

Foreword

Wherever you have been this summer, even if it has only been at home, I hope you have enjoyed the break from routine and the Mediterranean-like temperatures. Dental Branch has been working away and, despite the rumours - we do not close down over the summer months!

Final preparations have gone into implementing Positive Assurance and hopefully it will cause as little disruption to practices as possible. You will see we have negotiated a special pre-paid postage service. Most of the changes have occurred here at an administrative level and we hope we have covered all possible hitches.

There are several good news stories in this edition of the Newsletter. Congratulations to Newry and Mourne CDS for first prize in the "Excellence in Dental Care for Children" in the BDA/DoH Focus Awards. Several members of staff of the SHSSB attended the prize-giving in London and were complimented on their entry.

I hope you are reassured by the results of the user survey, showing that GPs are still appreciated by the majority of the public despite other scare stories. We must nurture that goodwill and not become complacent. The views of the public will be taken into consideration in the development of the new Oral Health Strategy and we are exploring ways in which that can be done. Similarly we will want to engage with all branches of the profession and I hope over the coming months you will feel some role in the development of the strategy. If you wish to be kept informed, send us your e-mail address and we will keep in contact.

Regards - Doreen Wilson
Chief Dental Officer

PCD Workforce Review

The Human Resources Directorate DHSSPS are undertaking a workforce review of professions complementary to dentistry (PCD). Initially it was intended to include PCDs within the Dental Workforce Review which was carried out in 2002 but it became apparent during this review that a separate review for PCD would be more appropriate.

A steering group comprising PCD representatives and Departmental officials has been set up and Capita Consulting have been commissioned to undertake the review. The review will commence in September 2003 and is scheduled to be completed by December 2003.

This review is indeed timely as registration for all classes of PCD is just around the corner. At present the only PCD groups registered with the GDC are dental hygienists and dental therapists but in the future dental nurses, dental technicians, clinical dental technicians, maxillofacial prosthodontists / technologists and orthodontic therapists will all have to register. With registration will come issues such as pre-qualification and post qualification training, mandatory CPD and new ways of team working to name a few.

STOP PRESS — STOP PRESS BDA FOCUS AWARDS

Congratulations to Newry and Mourne Trust !!

The Community Dental Service in Newry and Mourne Trust has just scooped a £1000 cash bonanza in the recent BDA Focus Awards.

They received first prize for the category "Excellence in Children's Dental Care"

Judges were impressed by the variety of schemes which the CDS has devised to address the specific oral health needs of children. These included the healthy lunch box, first aid advice for traumatised teeth and sports guards for older children.

The supporting literature was jargon free and easy to understand. Prize-winners and representatives from the Health Board and local BDA were invited to a presentation lunch in London, attended by the Minister of Health, Rosie Winterton.

A proud CDO presented the prize to the local winners.

This is the first year that the DHSSPS has participated in the Focus Awards, organised by the DoH and the BDA. There were 5 different categories of nomination and one overall winner. Full details of the event will follow in the dental journals but you read it first in the CDO News!

New Oral Health Strategy Update

The new Oral Health Strategy (OHS) is probably one of the most important pieces of work which Dental Branch has undertaken. It will form the basis upon which the new arrangements for the delivery of primary dental care services will be developed. In effect, it will be for Northern Ireland dental services what Options for Change is for English dental services. We therefore intend to give regular updates on the progress of the OHS in each edition of CDO News.

Work on the new OHS has already begun. During the summer months policy staff at the DHSSPS have been busy with the planning stage of the strategy. The following is a summary of where we are currently with the OHS:

- The Chair of the steering group for full term evaluation of the 1995 OHS has been appointed and the steering group will convene in September 2003
- The report of the full term evaluation of 1995 OHS should be completed in December 2003
- The Project Initiation Document (PID) for the new OHS has been drawn up
- The OHS will encompass the new primary care dental strategy
- Most of the work of the strategy will be undertaken by a project team under the guidance of a project manager. The strategy will be overseen by a Project Board
- Along with desk top research, the strategy will include a survey of users (i.e patients), and three inclusive workshops
- The timescale for the project is September 2003 to June 2004

While England and Wales will make the transition to new contractual arrangements for the GDS in April 2005, this will not be the case in Northern Ireland (nor indeed Scotland). The legislative timetable will not permit us to make any major contractual changes to our GDS before April 2006. It is therefore likely that Northern Ireland will run with the current GDS arrangements until at least April 2006, but the option for some interim arrangements is still available. We will fully involve the Dental Practice Committee in our deliberations on the options for future contracting and any interim arrangements that may be necessary.

