

# Dentistry

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## Cheque scam fraud almost closes charity

## BDA in turmoil

Charity Bridge2Aid (B2A) was the victim of a sophisticated cheque fraud in its home base of Tanzania. In the wake of this, and coupled with an unexpectedly-announced 70% drop in donations from a main corporate sponsor, the charity was facing a crisis: it needed to raise a minimum amount of £50,000 by the end of March to continue operations before new funding streams become live later this year.

An emergency appeal was launched on 11 January. Mark Topley, head of the charity said: 'In just a few weeks the dental profession has donated an incredible £37,337. It's brilliant – over 75% of our total.'

Mark is at pains to reassure volunteers and donors that B2A has taken swift action to prevent any future fraud occurring, tightening procedures that – through no fault of the charity – were not followed properly.

All money is kept in the UK for as long as possible and transferred

to Tanzania when needed. The charity has ceased using the overseas bank in question and has switched to a new international bank. Bridge2Aid is vigorously pursuing the funds taken, however this takes time, which is why help is needed now. The charity does not sit on huge

reserves and has a strong track record of maximising the use of all donations.

Mark Topley added: 'We can't thank the profession enough for all its overwhelming support. But the need doesn't stop here and we continue to ask that you dig deep. The £50,000 appeal was just

enough to keep our charity going, but if we can raise the target and get £75,000 – or even £100,000 – B2A's work can continue and will be even stronger than ever before. Please help us to keep making that difference by making a donation and sharing our story with others.'

The British Dental Association (BDA) is to hold an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) this month to discuss the falling membership, staff redundancies and vote on the removal of the elected chairman of the Principal Executive Committee (PEC).

The PEC convened a meeting without their chair in December with the agenda being discussion about removing the chairman, Martin Fallowfield, from office. He is accused of having an affair, with assignments said to have taken place in the BDA flat.

A source close to the PEC told *Dentistry* magazine that the BDA and PEC wants rid of its chair after a condemning letter was received by all PEC members from the dean of Cardiff Dental School with the aforementioned allegations of unprofessional conduct and calling for his removal from office.

The BDA lawyer advised that Mr Fallowfield would be entitled to compensation and the BDA has been stuck ever since. A claim for compensation has been discussed with figures of £500,000 bandied.

Martin Fallowfield was available for comment and reminded *Dentistry* readers that he is the elected chairman of PEC until 2015 and wishes to carry out his duties until this date. He did not comment about the compensation figure or the accusation of assignments on BDA property.

The BDA EGM will discuss whether it has the power to remove its elected officials and may even vote itself the powers to do so. The EGM could allow the BDA PEC to remove its chair without compensation. **D**



### You can make a donation in the following ways:

- Through the website - [www.bridge2aid.org/urgentappeal](http://www.bridge2aid.org/urgentappeal)
- Online through Justgiving - [www.justgiving.com/B2Aurgentappeal](http://www.justgiving.com/B2Aurgentappeal)
- BACS through RBS, sort code: 16.16.20, account no. 10072646\*
- By cheque made payable to 'Bridge2Aid' and posted to Bridge2Aid, Well House, The Chipping, Wotton-Under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 7AD
- By calling 0845 850 9877.

\*please notify [karen@bridge2aid.org](mailto:karen@bridge2aid.org) when donating online directly

## Dental students experience a lack of patients

Students from the University of Glasgow are at risk of failing their dental degrees due to a lack of volunteers to practise on.

The *Herald Scotland* has reported that without more patients to practise on, dental students in Glasgow are at risk of falling behind on the number of hours practise they are required to undertake for their degree.

The University of Glasgow offer free treatments to the public so that trainees can complete enough procedures gaining Recaf points towards their qualifications. Despite advertising for patients to receive free oral treatment from students the dental school is not receiving enough volunteers.

The *Herald Scotland* received

this quote from a third year student who wishes to remain anonymous: 'At the end of the fifth year, if you haven't completed enough procedures

and therefore gained enough Recaf points, you cannot qualify as a professional dentist.

'There is nothing you can do about this if you don't have

patients

'I think people in Glasgow should be made more aware of the free dental care we provide at the school. It benefits them and us.'

