Ten thousand NHS places announced for Wales

By DTI

CARDIFF, UK: Up to 30,000 new NHS dental posts are planned to be created in Wales, the national government announced on Tuesday. As part of the investment, over £0.75 million will be given to the Cardiff and Vale University Health boards, it also said.

Overall, the Welsh government has pledged to spend an additional £1.3 million in this regard. In a press release, Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said that the effort is aimed at developing new and improved NHS dental services across Wales, particularly in places with higher needs and neglected areas, such as specialist paediatric dental services.

“The investment in specialist paediatric dentistry will help improve NHS dental treatment and care for those children who are affected by dental disease,” he said.

In addition to increased spending, the government said it plans to introduce a clinically led dental e-referral management system and fund courses and training for people who intend to work as dental care professionals.

According to national statistics, Wales falls significantly short of dentists per capita among all of the home nations. While it welcomed the investment, the British Dental Association said it is insufficient, as millions are taken away from dentistry each year owing to tough contract targets.

“This money represents just a quarter of what’s been taken out of the system each year. Creative accounting does not constitute new investment. The best thing the Welsh Government could do is commit to ensure all money set aside for dentistry is actually spent on improving the oral health of children and adults in Wales,” said Katrina Clarke, Chair of the BDA Wales General Dental Practice Committee.

Alarm raised over oral health of elderly Brits

RCS predicts sharp rise of dental conditions in over 65-year-olds

By DTI

LONDON, UK: Oral healthcare in older people needs drastic improvement, leading dentists in the UK have said, as almost one in five Brits over the age of 65 are currently suffering from an urgent dental condition. According to a new report published by the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS), at least 1.8 million of over ten million in this age group live with dental pain, oral sepsis or extensive caries in untreated teeth.

Conditions could become even worse in 20 years, when it is estimated that almost one in two will have severe dental conditions, the report also predicts. While adult oral health has seen significant improvement over the last 40 years, according to the RCS, too little is currently being done to help older people to maintain their oral health.

It asserted that government, health services, local authorities, care providers and regulators have to step up their efforts to improve access to dental services for older people.

“As well as causing pain and making it difficult to speak, eat and take medication, poor oral health is linked to conditions in older people such as malnutrition and aspiration pneumonia,” commented Prof. Michael Escudier, Dean of the Faculty of Dental Surgery at the RCS. “We need to work together to ensure improvements in oral healthcare for older people.” In addition to improving access to oral healthcare for the elderly, the RCS recommended oral health training of key health professionals in acute and community care settings, such as nurses, junior doctors, pharmacists and geriatricians. It also suggested that social care providers should train their staff about oral health issues and ensure that oral health is covered by those services in their initial health assessments.

Further measures should include the development of policies for hospitals to minimise denture loss and increased efforts to monitor and measure older people’s oral health, the RCS added. “Dental health needs to be viewed as part of older people’s overall health, with health professionals and social care providers being trained to recognise and deal with problems,” Escudier said.

The RCS estimates that almost one in two people over 65 will have severe dental conditions in 2040.
Collaboration meets creativity

British Society of Paediatric Dentistry invites to 2017 conference in Manchester

MANCHESTER UK: Collaboration between clinicians, healthcare officials and researchers will be the theme of this year’s annual conference of the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry in Manchester, the organiser has said. At the event, a number of renowned speakers from all over the country will present scientific developments resulting from trials or inter-hospital collaborations they are involved in.

Treatment of children with complex needs for which collaboration is essential will be particularly in focus of the conference. "Working together to keep it simple – complex problems in complex children." Innovative and creative concepts in caries prevention and management will be provided by Dr Sondos Albadri and Yang See Chau from the Northern Alliance collaboration as well as Prof. Marie Therese Hosey from King’s College in London. Drs Mechelle Collard from Cardiff and Joanna May from Manchester will further provide an paediatric perspective on why collaboration is essential in management of children with cleft disorders.

Other highlights include a session with the Chief Dental Officers from Scotland, Wales and England, Margie Taylor, Colette Bridgman and Sara Hurley, who will look at oral health initiatives across the home nations.

The three-day conference, which will be held at the Lowry Arts Centre in Salford Keys in Manchester, takes place from 19–22 September.

“It’s the first time in 20 years that the BSPD conference has come back to Manchester and, as an organising committee, we plan to showcase both a great city and some very exciting creative collaborations,” said BSPD president Claire Stevens. “What we hope is that all our delegates will experience the buzz of being in Manchester and hearing first class speakers but at the same time, they leave feeling refreshed and relaxed by the well-being activities that we have lined up.”

More information about the event is available online at www.bspdconference.org. For the first time, delegates will have access to a new mobile application, which provides easy-to-find information about the conference and the programme. Health and well-being activities for delegates will also be offered during the three congress days.

