

## Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Petition number: [P-05-0749](#)

Petition title: **Reinstate Corwen's Mobile Dental Service**

Text of petition: We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to make sure that money is made available for the mobile dentist service in the Bala– Wrexham area to be re-instated and to continue as a service which is important for the future health of children in the area.

Additional information: We want to start a petition in the hope of getting a replacement dental van to come to our school and help us look after our teeth, like it used too. We have already lost our school bus and we feel like we are losing lots of things from the community which will greatly affect our future.

### Petition update

It's understood that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, which is responsible for the provision of dental services in north Wales, has now **agreed to reinstate the mobile dental unit 'at the earliest opportunity'**. In a [letter to Llyr Gruffydd AM](#) (who had campaigned on behalf of the petitioners) the Health Board's Chief Executive said:

I was pleased to learn that the pupils of Ysgol Cae'r Drewyn, Corwen appreciate the service and I can understand their concern regarding the disruption to the service they normally receive. I hope the ongoing input from the Designed to Smile team, which will continue with its scheduled input in the area, will be welcomed.

We have now set out a specification for a replacement unit and will be commencing procurement imminently. The lead in time for the delivery of the new unit is not known at this point as the product is bespoke and this will therefore depend upon production timescales with the selected manufacturer. We will, however be emphasising the need to have the new unit in place at the earliest opportunity. We will finance the purchased of this unit from within the Board's capital programme for the year ahead.

The Cabinet Secretary's response to the Petitions Committee noted that the Designed to Smile programme continued to be delivered to the school, and that the Health Board will now be procuring a replacement mobile dental unit. He highlighted the availability of alternative community dental services in Corwen and Dolgellau and that, in the longer term, the Health

Board planned to open two dental surgeries within Corwen Health Centre for adults and children from the local area.

## Background

Community dental services may be delivered by mobile dental units as well as at fixed clinics. Mobile units play a key role in providing preventative care and treatment to schoolchildren under the Designed to Smile programme.

Corwen's mobile dental unit was [reportedly](#) taken out of service in summer 2016 as the vehicle was deemed unfit for use. In Plenary on [7 February 2017](#), the First Minister stated that the Health Board did intend to restart the service, and that alternative provision was in place in the meantime. He referred to the Designed to Smile programme, and its impact on improving children's oral health (the letter from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board also highlighted the role of Designed to Smile).

## Designed to Smile

[Designed to Smile \(D2S\)](#) is a child-focused national oral health improvement programme, funded by the Welsh Government. It was initially launched as a three year pilot in areas of north and south Wales in January 2009; the programme was enhanced and expanded in October 2009 to cover the whole of Wales. The programme aims to reduce oral health inequalities, and is targeted at children in Wales with the highest oral health need. D2S's preventative approach is aimed at children from birth through primary school and includes the provision of oral health advice, toothbrushes and paste, supervised brushing and fluoride varnish and fissure sealant programmes (depending on the age of the child).

The most recent [dental survey of 5 year olds](#) (for 2014/15) shows a continued reduction in dental decay among children in Wales, and that dental health is improving across all social groups.

Early data analyses suggest that dmft [average number of decayed, missing and filled teeth] in children attending Designed to Smile schools is improving. When five year olds survey results for 2015/16 are available the full impact of Designed to Smile should be emerging.

## Further information

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, [Local Oral Health Plan 2013 – 2018](#)

Local Health Board oral health profiles 2014: [Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board](#)