



Spring/Summer 2009

## Foreword

Dear Colleague,

The first six months of 2009 have been extremely busy in the Department with several large projects commencing and others nearing completion.

On the public health front, we have the Adult Dental Health Survey (ADHS), which is detailed on page 4. I want to thank Michele Oliver, Clinical Director of the SHSCT, for acting as the clinical lead for this project. Northern Ireland came late to the planning of the ADHS. In a very short space of time, Michele has gathered a team of examiners together to undertake the survey.

The other major public health initiative is the Northern Ireland Caries Prevention in Practice Trial (NICPIP), which has involved a huge amount of planning from the research team at Manchester University and local colleagues. Michael Donaldson (HSCB), Solveig Noble (NHSCT) and Seamus Killough (BDA) have contributed significantly to the planning of this endeavour and will have even more involvement in its operation, which is due to commence in the autumn of 2009. This is an extremely important research project for Northern Ireland, and particularly so since it is based in Primary Care. I would urge as many colleagues as possible from general dental practice and the Community Dental Service to get involved. Hopefully the results will provide the right direction in order to shift from treatment to prevention and that we can incorporate this into the new dental contract.

The award of the dental tender has also taken up a considerable amount of time and we are pleased that there has been a successful outcome. It is hoped that, within twelve months, the major access problems experienced in recent years will be largely addressed.

The 1<sup>st</sup> April saw the dissolution of the four Health & Social Services Boards and the setting up of one Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) for Northern Ireland. The Central Services Agency has also been replaced by the Business Services Organisation. The Referral Dental Service will transfer to the HSCB and all dental officers formerly employed by the CSA and Boards will now be employed by the HSCB. It is hoped that a Dental Director will soon be appointed to lead the HSCB dental team.

Enjoy your summer break.

**Donncha O'Carolan**

Acting Chief Dental Officer  
June 2009

## Tender for Health Service Dentistry in Northern Ireland

Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, announced on 13 May 2009 that 38 additional dentists will be deployed across Northern Ireland to resolve access difficulties to health service dentistry.

A new £17 million contract has been awarded to Oasis Dental Care Ltd who will provide the additional dentists in **access hotspots** across Northern Ireland. The contract will run for three years with the option of extension for a further two.

Additional dentists will be located in the following former Board areas:-

- **Western** Enniskillen, Omagh, Strabane and Derry
- **Northern** Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Cookstown
- **Eastern** Bangor/Donaghadee, Holywood, Dundonald/Castlereagh, Lisburn/ Dunmurry and Carryduff
- **Southern** Banbridge, Dungannon and Newry

The Enniskillen and Derry practices will be the first to open and it is hoped that the first of these new practices will open before the end of this year and the remaining practices will be phased in by order of need. It is planned that all 38 dentists will be in place within 12 months of the initial practice opening.

Making the announcement, Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey said:

*I know that access to health service dentistry has been a matter of concern for many people across Northern Ireland. I am pleased that, today, I can announce a new contract that will provide access for an additional 57,000 health service patients.*

*Oasis Dental Care Ltd will provide 38 dentists, targeted in access 'hotspot' areas across Northern Ireland ensuring people can get the health service dental treatment they need. Oasis has extensive expertise and experience in providing dental services to health Trusts across the United Kingdom and the standards they have set are impressive.*

Justin Ash, Chief Executive of Oasis Dental Care, said:

*We are delighted to have been chosen to be part of this significant boost to the health of the people of Northern Ireland and are delighted to be working in partnership with the Health Minister and the Health and Social Care Board. This contract is another resounding endorsement of Oasis Dental Care and our ability to deliver excellent health service dentistry. Plans are already well advanced for the new Oasis practices and we look forward to welcoming new patients from across the province later this year. We will ensure that we keep local communities informed of the progress of the building work and when they will be able to register for treatment.*

The Minister concluded:

*My officials are working closely with the British Dental Association to achieve a new dental contract for all health service dentists in Northern Ireland, and I look forward to a successful conclusion to this process. However, there are access problems now that I have to address, and I am delighted that Oasis will work with us on this.*

*I am confident that this initiative will greatly ease the current access problems, but my officials will continue to monitor the situation, and we shall take further action as is necessary to ensure that the general public has access to a health service dentist.*

In the spring of last year, in an effort to combat the problems around access to health service dentistry, the Minister approved the issue of a tender for provision of 38 additional health service dentists, to be carried out under a pilot Personal Dental Services (PDS) scheme. Consultation took place over the summer, and the advertisement announcing the tender was issued on 7 November 2008. The

procurement exercise was carried out by the Regional Supplies Service.

