



*August 2013*

### **CQC hurdle at the point of sale warning**

Dental practice sale completions are continuing to be delayed following new NHS England requirements in respect of the CQC as well more stringent lending criteria from the banks, warns Amanda Maskery, a specialist dental solicitor with the Newcastle firm of Sintons.

She said the average sale time of a dental practice began to take longer after April 1<sup>st</sup> this year when NHS England established new criteria for variation of the NHS contract. This affected practices where the buyer and the seller briefly entered into a partnership in order to transfer the contract.

Previously, explained Amanda, a 28-day partnership would be used to transfer a dental contract: the vendor and the purchaser both had to register with the CQC and the registration would be swapped over to the purchaser at completion. Since 1 April 2013, however, the partnership has also had to register with the CQC.

She said: "This now means that any variation will not be issued unless there is also a partnership registration with the CQC. Further registration will need to be carried out by the purchaser on completion to ensure that the CQC registration is transferred to their sole name."

Amanda concluded: "It's vital for your solicitor to have a full understanding of the requirements of NHS England as well as being able to deal properly with any issues arising over the CQC matters."

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