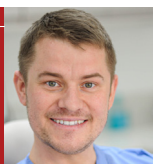


# Dentistry across the generations

Putting the community at the heart of everything Laffan Dental Care does is how it has remained successful for so long, **Guy Laffan** believes

## Dr Guy Laffan

Award-winning dentist based in Blackwood and Cardiff



The differential in dynamics between a family business and one built on professional collaboration arguably lies in the fact that the loyalty and commitment fundamental to its success is, in the case of the former, unconditional.

Those emotional ties run deep. When it comes to the business of dentistry, the link across generations can be reflected in its patient base, too.

If the practice has been in existence for many years, it will have secured loyal links between its clinicians and those families they serve.

## Dental dynasty

Dr Guy Laffan is an award-winning cosmetic and implant dentist based in south Wales.

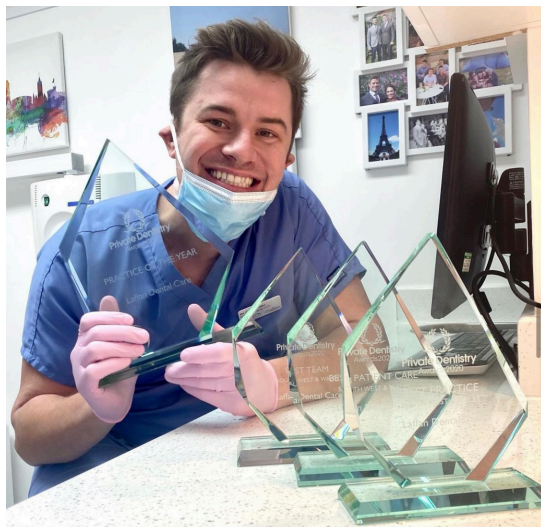
Graduating from Bristol in 2010, he works in the family dental business, Laffan Dental Care, one of the oldest in south Wales. He divides his time between the two clinics in his home town of Blackwood.

With a broad patient base, Laffan Dental Care has two small, exempt NHS contracts across both sites, serving 4,000-plus plan patients with around 30% of them independently private.

It's an impressive head count within a small community and, as Guy acknowledges: 'We have always been at the heart of the community and seem to look after the vast majority of the Blackwood population.'

Laffan Dental Care was established by Carol and Martyn Laffan in 1986. But there has been a dental surgery at 205 High Street, Blackwood, since 1913. The family is proud to be part of that legacy.

Similarly for Guy, it was important to join his parents in the Laffan 'dental dynasty'. His enthusiasm is palpable. 'It's a real privilege – as well as a novelty, I suppose – to have followed in my parents' footsteps, and to continue their legacy has been something very special to me. The practice was already thriving and enormously popular when I joined in 2012. Having the patients' trust and clinical freedom from day one was priceless.'



## Award winners

Roll on nearly a decade and Laffan Dental Care counts 35 people on its payroll – with nine dentists, two hygienists, six admin staff, a lab technician and an 'incredible nursing team'.

Guy says: 'Our ethos is to always put patients first. We pride ourselves on same-day emergencies. Even now during the pandemic when many practices have been inaccessible, we have been here for our patients. We even volunteered to help 111 with dental emergencies – such is our passion for helping the community.'

It was this commitment to patients that won the practice the title of Best Patient Care at the Private Dentistry Awards last year. At the time, judging panel chairman David Houston said that Laffan Dental Care: 'Defines a practice at the heart of their community and their community at its heart'. Guy says: 'That, for me, means everything. This is our core ethos.'

His personal successes are worth noting, too. Scooping Best Young Dentist in Wales and South West at the Dentistry Awards in 2020, this desire to strive for more is all part of his dedication to his patients.

Guy says: 'I can't explain the sense of pride and achievement I felt when I won this award. Knowing how proud everyone was of me, and how I would be putting our small town Blackwood on the map, gave me an enormous sense of accomplishment.'

'My patients haven't stopped congratulating me, and it is such an amazing feeling. I'm so thrilled to be providing the best possible care to our patients as we can; this is without question the most important element of my job.'

## Creating the right ethos

When it comes to delivering care, how does the design of the practice support the team's ethos? Guy says: 'We have 10 surgeries across two practices and every element of the practice is patient focused.'

'We have invested heavily in our facilities and have made every area as comfortable as we can. We are fully accessible, with simple features such as air conditioning in every room, comfortable waiting areas and Belmont Cleo II chairs for patient comfort.'

He calls his new surgery the 'jewel in the crown'.

'The whole concept of our newest surgery was to drive the focus away from a clinical feeling,' Guy says. 'Using our Cleo II as the central point, we worked outwards ensuring we kept a sense of comfort with neutral colours.'

'I designed the surgery, and it was installed by Alan Thorne of Reliatec. We selected the chair colour and went from there, knowing it would be the centrepiece of the new surgery.'

When it comes to dental treatments, it is the dual appeal of orthodontics and dental implants that ticks boxes for

him. 'We love offering both these treatments because of how life changing they can be and we also wanted to offer more of a bespoke in-house service, which means we now rarely refer anything out at all.'

## Digital dentistry

As the new generation of Laffan, Guy sees it as his job to help in the practices' transition from traditional dentistry to a more digital delivery.

He explains: 'Digital dentistry has now become vital to our everyday workflow. The obvious advantages include increased accuracy, record keeping, surgical guides, digital printing, and so much more. Our ultimate goal is to have a digital scanner in every surgery.'

'The digital workflow is vital in supporting the modern-day dentistry we offer. Once fully implemented, the advantages are staggering. We have noticed a huge increase in the accuracy, speed and ease throughout all our workflows, which means the patient journey is smoother than ever before.'

And patient comfort plays its role in the workflow, too, particularly in these more challenging times. Guy says: 'Our ethos revolves entirely around patient comfort – and so this is at the forefront of all our workflows. Our surgeries represent everything we stand for, including calming tones and the comfort of Cleo II units.'

'We are working hard to change people's perception of the dental surgery and it all starts here.'

Multidisciplinary care can be complex so simplicity in surgery design can prove complementary, particularly from the point of view of infection prevention and control.

'We are very focused on a multidisciplinary approach, so all our surgeries are planned with versatility and ergonomics in mind,' Guy says.

'The more compact and neater our surgeries and units, the easier they are to clean and decontaminate. The fewer surfaces there are, the quicker and more efficiently our staff can carry out the decontamination protocols. This is now more vital than ever.'

## Giving back to dentistry

Staying up to date with technology is key for Guy. 'We owe it to our patients to offer the best possible service and with the advantages of technology being so obvious I feel it is paramount to any dental practice.'

Guy's commitment to his profession does not stop at the surgery door. He sits on the ADI committee, is the Welsh regional representative of the BACD and sits on the Gwent Dental Committee (LDC), helping to advance and improve oral health in and around south Wales.

He is also a mentor for those starting out on their implant journey across the country so the principle of 'giving back' is evidently part of his ethos, too. **D**