

**THE HEALTH SERVICES (PRIMARY CARE) (NORTHERN IRELAND)
ORDER 1997**

**THE HEALTH AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES (NORTHERN
IRELAND) ORDER 1972**

PILOT PERSONAL DENTAL SERVICES SCHEME

The Health and Social Care Board is implementing a pilot Personal Dental Service Scheme in 15 locations throughout Northern Ireland. This scheme was approved by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on 24 April 2009.

BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME

In order to address the difficulties many patients are facing in accessing Health Service dentistry in Northern Ireland the Minister for Health, Mr Michael McGimpsey stated to the Assembly on 29 April 2008 that *'It is my aim that everyone in Northern Ireland should be able to access Health Service dentistry no matter where they live or their circumstances'*. He went on to announce his intention to obtain additional dental services through a tendering process.

In order to attract applications to this tender from as wide a range of dental providers as possible it was necessary to move beyond the usual system whereby Health and Social Services Boards (now the Health and Social Care Board) make arrangements with dental practitioners for general dental services. Instead, it was decided to establish these additional services under pilot Personal Dental Services schemes established under the Health Services (Primary Care) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. This ensured an open and competitive tender across all those working in the private/independent sector.

Consultation

In order to meet the legislative requirements for pilot Personal Dental Service schemes under the 1997 Order the (then) Western Health and Social Services Board, on behalf of the four Boards consulted on this proposal from July to October 2008.

Following a positive response to this consultation the Western Board (again on behalf of the four Boards) tendered for additional dental services from November 2008 to January 2009. In total the tender sought 38 additional dentists in specific locations throughout Northern Ireland. These areas had been identified as being the access hotspots for health service dentistry.

Successful bidder

The Boards (now the HSCB) agreed that Oasis Dental Care Ltd was the most suitable candidate to meet the requirements to provide these additional dental services.

Oasis Dental Care Ltd owns and operates 170 dental practices throughout England and Wales, providing a combination of NHS and private dental care.

Locations

The 38 dentists will be located as follows:

Location	Anticipated number
Enniskillen	6
Omagh	2
Strabane	2
Londonderry	4
Carrickfergus	2
Newtownabbey	4
Cookstown	2
Bangor / Donaghadee	2
Holywood	2
Dundonald / Castlereagh	2
Lisburn / Dunmurry	2
Carryduff	2
Banbridge	2
Dungannon	2
Newry	2
TOTAL	38

Timings

Each dentist must register 1500 health service patients and offer all treatments currently available under the health service.

This will provide access for an additional 57,000 health service patients.

It is anticipated that the first practices will open at the end of 2009 with a phased roll out over the next year. We hope to have all the new dentists in place within 12 months. Enniskillen followed by Londonderry will open in late 2009 as these are priority areas. Next will be Dungannon, Strabane and Omagh with the remainder of the locations following.