

Notes for Keith Percival to present to Portsmouth HOSP in March 2015

Current health improvement activities undertaken by the Dental Academy in Portsmouth

Community health improvement programmes can be resource-intensive. The Academy is able to provide a more cost-effective option due to the availability of students. The cost of the programme is mainly for materials used, transportation to and from settings and associated on-costs of organising the activities. The major staffing costs normally associated with this type of activity is mitigated with the use of students, supported by teaching staff who are already employed by the organisation.

Out in the community, the students are advocates for health and have time to tailor messages to suit the needs of those they meet. They are in a unique situation to cascade knowledge; for example, when with children in school, teachers also learn; when they are with disabled, carers acquire the knowledge; when they screen probationers, officers understand; and when they visit Sure Start centres, both mums and facilitators comprehend. Their enthusiasm creates a buzz at the setting when they are present, creating a memorable event, ideal for passing on educational messages.

The Dental Academy's Community Outreach Programme includes:

- **Primary schools supervised toothbrushing programme - 'Brush UP'**. The programme has been received very positively by most participating schools and the consent rate is very high, averaging around 91% this year. The Academy has been involved with 14 primary schools, all with high levels of dental decay, and 2 nurseries in Portsmouth this year. The students create a major 'buzz' and sense of fun in the school when they arrive, so children remember them and hopefully some of their message! The feedback from schools is very positive.
- **The 'Brush UP' fluoride varnish (FV) programme** targets children in Year 'R'. There is high-grade evidence to show a significant reduction in caries risk when children have fluoride varnish professionally applied two times a year. Dental and hygiene/therapy students, assisted by dental nurses, deliver the programme. Students applying varnish is a win/win event – it's fun for the children and the students learn and develop. A dental screening precedes FV application, so those with dental caries are referred for treatment with their dentist. If they do not have a dentist, they are invited for treatment at the Dental Academy. Consent rates are lower for FV than for toothbrushing and the average for all schools is 80%. The reason for the lower consent rate for FV relates to the adverse publicity, which surrounds water fluoridation. We are keen to work with PCC to improve these consent rates and include every child in the programme.

- **The Academy runs a number of training events for schoolteachers** to acquaint them with health issues, show them the science and to get them enthused for the 'Brush UP' project. The training is held at the Academy, which is conveniently located for most people. It gives teachers the opportunity to see the facility. There are plans to expand future training programmes to include a visit to clinical areas (where possible), so that teachers can describe the environment to parents and encourage those who do not regularly access dental care to book an appointment at the Academy.
- **The Academy works with three Sure Start groups** on a monthly basis, interacting with their clients and providing health promotion, diet advice and screening. The availability of free dental care at the Academy, for adults as well as children, is promoted to encourage whole families to attend and benefit from preventive advice and treatment.
- **Dental Academy's targeted "vulnerable young adults" programme.** The Academy works with vulnerable groups in various settings, such as, the Portsmouth Probation Service, Baytrees Detoxification Unit and The Foyer, which has links to YOT, PUSH and SWITCH. Dental students, with hygiene/therapy and dental nurse students supporting them have undertaken screening of the mouths of service users for disease and giving oral health promotion. Those requiring treatment are offered this at the Dental Academy. There have been high rates of "failed to attend" but, the Academy is keen to continue working with these groups and PCC to avoid disengaging from these vulnerable groups.
- **Training has been achieved with the Kestrel Centre, which supports adults with a learning disability** and provides information, advice, education and support to carers and other health and social care professionals. Training carers in health promotion is an effective way to cascade knowledge to improve health outcomes in disadvantaged groups. The trainers are given basic information on oral health and disease and taught skills in cleaning their client's teeth and/or dentures.
- **The Dental Academy's 'domiciliary settings' programme involves working with residential care homes** in the city, providing training to staff to improve oral care for their residents. Students tailor training to each home, due to the variability of their needs. The training is carried out with groups of staff, in each residence, and a volunteer oral health champion is selected. Students go in monthly to mentor staff members, working with each of them on residents' mouths. A student will typically show members of staff how to identify natural teeth from dentures, how to remove, name and clean dentures, how to clean natural teeth, how to identify healthy or diseased mouths and when to refer to a dentist. There have been difficulties with this programme including generating interest from care homes and high turnover of staff. The Academy is keen to explore potentially more effective approaches to this programme to be able to continue to support care home residents. This may include developing a training module for PCC-run training for carers.