

Progress on plans to improve NHS dental services in Wales

Mr Gething said his target for the expansion of the contract reform programme had been exceeded and in addition 73 applications had been received for support from a new £1.5m innovation fund to develop services.

He said:

“We are escalating the roll-out across Wales of the reform of dental contracts to deliver a better service for NHS patients and improve oral health. The new system aims to make better use of skills in dental practice teams, better understanding of individual patient need and more emphasis on prevention.”

Initially 22 dental practices, across Wales, took part in the first stage of the reforms, which included new personalised plans to help patients make better choices to improve and maintain oral health themselves.

The Health Secretary added:

“Early evaluation of the first stage has been positive and we are now increasing the number of practices taking part. In July I asked health boards and the dental profession to support expansion of the reform programme at pace and for a minimum of 10% of dental practices to be taking part by October.

I am pleased to say that ambition has been achieved and indeed exceeded, with a total of 53 practices – one in eight of all practices in Wales – now actively participating. I now expect a minimum of 20% of dental practices to be taking part in each area from April 2019.

We have also received 73 applications for funding from the £1.5m innovation fund to test new ways of working in dental practices, improve skills and recruit more dental care professionals.

There is still unequal disease experience and unequal access to dental care across Wales. These reforms aim to tackle those inequalities and empower people to maintain and protect their own oral health.”