



A DOGGONE GOOD IDEA!

A beagle is the face - and waggy tail - of a new service to help anxious patients in Suffolk. Six-year-old Basil's job is to provide patients with comfort and companionship, distracting them from their anxieties.

Senior dental nurse Jacci Plant is the owner of Basil the Beagle and came up with the idea of offering pet therapy. She underwent training and now has the title of Animal Assisted Practitioner. Together, she and Basil provide one to one therapy, meeting patients in the practice waiting area and then going into the appointment with them.

Said Jacci: 'I will be in the surgery with him and he will sit beside the chair, he's quite a solid little chap so may be a bit heavy to sit on someone's lap!'

'Pet therapy is something I have always been interested in and I knew Basil has the ideal laid-back temperament to make a fantastic therapy dog. I also knew that pet therapy worked well in other clinical settings or where people have additional needs such as mental health issues or learning disabilities.'

Having Basil as a therapy dog is a pilot scheme but Jacci says there has already been a lot of interest when she has been in the dental practice. There are no cross infection control implications as a therapy pet has the same classification as a guide dog.

Jacci works with the Community Dental Service Community Interest Company (CDS-CIC) in Suffolk. CDS-CIC, which operate eight clinics across the County, are starting a pilot of the pet therapy programme in selected locations and identifying patients who may benefit from being accompanied by Basil during their treatments.

Amy Schiller, Operations Director said: 'We provide special care and paediatric dentistry and many of our patients, adults and children, have additional needs or severe dental anxiety and may require extensive treatment. Reducing anxiety is very important and Basil will be one technique we can use to help patients relax and feel more comfortable about having treatment. Overall this is important, because with some patients it may make all the difference between being able to tolerate treatment without more invasive means such as sedation.'



GDC GOES UNDERCOVER TO PROSECUTE BEAUTICIAN

A Sussex woman, Katie Ensell, has been ordered to pay almost £3,500 by Hastings Magistrates' Court after being prosecuted and pleading guilty to offering illegal tooth whitening treatment through her business, KT's Cosmetics.

The fine included £500 for each of her two offences – unlawfully holding herself out as being prepared to practise dentistry and unlawfully carrying out the business of dentistry - and GDC costs of £2250.86.

The General Dental Council (GDC) launched an investigation after a complaint about Ms Ensell was made in March last year. She told undercover investigators that she could provide them with tooth whitening using the Hollywood Whitening system.

The GDC say that under the Dentists Act 1984 and following the High Court's ruling in GDC v Jamous, the legal position in relation to tooth whitening is very clear. The treatment can only be performed by a dentist or a dental therapist, dental hygienist or a clinical dental technician working to the prescription of a dentist.

Katie Spears, Head of In-House Appeals and Criminal Enforcement at the GDC said: 'When we receive a report of illegal practice, we seek to educate those involved about the dangers and the law in relation to tooth whitening. Where our efforts are ignored, as in the case of Ms Ensell, we will, where appropriate, prosecute in the criminal courts.'

