Dentistry hits headlines early in election campaign

NHS dental services become an early key election topic as the political parties draw battle lines in Reading West constituency.

About tooth decay among children in the Reading West area rather than a lack of capacity. She commented: “When I have put the question to the authorities they say there are enough dentists and places for NHS patients.

“But they need to work much more closely with the council to advertise properly and help people get to see those dentists.”

Adrian Windisch, candidate for the Green Party, said: “The idea of the NHS was that all dental health would be free, but that is not the case.

“We would bring back free dentists for all by saving money on scrapping things like nuclear weapons.”

News

Dental practice investment

The chief dental officer has highlighted in his CDO update that under the new system, “PCTs can make investments in NHS dental services from their funding allocations in return for an agreement related to improving the quality and possibly the quantity of NHS services.” Dr Cockcroft added: “A convenient way to do this is through an amortised loan, and we have published a contract template agreement on the NHS Primary Care Commissioning (PCC) website to make it easier for both parties to do this, where they have agreed that it is desirable and there are funds available.” See: www.pcc.nhs.uk/condition-al-grant-agreements

DCP national survey

Dental care professionals are being asked to take part in a national survey being carried out by the Dental Programme Board of NHS Medical Education England. One of the primary aims of the review is to assess the contribution that dental care professionals (DCPs) can make to the efficient and effective delivery of primary care services. Information submitted in response to this survey will create a profile of how the broad skill mix of dentists and dental care professionals is currently used, and will provide an evidence base for the working group’s report, to be published later in 2010. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and the closing date is 30 April. For more information and to complete the survey, please go to: www.surveymonkey.com/s/skillmix

Election site

Campaigning charity The King’s Fund has launched a web microsite highlighting the political parties and their policies concerning healthcare to coincide with the recently announced election. The King’s Fund is a charity that seeks to understand how the health system in England can be improved. Using that insight, the charity helps to shape policy, transform services and bring about behaviour change. To help demonstrate the different parties’ approach to health-care, the charity has developed the ‘Your election check up’ interactive game. The game is a means of demonstrating the different approaches to health and social care from the three main political parties and acts as a gateway to the wider election coverage on the micro site. To play, go to: www.kingsfund.org.uk/general_election_2010/