

15th June 2026

Dental Education Practice Update

Since welcoming our first patients on 9 February 2026, the practice has delivered **2,756 dental appointments** by the end of May, including treating people for urgent care referred through NHS 111 with issues such as pain, infection and dental trauma.

The service, run by Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise (PDSE) in partnership with the University of Plymouth, is designed to help address the growing demand for urgent dental care while also providing valuable hands-on experience for the next generation of dental professionals.

The practice brings together dental students, Foundation Dentists, qualified Dental Therapists and Dentists, and highly skilled Dental Nurses, all working collaboratively within a carefully supervised and patient-centred environment. This multidisciplinary model ensures patients receive high-quality treatment while the students develop the clinical confidence and professional skills needed for their future careers.

Designed to simulate a real dental practice within an accessible city-centre setting, the facility offers a fundamentally different teaching experience from a traditional large teaching clinic. Students and trainees are able to work alongside specialists and qualified clinicians, broadening their experience across a wide range of clinical disciplines and gaining exposure to the collaborative nature of contemporary dental care. This approach supports both exceptional patient outcomes and outstanding educational development. This model reflects Peninsula Dental Social Enterprise's wider commitment to combining excellent primary dental care with high-quality clinical placement opportunities for students.

Detailed activity

- We have provided 2,756 appointments providing care to **1,585** patients.
- Dental students have provided 237 **urgent care** appointments providing care to **223** patients
- Dental therapy students have provided 347 **stabilisation** appointments to **179** patients
- Qualified clinicians have provided 212 NHS urgent care appointments to **199** patients
- Qualified clinicians have provided 732 NHS stabilisation appointments to **320** patients
- A specialist oral surgeon has provided 167 appointments providing care to **130** patients for NHS specialist oral surgery services
- Qualified clinicians have provided 53 NHS appointments to **25** patients experiencing homelessness
- Qualified clinicians have provided 39 NHS appointments to **32** children in care

Patient feedback

Over 93% of respondents answered, 'Very Good' or 'Good' to the question '*Overall how was your experience of our service?*'

A selection of comments:

- *"I have had dental phobia for many years following traumatic experience of dental care. The team were very understanding, patient & supportive. I had three extractions, one of which was very stubborn & extremely painful to extract. The dentist & assistant were absolutely amazing, supporting me with empathy throughout the procedure. Thank you so so much."*
- *"I would have scored 'excellent' if the option was available! The team that I dealt with were excellent, they made me feel at ease when I would usually be feeling very anxious."*
- *"I am very grateful to this service and the care it gives especially at a time when NHS dentists are so hard to come by."*
- *"All of the students without exception were efficient and extremely kind and considerate. I have never felt so at ease in this environment in my life. Good luck to them all."*

Impact evaluation

We will be evaluating the impact of the new practice by combining routinely collected clinical and service data with patient-reported outcome measures and quality-of-life assessments. This will quantify improvements in oral health-related quality of life, pain, daily functioning, access to urgent dental care, and the reach of the service across communities with different levels of deprivation.

We will also be assessing the wider impact of the practice through interviews and focus groups with patients, students, clinical supervisors, staff, and stakeholders to understand its benefits, challenges, and contribution to patient care and workforce development. These findings will be complemented by an economic evaluation of patient costs and quality-of-life gains to explore the broader social and monetary co-benefits of the practice.

The impact evaluation will take some time as it relies on a sufficient throughput of patients to return reliable and valid results.

Awards

The practice has been shortlisted for a Michelmore Property Award, the awards event takes place on 25th June.

Robert Witton

CEO, PDSE CIC

Professor of Community Dentistry, University of Plymouth