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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

All I Want for Christmas Day in Blackpool

People in recovery, and other groups who find it hard to access NHS dental services in Blackpool received essential dental treatment onboard a mobile dental unit operated by Dentaaid. The project was funded by Horizon, Blackpool Council's drug, alcohol and non-clinical sexual health support for Blackpool residents – and was the brainchild of Carole Houston, Communications Lead for Horizon, Janet Goodwin, President of the Oral Health Foundation and Blackpool resident, and Pam Swain, Chief Executive of the British Association of Dental Nurses, which is based near Blackpool. The event was attended by Deputy Chief Dental Officer, Eric Rooney.

Carole's previous PR experience in dentistry had led to her meeting Janet and Pam, and also made her aware of the work done by Dentaaid. Having obtained funding from Horizon to commission Dentaaid, Carole went ahead organising the Day at the Church Street centre used as a focal point for the recovery programme, liaising with Janet Goodwin on oral health education materials provided by the OHF and with Pam Swain who asked for volunteer dental nurses from the BADN membership. Horizon volunteers, themselves in recovery, were also on hand to offer support to nervous patients.

Despite a couple of hiccups – fuses in the centre blew twice and the kettle and microwave had to be cannibalised to restore power to the mobile unit! - 47 patients were seen, including many who had been suffering long-term dental pain. One patient had 5 teeth extracted and a further 16 had at least one tooth removed. The team also provided scale and polishes, fillings, fluoride application for children and oral health advice. Several patients had not seen a dentist for several years, either because of access difficulties or because of previous difficult experiences.

“At Horizon we are very conscious” said Carole “that many of our clients find it difficult to access NHS dental treatment for various reasons. We therefore wanted to make dental treatment as accessible as possible for our clients and other vulnerable people in Blackpool. We commissioned the Dentaaid team to bring their mobile unit into the heart of the recovery community in Blackpool to help to break down any perceived barriers. The event was a tremendous success and the feedback from the patients was very positive. So many patients had been in desperate need of dental treatment but either didn't know how to access treatment or were too anxious to seek help. This initiative was created especially for our clients, bringing dental treatment directly to them.

“We were delighted that Eric Rooney came along to support the event, and his ideas for bringing various services together to improve access to dental care for our clients in future was a perfect outcome from a very successful day.”

-Ends-

HORIZON

Alcohol, drugs & sexual health support



Notes for editors

1. *Dentaid was founded in 1996 and works to improve oral health around the world. The charity sends volunteer dental professionals and reconditioned equipment to support the work of dentists in poor and remote communities. Dentaid also runs education, training and toothbrushing programmes. In 2015 Dentaid expanded its work to the UK with an oral health education programme called BrightBites and the purchase of the mobile dental unit which is used to deliver dental care for people who find it difficult to access treatment.*
2. *The British Association of Dental Nurses is the UK's professional association for dental nurses. Founded in 1940 it provides advice, information and support to dental nurses working in all areas of dentistry, including student dental nurses. Full Membership is open to all Registered Dental Nurses, Associate Membership to overseas, former and retired dental nurses, and Student Associate Membership to all student dental nurses. Membership benefits include indemnity cover, access to the quarterly digital "British Dental Nurses' Journal" including free verifiable CPD, free legal and counselling helplines and BADN Benefits, which offers special offers and discounts to members on a wide variety of services and products. www.badn.org.uk*
3. *The Oral Health Foundation is the leading national charity working to improve oral health. Our goal is to improve people's lives by reducing the harm caused by oral diseases – many of which are entirely preventable. Established more than 40 years ago, we continue to provide expert, independent and impartial advice on all aspects of oral health to those who need it most. We work closely with Government, dental and health professionals, manufacturers, the dental trade, national and local agencies and the public, to achieve our mission of addressing the inequalities which exist in oral health, changing people's lives for the better. Visit www.dentalhealth.org for more information*
4. *Horizon offers drug, alcohol and non-clinical sexual health for Blackpool residents aged 25 and over. Funded by Blackpool council, the service uses a 'Dependence to Freedom' model which offers help to clients within three separate buildings 'Connect, Dependence and Freedom. 'Connect' on Dickson Rd in Blackpool is where clients first make contact with Horizon. They can be referred by a health professional or they can just present themselves for support. There is no barrier to support from Horizon. At Connect, clients will become involved in a series of group and one-to-one sessions to get them stable as soon as possible and to create some goals to aim for. The 'Dependence' building on Church Street is where many support groups and programmes are held. Once a client has gained stability and is ready to achieve the goals they set, the Dependence team take over, using psychological treatment to achieve individual goals. The 'Freedom' building is primarily used for when clients are abstinent and are ready to move on with their lives. Here the team will consolidate the clients progress made, and help the client move forward. Clients are offered volunteering roles which build confidence and experience and a focus on achieving more from life away from addiction. Horizon also offers detox, an outreach service and harm minimisation support including needle exchange, blood borne virus testing and free condoms.*
5. *Photos available from Pam Swain on 01253 338365 or pam@badn.org.uk*



Dentaid mobile unit



Dentaid volunteer dentist Benjamin Veale and BADN member volunteer dental nurse Michelle Brand with a relieved patient!