Annual Report

Dental Branch (DHSSPS) has just published it's first ever annual report. The report details the business activities of the branch during the financial year 2002-2003. It is compiled for reference by Dental Branch customers including the Department, the Health Boards, Trusts, Central Services Agency and the numerous committees and groups with which Dental Branch engage. The report has been distributed to our key stakeholders but some additional copies are available. If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy, please contact Dental branch:

Email :

Jennifer.mcadams@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Phone : 028 9052 2710

New Appointments

Aisling Quinn has been appointed as a Referral Dental Officer DHSSPS, and took up post in June 2003. Aisling graduated from Queens University Belfast in 1993 and after undergoing Vocational Training practised as an associate dentist for 6 years in Enniskillen. After this period Aisling moved to Kent where she took up a post as dental associate with Boots Dental Care.

The team of Referral Dental Officers in the department now stands at 3 full time employees.

Dentists Perform Well in User Survey

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) recently commissioned a survey to establish the level of public satisfaction with health and social services in Northern Ireland and to identify areas that the public felt would benefit from change or improvement.

The aim of the research was to undertake '... a quantitative survey of the public to establish the level of satisfaction with current services...'

The survey, based on telephone interviews, was carried out on a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population earlier this year. The questionnaire was structured to obtain information on the public's perception of primary and secondary health care services, examining various issues such as access to care, health promotion, spending priorities and equality, as well as gaining information on the public's view on the future planning for the health service.

The survey respondents were asked to rate each of the services that they had used in the twelve months prior to being surveyed: these included community pharmacy, dental services, GP services, physiotherapy and social services.

The results make pleasing reading for all of our colleagues providing primary health care in Northern Ireland. The overwhelming majority of services users reported to be either very satisfied or satisfied with the service(s) they used in the last twelve months. The highest levels of satisfaction were recorded for the community pharmacy service (99% satisfied users) closely followed by the dental services (96%). Well done to us!!

Satisfaction with Primary Care Services (Users: last 12 months)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
	%	%	%	%	%
Community Pharmacy/ Chemist	70	29	1	-	-
GP/Family Doctor/ Practice Nurse	45	48	6	1	-
Dentist	55	41	2	1	-
Occupational Therapy/ Physiotherapy/ Speech and Language/Chiroprody (Allied Professions to Health)	50	42	4	2	2
Health Visitor or District Nurse (Community Nursing)	62	30	3	4	2
Social Worker	48	41	6	6	77
Home Help/Homecare Service	57	36	4	3	54
Day-care Services	68	25	-	6	12
NB: Service Users Only					

Positive Assurance

Positive Assurance is due to be implemented by the Referral Dental Service in early September 2003. At present final arrangements are being made for its smooth implementation with particular attention to the logistics of the handling of patients confidential dental records.

Information evenings regarding Positive Assurance have been arranged for each of the Boards:-

Eastern Board,
16th September 2003, 7:30 pm,
Postgraduate Lecture Theatre, BCH

Southern Board,
23rd September 2003, 7:30pm,
Seagoe Hotel, Portadown

Northern Board,
6th November 2003, 7:30pm,
Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick

(Western Board evening was held in June)

Positive Assurance and RDO examinations will be carried out concurrently by the RDO for each patient called for examination.

Your patients will be called to the examination in the normal manner.

You, the dentists will receive the D4T form (which has been updated) for each patient called for RDO

examination. In addition, for every patient called you will receive an A4 envelope with the patient's details recorded on the front. **The record, including relevant radiographs, for each patient called to examination should be placed into and then sealed in the appropriate envelope.**

Finally a silver coloured, plastic 'special delivery', Royal Mail envelope will be supplied which is to be used to return all the individual patient envelopes to Castle Buildings.

Although the postage cost is prepaid, the silver coloured envelope **cannot** be dropped into a post box. It **must** be taken to a Post Office counter where a certificate of posting will be issued. Special delivery is the safest form of sending documents through the post. It is fully traceable and sent by first class courier service. All clinical records will be returned to the practitioner by the same special delivery service.

If you do not use these arrangements correctly the Referral Dental Service cannot be responsible for the receipt and delivery of your clinical records.

Details of these arrangements will be sent out with the initial wave of Positive Assurance D 4Ts.

If you have any queries contact Donna Mc Neill by phoning 028 9052 3273

New Dental Service at Magilligan Prison

There are three prison sites in Northern Ireland at which prison services are delivered: Maghaberry, Magilligan and the Young Offenders Centre Hydebank. The prison dental service is provided by the Department and following a review last year it was decided to tender for dental services at Magilligan Prison. A general dental practice from the North West was successful in gaining the contract and hope to commence providing dental treatment in October 2003. The contract runs for two years with an option to run for a further three years.

This is the first time that prison dental services have been contracted out to the private sector.

Services to the remaining prison sites are currently being provided by locum practitioners and this arrangement is currently under review.

New Appointment at School of Dentistry

Dr Donald Burden has been appointed to the new combined post of Head of School and Clinical Director at the Dental Hospital RVH. Previously the posts of Head of School and Clinical Director were two distinct roles and the new combined post should open the opportunity for a more integrated approach to managing the dual roles of teaching and service which the Dental School provides. We congratulate Dr Burden on his appointment and wish him well in his new post.