The tender period closed on 7 January 2009 and eleven bids were received. The bids received were subsequently evaluated by a panel chaired by the acting CDO and comprising the Dental Directors of the four legacy Health & Social Services Boards. The bids were evaluated against both quality and price, with Oasis Dental Care Limited emerging as the preferred bidder. Further evaluation and financial checks were carried out, including interviews with the preferred bidder and visits to some of their practice premises in England and Wales. Oasis Dental Care was approved by the Department as the successful bidder on 24 April 2009.

### Oasis Dental Care Limited

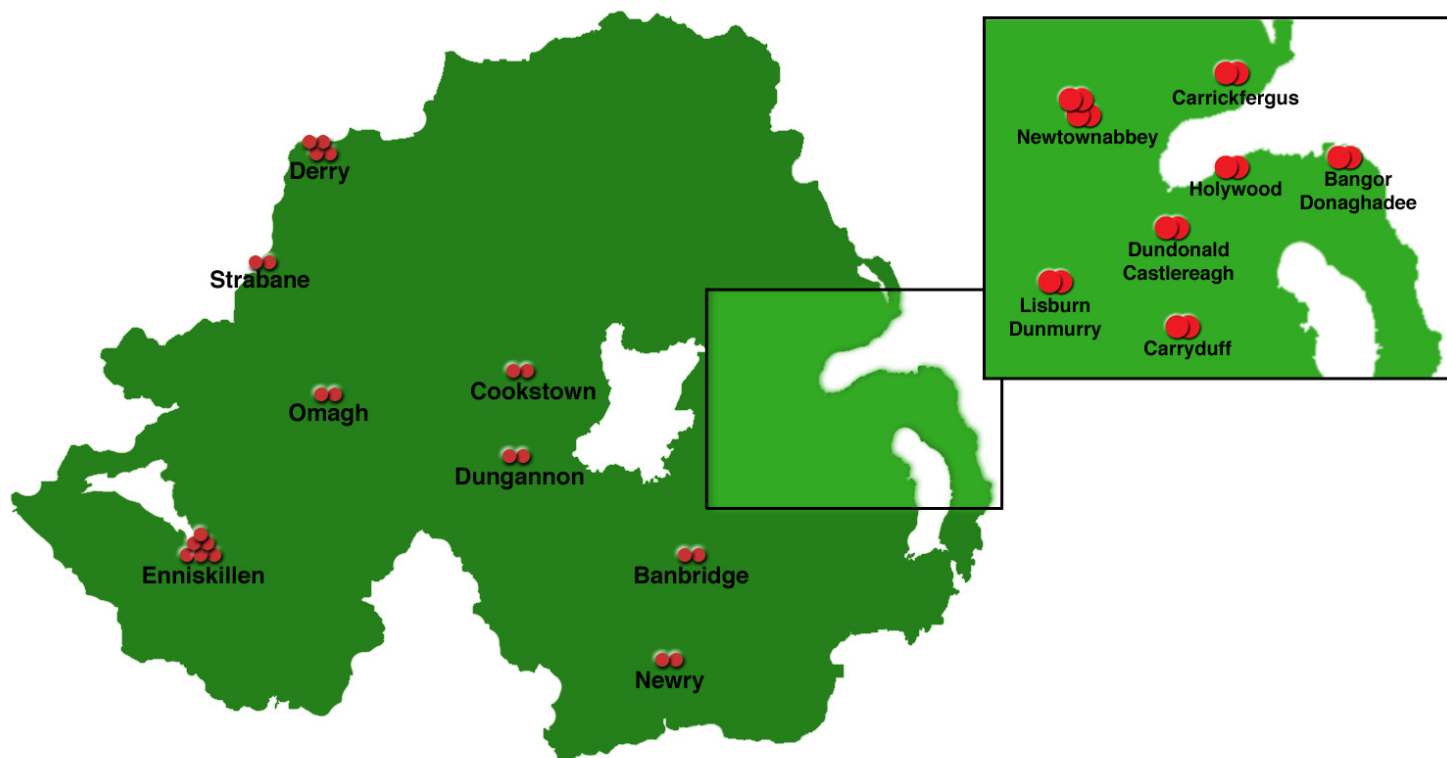
Oasis Dental Care Limited is a large corporate body with over 650 dentists and 1600 staff. The group is commissioned to provide over £45M of NHS services, and owns and operates over 170 dental practices throughout England and Wales, providing a combination of NHS and

private dental care. Oasis currently provides NHS services to over one million patients across England and Wales. The evaluation panel was particularly impressed by the information provided on clinical governance & best practice, induction of staff and focus on the quality of service provision. It also welcomed the emphasis placed on preventive care, in line with the Department's strategies on oral health and primary dental care.

