New deputy CDO joins the DH

The Department of Health has appointed a new Deputy Chief Dental Officer.

Sue Gregory is currently the dental public health consultant for Bedfordshire, Luton and Hertfordshire Primary Care Trusts. She will replace the current Deputy Chief Dental Officer, Tony Jenner, who is leaving the Department of Health after six years.

Ms Gregory chairs the UK Consultants in Dental Public Health Group and was president of the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry in 2006-07.

Sue was also previously honorary secretary, and then president, of the British Society of Disability and Oral Health.

Barry Cockerill, Chief Dental Officer for England said: ‘I am delighted that Sue is joining the dental team at the Department of Health. Her experience in active local commissioning and with primary care particularly invaluable in helping Primary Care Trusts to ensure that their resources reach the best and most appropriate local dental services.’

He added: ‘It has been a real pleasure to work with Tony Jenner over the last six years. He has been closely involved with changes to legislation that have enabled consultation on water fluoridation, and has made a significant contribution to the development of Choosing Better Oral Health and publication of the prevention toolkit - achievements of which he should be truly proud.’

NHS Bedfordshire chief executive, Andrew Morgan, also congratulated Ms Gregory on her new appointment and said: ‘Sue has made a huge contribution to dental services in Bedfordshire and will be a hard act to follow.’

Her appointment will take effect in January 2009.

Queuing up for ortho

Hundreds of children in West Wales are facing a two-year wait for orthodontic treatment due to lack of funding, according to an orthodontist.

Dr David Howells, who works in Llanelli and Carmarthen, claims he has been forced to put more than 600 children on a waiting list because he has not been given enough funding by the local health boards (LHBs).

In an open letter to Bernadine Rees, chief executive of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion LHBs, he said: ‘It is no exaggeration to state that recent events have had a catastrophic impact upon an already dire situation.’

Dr Howells claims he has only received enough funding to treat 480 patients a year – even though more than 1,000 children are being referred for orthodontic treatment at his practices every year.

In his letter to Ms Rees, he said that orthodontics is a ‘time-consuming and expensive service to provide. The old funding system remains in Scotland and Northern Ireland but, regretably, Wales chose to copy England instead. As a result of imposition of the personal dental services contracts, much of the previous growth has been reversed’.

An LHB spokeswoman said: ‘While the LHBs request waiting list information from orthodontic practices on a regular basis, the numbers supplied include those currently awaiting an assessment and it is unclear at this point how many of these would go on to receive NHS orthodontic treatment within primary care.’

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