diseases. Her emblem, seen here, is the figure of a saint, with halo, grasping a pair of pincers still carrying a blooded, extracted tooth. As, for many centuries, infection from a dental source commonly led to death through sepsis, and still can, she deserves to be on the Coat of Arms of the British Dental Association!