Steele report exposed to all

Health minister, Ann Keen, has promised to publish the report on the independent review of NHS Dentistry in full.

Professor Jimmy Steele, is leading the review, which has been asked to report on increasing access across the country and how to improve quality of services.

The review group has also been asked to come up with recommendations on how the government can work towards reducing oral health inequalities.

In an exchange in the House of Commons, Mike Penning, the shadow health minister, asked if the report will be published in full and whether the government will accept all the recommendations.

In a slip up, Mrs Keen, replied that the report, of course, will be accepted in full.

She quickly corrected herself and said: ‘No, it will be published in full; all of us on this side of the House are humble enough to say ‘It will be published in full; all of us on this side of the House are humble enough to say when we have made an error.’

When we have made an error. Like any sensible government, we will look at the review when it is published.

The review is independent from the Department of Health and is being led by Professor Jimmy Steele of the University of Newcastle who, along with his team, will report directly to the Secretary of State in the summer.

Earlier on in the exchange, Conservative MP, Laurence Robertson, asked if the government will be taking steps to increase the number of NHS dentists in Gloucestershire.

Mrs Keen replied that NHS South West and Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust (PCT) is in the process of inviting tenders for dental services with a total value of £6m over the next two years – that is, £3m in 2009-10 and £3m in 2010-11.

She said: ‘This investment will be used for building purpose-built practices as well as refurbishing community hospital sites to enable them to provide dental services, focusing on areas of most need in Gloucestershire.

This investment has the potential to offer access to a dentist to approximately 95,000 people.’

Mr Penning said: ‘The 90,000 extra places for patients that the Minister has just announced will go part of the way to addressing the issue of the 1.1m people who would like an NHS dentist.’

Dentist cuts patient’s cheek

A dentist in South London has been accused of cutting a patient’s cheek from her mouth up to the corner of her eye.

A General Dental Council (GDC) fitness to practise hearing, heard how NHS dentist Oscar Miguel Prazano Alvim de Castro, formerly employed at Whitecross Dental Care surgery in Streatham, left his patient with the scratch from the instrument being used to do the filling, after his hand slipped.

Guy Nicklewright, who is representing the GDC, described it as ‘a quite extreme amount of travel (by the instrument) for an accident.’

The patient complained that the dentist did not apologise and carried on with the treatment as if nothing had happened.

She wrote a letter of complaint to the practice and took the matter to the GDC.

Mr De Castro, who is now living in Portugal, did not attend the hearing.

He claims he did nothing because the patient was wearing goggles, and did not show any pain during the remainder of the treatment.

Mr De Castro is also accused of giving the patient fillings without discussing or getting consent for the treatment, and keeping in sufficient notes on the incident.

Mr De Castro, worked at the Streatham dentists surgery from May 2006 to April 2007 as a practitioner employed by Lambeth PCT.

The hearing continues.