Dental units on the move

The first national oral health improvement programme for young children in Wales is being rolled out with the help of a fleet of mobile dental units.

The scheme, which was launched by First Minister Rhodri Morgan, involves a team of dental health support workers giving out toothbrushes and toothpaste to school children along with oral health advice.

Part of the service will be delivered via mobile dental health units that will play a key role in providing specialist preventive care and treatment to schools.

The Designed to Smile programme was announced last year by Health Minister Edwina Hart and has already been running on a much smaller scale.

It will now be rolled out through two super pilots in North and South Wales. Children in nursery, reception and year one classes in schools, in areas deemed to be of greatest oral health need, will be visited by the dental fleet.

Over 500 schools are expected to benefit from the scheme during their rollout over the next three years.

Welsh children have the worst rates of tooth decay in the UK. On average, a five-year-old in Wales has between two and three decayed, missing or filled teeth, compared to less than two in Great Britain as a whole.

The First Minister Rhodri Morgan said: ‘Rates of tooth decay are far too high in Wales given that it is almost a preventable disease.’

‘This programme recognises that extra level of oral health problems we face in Wales. Through ‘Designed to Smile’ we hope to open up more avenues of preventative care and treatment to children in Wales so that we can reduce the number of children with dental decay levels in the UK average level and then to even lower levels.

Health Minister Edwina Hart said: ‘This programme will help meet our One Wales commitment to provide a new public health focus on dentistry and ensure that children are given the tools skills they need to maintain good oral health.’

The British Dental Association (BDA) Wales welcomed the initiative. Stuart Geddes, BDA Director for Wales, said: ‘There is clearly much work to be done to improve the oral health of Wales’ children and this fleet of mobile dental units is a good way of taking oral health education and messages to those who might not normally receive them.

The British Dental Association (BDA) Wales welcomed the initiative. Stuart Geddes, BDA Director for Wales, said: ‘There is clearly much work to be done to improve the oral health of Wales’ children and this fleet of mobile dental units is a good way of taking oral health education and messages to those who might not normally receive them.

The dental profession is currently undergoing a period of rapid change within infection control and is eagerly awaiting the new HTM 01-05, Decontamination in Dentistry.

This new document will consolidate previous guidance into one and incorporate practice standards, this is an opportunity for dental professionals to learn from industry experts on how these new developed standards will affect their practice and how to overcome challenges.

Kevin Lewis, dental director at Dental Protection Limited, will be speaking at the seminar on the general guidelines for infection control in dentistry and the legal context including professional and ethical responsibilities.

Judith Doig, practice manager and Samantha Wright, head nurse at the Private Dental Centre, will be looking at the practical lessons learnt in infection control management and techniques for getting the whole practice involved and committed to infection control.

Caroline Pankhurst, senior clinical teacher at King’s College London Dental Institute, will be discussing guidelines for effective use of barrier techniques: gloves, glasses, masks, surgery clothing and immunisation protocols and access for practice staff.

Carmel Maher and Sarah Green, regional consultants atslash UK, will be speaking on the fundamentals of systemic hand washing and being aware of what gloves are available and the mist suitable for you and your team.

Daniel McAlonan, health and safety adviser at the British Dental Association’s (BDA) Professional Advisory Services, will be exploring the issue of the safe management of healthcare waste.

The last speaker, Paul Jenkins, operational manager for the Ser- ices Department at Swin- don and Marlborough NHS Trust, will talk about maintaining high standards of decontamination and complying with HTM 01-05.

The seminar meets the educational criteria set by the General Dental Council for verifiable CPD (six hours) and is certified by the BDA.

For further information on the programme and to book your place on this seminar please contact: Merete Hatastedt, events executive at the BDA, Tel: 020 7565 4595, fax: 020 7565 4591, email: events@bda.org

Reviewing infection control

The British Dental Association is holding a one-day conference on infection control for the entire programme, uniting both super pilots.

Both Community Dental Services in North and South Wales have taken on new staff to implement the preventative programme who will play an integral role in the success of the scheme.

Dr Menna Lloyd programme lead for Cardiff and the Vale NHS Trust called the programme a ‘very welcome Welsh Assembly Government development and said it will enable the Community Dental Service to really make a difference by reducing dental decay levels in children. We have now appointed the ‘Designed to Smile’ team and they are already busily working in schools and with parent groups to get the message across that healthy teeth are important.’

While Dr Michelle Sogger programme lead at North Wales NHS Trust said: ‘We are pleased to have been chosen by the Welsh Assembly Government to be one of the super pilot areas. Working alongside Cardiff and Vale Community Dental Service we have developed a brand image and some great resources to help make toothbrushing fun.’

‘Designed to Smile’ is a Welsh Assembly Government funded scheme that forms part of a national oral health action plan for Wales.

Total funding of £4.6 million for the action plan is expected to be made available till at least 2010/11.

Dental schools to join hands

For the first time, three dental schools have joined forces to develop joint research opportunities.

Cardiff University’s School of Dentistry, the Peninsula Dental School in Exeter and the dental school at University of Bristol have formed the South West & Wales Dental Schools’ Research Symposium.

The initiative is designed to develop research excellence and open up more avenues of funding.

Professor Elizabeth Treasure, dean of the School of Dentistry at Cardiff, said: ‘Developing research that impacts positively, regionally and globally de-