Prison for dental thief
A woman who stole £15,000 from the dental surgery where she worked as practice manager has been sentenced to six months in prison.

Victoria Moore, 28, pleaded guilty to stealing the money from the practice in Ebbw Vale. She was heard how Moore and her husband took out a loan on their home in 2005 to carry out improvements but their debts increased.

Clinic visit ahead of review
A £4.6m community clinic in Lanarkshire has been visited by the public health minister before she chairs the local NHS board's annual review. Public Health Minister Shona Robison visited the Douglas Street Community Health clinic in Hamilton, which has been receiving NHS services including dentistry, together under one roof.

Ms Robison said it was important that local people took part in the review of healthcare services. She added: "Our NHS should always strive to provide the best possible care, so holding those who manage our NHS boards to account is the right thing to do."

New Lerwick dental clinic
A new dental clinic is likely to be set up in Lerwick, Shetland. The new practice could house up to four dentists and greatly improve access to NHS dentistry in the region. The new clinic aims to remedy the problem of some non-urgent dental patients being on waiting lists for several years, as current NHS dental facilities are overstretched. The project, the whereabouts of which has not been decided upon, is part of the Scottish government’s new health targets. When the clinic is fully functional, there will be a total of 15 dentists in Shetland.

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Recent report indicates increase in both UDAs and patients during 2009
In the first quarter of 2009/10, Band 1 CoTs accounted for 53.6 per cent of all those delivered. Band 2 CoTs made up 29.9 per cent and Band 3 CoTs, 5.0 per cent. The remaining 11.4 per cent of CoTs were for urgent and charge-exempt treatments.

Practice's best friend
Jo Banks discusses one of the Practice's best friends - the appointment book.

Homeless initiative
CDO Barry Cockcroft launches homeless dental services scheme in London.

DCP Advisory chair
FGDP(UK) has appointed Tony Griffin as chair of its DCP Advisory Board.

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In the first quarter of 2009/10 units of dental activity (UDAs) in England provisionally increased by 5.2 per cent, compared to the first quarter of 2008/09, from 19.8 million to 20.5 million.

In the first quarter of 2009/10, 9.5 million CoTs were provisionally delivered, an increase of 0.2 million - 1.6 per cent - on the final figure for the equivalent quarter last year.

This equates to 20.5 million UDAs, a 5.2 per cent increase - 0.6 million - on the final figures for last year’s first quarter.

The number of patients seen in the period ending Sept 30, 2009, was 279 million - 54.2 per cent of the population - a decrease of 0.3 million - 1.0 per cent - on the 28.1 million patients seen in the two-year period ending March 31, 2008.

This is, however, an increase of 0.2 million - 0.8 per cent - from the previous 24-month period ending June 30, 2009.

Chief Dental Officer for England, Dr Barry Cockcroft said: "We have invested more than £2 billion in NHS dentistry, resulting in more dental practices expanding and opening all the time. The tide is turning and access to NHS dentistry has been increasing steadily for over a year with more than 950,000 more people seeing an NHS dentist in the last five quarters.

“Dentists working in the NHS treat around 250,000 patients every working day and our aim is to ensure that everyone who wants to see an NHS dentist can by March 2014.”

But Dental Practitioners Association chief executive, Derek Watson, thinks differently.

Watson commented “The Department of Health said that the very few dentists resigned in April 2009 represented very little capacity. They are missing the point. The new contract was supposed to correct supply problems and it has had the opposite effect. Fewer patients are now seeing NHS dentists as a result of the NHS contract, despite the fact the DH has been spruying the money house around for two years in an attempt to disguise their bungling antics.”

Dr Watson said that in April 2006, 55.8 per cent of the population was seen on the NHS in the previous 24 months. Following the introduction of new terms of service on April 1, this fell to 52.7 per cent in June 2008, from which point it was thought to be recovering. However he said the newly released adjusted figures to September 2009, demonstrated that it was struggling to reach pre-contract levels.


News in Brief

The latest NHS Dental Statistics for England have been published by the NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care.

The report, which evaluates data under the new contract from April 1, 2006, was published on November 26. The latest information on ‘activity’ relates to the first quarter of 2009/10, up to June 30, 2009. "Patients seen" data is reported to the end of the second quarter, up to September 30, 2009.

Quarterly activity information for 2009/10 is provisional and will be revised upwards to include courses of treatment (CoTs) reported too late. But if there are similar patterns to last year, any changes between provisional and final data by treatment band should be small, with final figures published next summer.

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