Champagne and canopies were flowing in style for leading industry figures earlier this month to celebrate the launch of the Lava chairside oral scanner (Lava C.O.S) for the first time in the UK.

The tried and tested product, which has already been rolled out in the USA for the past 12 months, is capable of delivering an uninterrupted ‘digital workflow process’ to dentists and technicians.

Designed with breakthrough technology that allows for quick, real-time 3D video capture of the tooth anatomy, it allows precise-fitting restorations, and offers patients the convenience and comfort of digital impressions.

Practices and authorised laboratories can now work in partnership and control the entire process of impression taking—by replacing traditional methods with digitally enhanced technology, and producing accurate results through the advanced software.

More than 140 million impressions are carried out worldwide each year, yet many dental laboratories still receive ‘inadequate models’ before even commencing lab procedures. 3M ESPE has recognised that even the most experienced of practitioners, using the very best materials, can encounter difficulties with impressions. This is why 3M ESPE has provided this revolutionary solution.

With the Lava C.O.S, the dentist can capture a high data density digital impression of the patient’s mouth, scanning up to two million different data points using a revolutionary 3D-Imotion digital wand. Weighing less than a pound, it is easy to manoeuvre around the mouth providing a more pleasant experience for both users and patients. To sum up, the Lava C.O.S provides a cleaner, quicker and less obtrusive treatment, making it easy to gather scanning data as well as assessing whether the prep is good to continue.

The authorised laboratory which has access to the data manipulation software, can confidently mark margins and ditch dies using the exact video images that the dentist captures in the mouth.

The data files are then transmitted to the model manufacturer which create and return the resin model to the laboratory. Should the laboratory wish to use a Lava framework for the restoration the file is simultaneously sent to the Lava scan ST to design the framework which can be milled and returned to match the timeframe of the returning resin model.

3M ESPE’s technology has been hailed as a major breakthrough by patients and dental professionals, with the company’s new ‘digital workflow process’ providing a more comfortable method for taking an accurate impression, while streamlining the entire procedure for indirect restorations.
News & Opinions

Free check-ups on the cards?

Every five-year-old would get a free dental check-up at school under a Conservative government.

The £17m scheme would mean children would be shown how to brush their teeth properly and told about the dangers of eating too many sweets and drinking sugary drinks.

Around 680,000 children would benefit from the scheme.

Figures obtained by the Tories reveal that on average, children have at least one filling, extraction, or episode of tooth decay by the time they are five.

Check-ups were first introduced in schools back in 1918.

However Department of Health guidelines published in 2007 removed the obligation on primary care trusts to give dental screening to schoolchildren.

New figures show that 64 per cent of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are no longer screening children following Labour’s dental reforms – and only 25 per cent have a screening programme that is widely available to schoolchildren.

Shadow health secretary Andrew Lansley, the Shadow Health Secretary, described Labour’s ‘neglect’ of preventative dentistry as ‘shameful’.

‘Not only has the Government in its new dental contract worsened outcomes and access for patients, but Ministers have quietly abolished a long-standing programme that helps to protect children’s oral health.’

He revealed that under a Tory government ‘Every child at the age of five when they go to school will have dental screening.’

On the BBC’s Politics Show, he said: ‘We’ll find £17m from within the planned dentistry budget, in order to do that - that’s 680,000 children and then, from that, we will also be a position to be able to look at where tooth decay is in those children and we want to change the contract so that dentists have a greater incentive for preventative work, including contracts to look after children, whether or not their parents are having NHS dentistry.

We have to make sure that we put the investment where it’s needed, which is in prevention, rather than cure. The evidence internationally, it’s absolutely clear, if we can have children whose teeth are good when they are younger, we are likely to have adults who have good teeth for the rest of their lives.’

However the Government has disputed the Tories’ figures and claims the UK has the lowest rate of tooth decay among 12-year-olds in Europe.

The Chief Dental Officer, Barry Crocket, said: ‘PCTs can still decide to carry out the screening if they wish but most PCTs have decided to target their resources at the significant inequalities that exist rather than carry out blanket screening which is considered ineffective.

When we removed the mandatory requirement, the decision was supported by the British Dental Association.

Currently around 70 per cent of children see a dentist in each two year period so to introduce further screening at school would create a huge degree of duplication.

PCTs are now developing locally targeted initiatives in their own areas to meet their own particular circumstances, surely a better way to target inequalities.’

The British Dental Health Foundation cast doubt on the scheme claiming the Tories’ planned £17m spend would be better spent on effective preventative measures.

Compulsory screenings became optional for Primary Care Trusts in 2007 after the National Screening Committee heard evidence highlighting a lack of impact on future oral health with isolated screenings failing to solve dental problems.

Foundation chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said: ‘While we wholeheartedly support Mr Lansley’s commitment to increasing the focus on preventative dentistry, compulsory school screenings are simply a waste of money when there are far more effective measures available.

We live in an age of evidence-based medicine and dentistry and the evidence is overwhelming that school dental check-ups are not effective. Indeed, far from improving pupils’ oral health they have been shown to increase existing disparities.

Screenings are not a preventative measure since they diagnose existing decay. Instead the proposed additional budget would be best spent on real preventative measures from water fluoridation to targeted programmes in schools with the application of fluoride varnishes and supervised brushing.