While this will be Oasis' first experience in Northern Ireland, the firm has developed 27 new NHS Dental Practices under PDS since April 2006, in locations with both high access requirements and poor oral health issues across England and Wales. The firm will provide the full range of treatments currently provided under the Statement of Dental Remuneration, and will guarantee a minimum of 90% Health Service treatment under the contract. (The remaining 10% is intended to cater for those Health Service patients requiring particular treatments which are not available under the Health Service). ■

## Map of new surgery location and numbers

Under the contract, there is the flexibility to increase these numbers should the need be determined by the Commissioners



The former Northern Board has significantly addressed dental access with their Salaried Dental Service

# HTM 01-05: Decontamination in General Dental Practices Northern Ireland Policy Position

The Department of Health in England has recently issued *Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices*, which is intended to progressively raise the quality of decontamination work in primary care dental services by covering the decontamination of reusable instruments within dental facilities.

The DHSSPS welcomes this document as an important step towards improving the standards of local decontamination in general dental practice and broadly accepts the principles set out in HTM 01-05. However, the profession will be aware that the DHSSPS, in partnership with colleagues from Queen's University and the Health and Social Care Board, has already undertaken a significant body of work around decontamination of reusable instruments in general

dental practice. The background to this programme of work and our key priority areas were outlined in our Quality Improvement Scheme (QIS) letter of 13 November 2007. [dhsspsni.gov.uk/2007\\_11\\_13\\_qis\\_letter.pdf](http://dhsspsni.gov.uk/2007_11_13_qis_letter.pdf)

The DHSSPS policy position as outlined in November 2007 still stands and, while we largely accept the HTM 01-05 guidance on decontamination, the following amendments to HTM 01-05 will apply in Northern Ireland:

Topic	HTM 01-05	DHSSPS position
Manual Cleaning	HTM 01-05 states that every practice should be capable of meeting the essential quality requirements, that is:  <i>Regardless of the technology used, the cleaned instruments, prior to sterilization, should be free of visible contaminants when inspected. Instruments should be reprocessed using a validated decontamination cycle including: cleaning washing (in terms of manual cleaning, this includes having a written protocol); a validated steam sterilizer and, at the end of the reprocessing cycle, they should be in a sterilized state.</i>	We do not accept manual cleaning as a validated process, therefore in order to achieve a validated cleaning/washing cycle a washer/disinfector must be used.
Time Scales	HTM 01-05 proposes a period of 12 months for the attainment of essential quality requirements but no schedule for attainment of best practice is provided in the document.	We support the 12 month time period for meeting essential requirements. In the Quality Improvement Scheme letter issued on 13 November 2007 we pointed out to the profession that we expected dental practices to achieve the priority areas outlined in the annex within a 3-5 year period. These priority areas are consistent with the best practice standards as outlined in HTM 01-05. We therefore expect all dental practices in Northern Ireland to work towards achieving best practice by November 2010 and by November 2012 all dental practices must have achieved best practice.
Packaging of instruments after processing in a displacement steam autoclave	HTM 01-05 permits the drying and packing of instruments after processing in a non-vacuum (type N) autoclave and the subsequent storage of these instruments for 21 days.	As this is a non validated process with no evidence base to support it, this practice will not be deemed acceptable. Non packaged instruments can be processed in a type N autoclave but should be stored in covered trays and used within the working day on which they were processed.
Exemplar room layouts	Exemplar room layouts are illustrated in section 5 of HTM 01-05	The Decontamination Area as <i>Figure 1: Example layout for essential quality requirements</i> is not acceptable.

Guidance on decontamination in general dental practices, including HTM 01-05, will soon be available at: [dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hea/decontamination-general-dental-practices.htm](http://dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hea/decontamination-general-dental-practices.htm)

Hard copies of HTM 01-05 have been ordered and will be distributed as soon as possible to each dentist on the dental list.

