Oasis Dental Care has won a £17m contract to help alleviate the huge gaps in NHS dental care in Northern Ireland. The contract means Northern Ireland should get 58 more NHS dentists.

Health Minister for Northern Ireland, Michael McGimpsey said he has awarded the £17m contract for the provision of additional dentists ‘where they were most needed’. He claims that the contract will provide access for an additional 57,000 NHS patients.

‘The first dentists will be appointed first in the areas that need them most and are expected to be in post by the end of the year. The three-year contract has gone to Oasis Dental Care Ltd, which owns and operates 170 dental practices throughout England and Wales.

Mr McGimpsey said he hoped the new contract will ‘greatly ease current access problems’. 

He added: ‘Oasis Dental Care Ltd will provide 58 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. Health Trusts across the United Kingdom and the standards they have set are impressive. 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.’

The British Dental Association (BDA) gave a broad welcome to the announcement of the award of a tender for 58 new dentists in Northern Ireland as part of the solution to the problems some patients face accessing care.

But the BDA also warned that the 800 dentists already working in Northern Ireland need more support and a new contract that allows them to provide the kind of modern, preventive care they are trained to do.

Dr Claudette Christie, director for the British Dental Association (BDA) in Northern Ireland, called the new contract a ‘welcome step’ but said: ‘However, while this is welcome news, it is not the sole solution to the problems dentists and their patients face.

Also important is that the dentists in Northern Ireland do have access ‘hotspot’ areas across all regions.’

The contract will provide access for 17,000 patients.

Dr Cockcroft backs e-learning

S mile-on’s new e-learning programme ‘complements’ the government’s guidance on improving oral health, said the chief dental officer.

Speaking about the learning resources provider’s two-hour programme, Delivering Better Oral Health, the ‘Prevention in Practice’ CD Rom, Barry Cockcroft said: ‘The learning resource that Smyle on has produced should complement the document itself well and provides dentists with support to practically implement the messages within the dental practice environment.’

He added: ‘One of the things we learnt from PDS (personal dental services) piloting was that most dentists were really keen to work in a more preventive way. We also learnt from the same pilots that most dentists were unaware of what evidence based prevention really was. We were delighted that the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry worked with us to produce such an excellent document in such a short time.’

The Delivering Better Oral Health toolkit, was sent to all NHS practices in England in 2007, by the Department of Health.

Dr Cockcroft revealed that the Department of Health has decided to update and send the hard copy document to all dentists with an NHS contract in June. The Prevention in Practice CD Rom has been developed by Smyle on the request of the Oxford Deanery.

It has had input from members of the team that produced the Department of Health toolkit.

The CD Rom looks at patient self-care and how practitioners can raise self-care issues with patients. This includes oral health messages as well as advising patients on healthy diets, sensible drinking and smoking cessation.

Users can see actual interviews from a dentist and a dental care professional who have successfully implemented the toolkit into their practice. The programme is for all dental professionals from dentists to orthodontists to hygienists. Each learning programme provides two hours of CPD.

Oasis fills the gaps

We also learnt from the same pilots that most dentists were unaware of what evidence based prevention really was. We were delighted that the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry worked with us to produce such an excellent document in such a short time.

Detectives are investigating alleged serious crimes which may have occurred at the Causeway Dental Implant Clinic in Ballymoney over a number of years and at Bangor West Dental and Implant Clinic in Bangor between 2005 and 2008. The investigation does not involve any other member of staff at the clinics.

Officers are asking patients if they have any information that may assist the inquiry team or if they have concerns. Police have revealed that a number of patients have already come forward and this latest renewed appeal is to ensure that ‘every possible step has been taken to identify all victims in this part of the investigation’.

Police say any contact will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Howard, who has 10 children, is in custody charged with the murders of his wife Lesley, 50, and Trevor Buchanan. Their bodies were found in a car filled with carbon monoxide fumes in Castlereagh in May 1991.

Howard, has had his registration suspended by the General Dental Council for 18 months. Howard, who had surgeries in Ballymoney and Bangor, is seen as one of the foremost dental practitioners in Northern Ireland.

The police inquiry team can be contacted on 028 7055 0955 or 028 7055 0920.

Photo: Barry Cockcroft

For more information on the programme, call 028 7906 3800 or email info@smile-on.com.
Editorial comment

Seeing the light

A friend said last week that her permanently and happily unemployed friend and her children regularly fly out to Florida for holidays at Disneyland. ‘How does she do it when she doesn’t have a job I just don’t know,’ she said. But when she added up her friend’s tax credits, council tax benefits, plus the rest of the frills, it all became crystal clear. Now don’t get me wrong – there are plenty of people out there struggling to scrape by on benefits and deserve every penny and some, but there are also others who are positively living the life of O’Riley. So who’s paying for it all?

High earning go-getters have always been penalised by Mr Brown to some degree, but introducing these new taxes is like saying ‘bring on the brain-drain now’. For getting taxed to the hilt is hardly going to motivate the nation to work hard and build better businesses. Earning £100k in the UK is really not a lot these days – the average family household needs at least this to pay the mortgage, meet spiralling bills and put food on the table. So is having a holiday so much to ask after grafting the hours away day in, and day out in the practice? Apparently so, according to the Chancellor. Ok so he hasn’t said as much but actions speak far louder than words don’t they.

Thatcher’s children were all geared up to work hard and think about earning money and lots of it. She may have taken the milk away, but it didn’t half motivate us to work hard to make sure we earned enough to buy our own pint. But now why bother? For the harder we work, the less we earn. What a wonderful way to kick-start an ailing economy.

DT

If so don’t hesitate to write to: The Editor, Dental Tribune UK Ltd, 4th Floor, Treasure House, 19-21 Hatton Garden, London, EC1N 8BA.
Or email: penny@dentaltribuneuk.com

Do you have an opinion or something to say on any Dental Tribune UK article? Or would you like to write your own opinion for our guest comment page?

House raffle is extended

A dental technician, who put his £490,000 house up for sale in a £25 raffle, has extended the competition for a further three months, following poor ticket sales.

Stephen and Caroline Sicklemore are hoping to sell their £490,000 four-bedroom home in Devon, through a raffle. Tickets cost £25 each and if the couple sell all their tickets, they will get £675,000.

The winner will also get other benefits including their stamp duty paid, legal fees and a contribution towards moving expenses, plus an up-front payment of 12 months’ council tax of £4,700 for the Band E property.

The couple have promised to donate 3.6 per cent of the prize fund, up to £25,000, to Force Cancer charity in Exeter. However, the couple have only sold 1,523 of the tickets since the raffle began in January. They have now decided to extend the competition for a further three months to the 24 July ‘to ensure we give the competition the chance of selling all of the tickets’.

People can buy tickets from the couple’s website where they have to answer three questions correctly as part of their entry to the draw.

To find out more, visit website www.summerbreezecompetition.co.uk

Colgate 360° Sensitive for gentle, proven cleaning

Raised cleaning tip

Ultra soft tapered bristles

Soft rubber cups

Less wear - ideal for patients with dentine hypersensitivity

Colgate 360° Sensitive toothbrush provides gentle yet effective plaque removal

- Unique rubber cups, together with soft bristles, result in less wear on exposed root surfaces compared with a soft flat trim toothbrush
- 48% softer bristles than a leading soft manual toothbrush
- Clinically proven to remove up to 38% more plaque than a leading soft manual toothbrush

Colgate 360° Whole mouth clean. For sensitive teeth