He added: ‘These measures have proved extremely successful at reducing child decay levels when implemented in the Scandinavian countries. We particularly need to target high-need areas with dental resources. The Foundation would welcome an opportunity to work with the Shadow Health Team in developing their future dental policy.’

Oasis scoops new contract

Oasis Healthcare has been awarded another NHS contract and is to open a new dental surgery in Carlisle to ease waiting lists in the town of Workington. Oasis Healthcare Ltd has received permission from Allerdale Council to change the first floor of an empty unit in Workington into a surgery.

The surgery will create 11 jobs and provide NHS dental care to more than 1,000 people.

NHS Cumbria, the primary care trust, is to manage the appointments in partnership with Oasis. The site has been chosen as it is accessible by public transport to people living outside the town centre.

The Workington surgery is part of a £17m scheme to create 50,000 NHS dental places in west Cumbria.

Manchester company, Oasis Dental Care Ltd, which has more than 140 practices in the UK, is also planning to open surgeries in Maryport, Whitehaven and Egremont.
Teddy bear dental programme

Dental students from Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry have developed an oral health programme, which uses teddy bears to help reduce the fear and anxiety children have, when they visit the dentist.

The student led programme, dubbed Teddy Bear Hospital (TBH), has been running in the London borough of Tower Hamlets for children aged from three to seven. The dental students have been visiting schools in Tower Hamlets and children have been bringing in their teddy bears to be treated by the dental students.

Avin Mohammed, who helps run the programme, said: ‘It has proved to be an exciting opportunity for both the children and teddy dentists. The children have learnt about oral health in an interactive way, working in small groups as well as on a one to one basis. The key has been organisation and the use of child friendly language such as ‘sleeping juice’, ‘tooth shower’ and ‘tickling stick’.

The programme is recognised as a valuable learning tool for both children and students. The aim is to increase awareness on the importance of oral health as well as stimulate collaboration among the dental students to promote oral health care in the community.’

She added: ‘The experiences have benefited everyone, to the extent that the dentists recognised the value of being involved and because oral health still remains a significant problem in Tower Hamlets, developed a series of dental related workshops with the goal of reducing dental fear, promoting oral health and ultimately preventing and reducing dental disease in this group of children.’

The dental workshops offered include tooth brushing, visiting the dentist and healthy eating.

The students also run a Teddy Bear Hospital ‘Safety Day’ once a year for more than 180 children.

The children, teddies, and teddy dentists take part in interactive activities based on health and safety in the home.

The campaign has attracted various sponsors, such as GSK and Oral B, who have been major contributors to campaigns.

At the end of each clinic, the children go home with a ‘goodie bag’ including a toothbrush, tooth paste and timer.

Practice Plan challenge

The dental plan provider, Practice Plan, is competing with thousands of other companies from around the world, to walk 10,000 steps a day for 125 days.

The team of seven from Practice Plan, are taking part in the office fitness programme, the Global Corporate Challenge (GCC).

The scheme is designed to increase staff fitness, promote teamwork, foster a positive, competitive spirit, and support the workforce to be active, healthy, and more productive.

Managing director of Practice Plan, Nick Dilworth called it a ‘fantastic opportunity not only for the group of seven who are officially competing in the challenge, but for the whole company to get fit and healthy’.

He added: ‘We are encouraging everyone to join in with the daily walks, as the wellbeing of our staff is hugely important. A healthy body is a healthy mind.’

The walking challenge begins on 21 May and runs up until 22 September, and will see 50,000 individuals globally competing to walk the farthest distance over the course of 125 days, with 10,000 steps being the daily minimum.

The average person walks around 5,500 steps a day, but the recommendation from the World Health Organisation is 10,000.

Therefore, the Practice Plan team members are in a bid to walk a combined total of 8,750,000 steps over the course of the competition, meaning 551,558 calories burned, 3,480 miles travelled and 1,167 hours of completed stepping time.

Every morning, team members will pop on their pedometers in order to track the number of steps that they take and will compete in various walking events to notch up their running total.

The results will be fed into a website that shows teams and organisations how they measure up against each other.

The company is organising a number of challenging walks for the team of seven, and is encouraging all of their staff to get involved, in order keep fit and healthy.

The money that the GCC generates from registration fees is spent on research into conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

Expenses saga continues

An MP, who works three days a week as a dentist, has been accused of claiming on expenses for repairs to his dental surgery in Putney, south-west London.

The MP for Mole Valley in Surrey, Sir Paul Beresford, has been dragged into the expenses row by the Daily Telegraph, over his leasehold property in Putney, which incorporates a dental practice and a flat.

The newspaper has alleged that he used taxpayers’ money to subsidise his dental surgery.

In 1992, when he was elected as Conservative MP, Sir Paul worked out a deal with the House of Commons fees office where he charged three quarters of the running costs of the property to the taxpayer, claiming three-quarters were used for parliamentary duties.

He said the flat was used as a second home and the patient waiting room doubled as his private lounge in the evenings.

In 2007, Sir Paul increased his practice and took over a larger share of the running costs, reducing his claim to 50 per cent of the expenses at the property. He said none of it was used to subsidise the dental surgery.

He said he claimed £3,521 for 2007 to 2008, which includes claims for gutter cleaning, roof repairs and council tax.

He said he has claimed nothing for 2008 to 2009, as he didn’t use the flat and went home instead.

Chairman of the Mole Valley Conservative Association, Colin Crispin, has given Sir Paul his total support and said he will still be their candidate at the next election.