**……………………. Dental Practice**

**Protocol for patient notification if practice closes**

In the event of proposed closure, ……………... Dental Practice will give not less than three months advance notification to Lanarkshire NHS Board, confirming that the Practice is closing with no intention to sell the goodwill.

The practice should notify patients in writing when the practice is closing, at least 3 months ahead of the planned closure date, notice should also contain confirmation of where the records shall be stored.

Notification should include

* the final date of availability
* what provision has been made for ongoing patient care
* a list of nearby practices currently registering patients or contact details for NHSL either telephone number or email for queries regarding dental provision in the area telephone number 0300 30 30 243 or [www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk](http://www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk)
* Details of where dental records will be stored (please note that records will not be stored by NHSL) and instructions for obtaining copies of dental records both now and in the future.

 It is important to guard against the appearance of abandonment, a serious medico-legal concern.  A copy of the written/electronic notification sent to patients should be kept in their record to demonstrate that this important step has been taken.

 All registered patients should be notified by letter or email

Paper records can be stored using a commercial organisation that is registered for this purpose. Electronic records must be stored in accordance with Data Protection Act principles regarding security and access. Dental practices must develop a protocol that will be followed in the event of closure, including the length of time records will be stored; the method of storage including security and as well as how patients will gain access to those records in the future; and the arrangements for secure destruction when appropriate.

It is important to ensure confidentiality of records for data compliance, an issue which should be specified in a written agreement with the storage facility