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GDC announces warning after suspension over fake dental products

BY DTI

LONDON, UK: The General Dental Council (GDC) has strongly advised dental professionals in the UK not to buy products from sources that are not compliant with existing standards and regulations. The warning comes after a dentist from North West England was suspended recently for repeatedly having bought counterfeit dental handpieces online.

According to the UK regulator, the 32-year-old purchased risky equipment on an internet auction website at least three times. It was seized earlier this year during inspections by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) at his practice in Preston in Lancashire. After his hearing in July, he will not be able to practise dentistry for three months, the GDC said.

“This case shows the importance of dentists and dental care professionals adhering to the standards around compliant dental equipment,” Jonathan Green, GDC Director of Fitness to Practise, commented. “Non-compliant equipment endangers the health of both the patient and those using it and is vital that all items meet safety requirements.”

“As set out in our Standards for Dental Professionals, all members of the dental team must understand and follow the law and regulations in this important area, which go to the heart of patient protection. They must always put patients’ interests first,” he added.

According to MHRA, which regulates all medical devices in the UK, over 10,000 individual pieces of non-compliant or counterfeit dental equipment are seized in dental practices per year. To counter the worrying trend, the agency has been running an awareness campaign in partnership with the British Dental Industry Association since 2014.

“Dental patients are entitled to expect quality care, including the standard of the instruments and devices used by dental professionals. It is vital that dentists and dental staff buy equipment from bona fide suppliers and avoid non-compliant or counterfeit devices. I urge all dental professionals to be cautious of seemingly cheap devices which may be unfit for purpose and potentially dangerous to patients and the staff that use them,” Head of Enforcement at MHRA, Alastair Jeffrey, said.

Critical equipment is easily available on websites like eBay and Google.

Dental students charged with terrorist offences

BY DTI

LONDON, UK: Local newspapers are reporting that a dental student from Plymouth will have to stand trial for terrorist offences in London this month. The individual, Abdurahman Kaabar, originally of Upperthorpe in Sheffield, is accused of three offences of possessing records of a kind likely to be useful in preparing an act of terrorism.

It is understood that the 22-year-old is a UK citizen of Libyan descent and is studying dentistry at Plymouth University. He was arrested in August by South Yorkshire Police after an investigation by the North East Counter Terrorism Unit (NECTU). Kaabar has been remanded in custody and will appear before the Old Bailey in September. He pleaded not guilty to the charges, according to court documents.

It is unknown whether the arrest is connected to the arrest in June of another dental student from Sheffield, who was charged for the early attack planning of a terror attack and will stand trial in November. The 24-year-old, who is originally from Huddersfield in West Yorkshire, was arrested in his flat after the NECTU was tipped off about suspicious behaviour. He is accused of having engaged in the preparation of and having possessed material that could be useful in preparing an act of terrorism.

The arrests are the latest in a number of counterterrorism activities after the devastating terror attacks of recent months. However, they are not related to any recent incidents, like the Manchester Arena bombing or the Westminster Bridge attack in London, NECTU officials said. According to the Home Office, police in the UK arrested a record number of terrorist suspects last year and an estimated 3,000 persons are still under observation by authorities nationwide.

South Yorkshire Police Assistant Chief Constable David Hartley said, “If you have any concerns around any suspicious activity, I would encourage you to please call the confidential Anti-Terrorist hotline on 0800 779321.

Nurse from practice with largest recall suspended for life

BY DTI

LONDON, UK: A Nottingham nurse working for a Nottingham dentist responsible for the largest recall of patients in NHS history has been suspended from practice indefinitely. The decision came after a hearing by the General Dental Council (GDC) in August after her initial suspension in 2016.

The nurse was accused of having put patients at risk by failing to ensure that an adequate standard of cross-infection control was maintained at the practice in which she worked in 2014. According to the GDC, she has not engaged with the regulatory body to remedy her failings and does not wish to practise as a dental nurse again.

“I feel I have let myself down as a dental nurse as well as my patients, although I would never intentionally do anything to put their health at risk. We were a very busy practice and I often felt it was almost impossible to meet CQC [Care Quality Commission] standards at all times due to the amount of patients coming through the door,” she stated in a letter sent to the GDC.

The nurse’s former employer was removed for reasons of misconduct owing to 55 allegations of failure to maintain basic standards of infection control or prescribe antibiotics without a thorough assessment of patients’ needs. As a result, more than 22,000 patients were offered a recall for blood tests owing to the risk of exposure to infection in 2014.

The dentist’s actions were revealed by a whistle-blower, who recorded some of the failings on video. The filmings showed that he did not change his gloves or surgical mask and wiped his hands on his trousers instead of washing them, among other gravely hazardous practices.

Dental patients are entitled to expect quality care, including the standard of the instruments and devices used by dental professionals. It is vital that dentists and dental staff buy equipment from bona fide suppliers and avoid non-compliant or counterfeit devices. I urge all dental professionals to be cautious of seemingly cheap devices which may be unfit for purpose and potentially dangerous to patients and the staff that use them.”