

New mobile dental service for under-served communities in Hampshire and Isle of Wight



Dentist Mary Green treating a patient on the mobile dental unit

NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight has partnered with Dentaid the Dental Charity to provide a new mobile dental service for people experiencing health inequalities who struggle to get dental care.

The innovative project is a partnership to alleviate pressure on existing dental services and increase access to care for those facing difficult circumstances.

Patients including families experiencing poverty, people at risk of homelessness,

children, and new and expectant mothers in areas at highest risk of poor dental health will be able to make appointments to see the dentist on a mobile dental unit.

Emergency appointments will also be available for eligible patients who are suffering acute pain and have no other access to dental care.

Dentaid's mobile dental units will be parking outside community centres, public buildings and sports facilities

across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Eligible patients will be invited to make appointments to see the dentist onboard who will provide check-ups and oral cancer screening, oral health advice and emergency care including extractions and fillings. All treatment will be free of charge.

The service is for Hampshire and Isle of Wight residents facing health inequalities who have no other access to dental services. Agencies including support services, community groups, GP practices, foodbanks, charity partners and 111 will be signposting eligible patients to make an appointment.

The partnership will provide clinics across Hampshire and Isle of Wight over 18 months. The first clinics will take place in Southampton, Havant, Cosham and Portsmouth followed by the Isle of Wight in March and other areas of Hampshire later in the year. The service is designed to help communities at the highest risk of social exclusion to access dental screening, advice and urgent care.

CEO of Dentaid the Dental Charity, Andy Evans said: 'This pioneering partnership with NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight will enable us to significantly upscale our work, reaching new communities and giving thousands more Hampshire and Isle of Wight residents who face health inequalities the opportunity to access care. By taking charity dental units into communities where our patients can use other support services, we are helping to break down some of the barriers people face when it comes to seeing a dentist.'

New organisation will focus on reducing barriers for overseas dentists

The International Dental Organisation UK, IDO UK, an organisation made up of dental practitioners, will formally launch in London this March. Its core mission is to support the UK dental industry by increasing the quality of dental care quality and improving access for consumers. IDO will also focus on

reducing barriers for overseas dentists to practise in the UK to help bridge the deepening gap in the dental workforce.

Many thousands of qualified overseas dentists want to practise in the UK, some of whom are already in the country working as dental nurses or in unrelated sectors. However, registration processes

are blocking easy recruitment. This is unacceptable at a time of acute staffing shortages within UK dentistry, and long waiting lists for patient appointments across the country.

The overseas registration exam (ORE), which overseas qualified dentists must pass in order to register with the