For all dental care carried out in HSC Trust settings, DHSSPS policy is for local decontamination to transfer from these sites to Sterile Service Departments (SSD's). If the opportunity arises for General Dental Practitioners to use SSD, then this option would be preferred over local decontamination. ■

## Additional Funding for Commitment Payments

The Minister, Michael McGimpsey, has agreed to significantly increase the Commitment Payments, Determination V of the SDR. In total, £1.1M will be added to the commitment payments; this represents a 75% increase to the commitment payments and equates to an overall 1.5% increase to the net GDS spend.

Over the past 2 years, the Department has made significant increases to the allowances paid to Health Service dentists such as the Practice Allowance, quality assurance grants for trainers and the Quality Improvement Scheme. We have continued this approach by applying this large increase to the commitment payment this year which will benefit the majority of dentists providing Health Service care.

## Dental Registration

There will be change to the registration period from the current 15 month period to 24 months. This policy revision requires a change to the 1993 GDS regulations so a composite set of amending regulations have been drafted.

The Department consulted with the British Dental Association on this amendment and the BDA has not raised any concerns.

The amendment is currently with the Minister for endorsement.

## Adult Dental Health Survey

### Northern Ireland will take part in the Adult Dental Health Survey 2009.

Michele Oliver, Clinical Dental Director SHSCT, is acting as the clinical lead coordinator for this project.

A workshop was held on 5 March 2009 to consult with local stakeholders to identify the types of information that could be collected as part of the survey and that would be most valuable for planning dental services. Attendees included representatives from the CDS, HSCB, DHSSPS, QUB and Central Survey Unit. The projected time table for the survey is:

March 2009 ..... examiners provisionally identified

June/July 2009.... pilot in a small number of selected areas

September 2009 ..... training (3 days per examiner)

October 2009 ..... fieldwork starts

March 2009 ..... fieldwork finishes

There will be 15 primary sampling units (PSU's) in Northern Ireland as detailed below. Each PSU will have 50 addresses at which examinations will take place.

Belfast Trust.....	2 PSU's
South Eastern Trust ....	4 PSU's
Southern Trust .....	4 PSU's
Western Trust .....	3 PSU's
Northern Trust .....	2 PSU's

## Northern Ireland Caries Prevention in Practice Trial

### A large Primary Care based research trial into the use fluoride varnish for prevention of caries is planned for Northern Ireland in autumn 2009.

This is a first in the United Kingdom and we will be looking for dental practices to volunteer to participate. Anyone interested should contact Michael Donaldson: [Michael.Donaldson@hscni.net](mailto:Michael.Donaldson@hscni.net). The background to this trial is detailed below.

Recent studies have shown that prevention of decay in the primary teeth in NHS general dental practice is not very effective. This is corroborated by data that shows, over a 3 year period, 35% of 2-3 year olds registered with a dentist develop tooth decay.

In England, all NHS GDP's have been sent *Delivering Better Oral Health: an Evidence Based Toolkit*, which identifies best evidence for preventive care. What is not known, however, is

if these interventions are cost effective when used in every day NHS practices.

A trial is planned to test the cost effectiveness of the fluoride varnish and family-strength fluoride toothpaste (>1000ppm) provided in general practice. The trial will be planned and managed by a partnership of GDP's, CDS dentists, academics from the University of Manchester and Queens University, and Michael Donaldson. It has the full, and active, backing of acting Chief Dental Officer and the DHSSPS.

The trial will have two arms; fluoride varnish (applied twice a year) and toothpaste vs. a control - both groups will have the same, standardised, dental health education. The trial will involve approximately 2000 children at approximately 40 GDS practices and 10 CDS clinics. Children will be recruited at 2-4 years and followed up for 3 years. The main aim of the trial is to see if a larger proportion of children can remain caries free.

The trial sought funding from the Health Technology Assessment funding stream of the National Institute of

Health Research and the DHSSPS in Northern Ireland. Funding has been agreed and recruitment of practices will begin in September 2009.

GDP's who wish to participate in the trial will receive £1000 as an introductory fee, then an additional £25 for each visit of each child in the study (a total of 7 visits in all). This is in addition to the normal capitation and fee for item payments for each child. Practices and CDS sites will receive additional payments to cover the costs of training and time of their receptionists and practice nurses to participate in the trial. The practices will also have close support from research staff who will visit practices on a regular basis.

The trial will have ethical approval and, as a result, liability for any possible injury to children (the risk is negligible) will be the responsibility of the study sponsor not the GDP/ CDS services. The outcomes of the trial could inform the development of the new dental contract in Northern Ireland and the NHS dental contracts in the UK. ■

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<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/dental/dental-whatsnew.htm>

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