

Caring for Smiles

Activity and Data Report

(April 2020 – March 2023)

Leigh Deas, Caring for Smiles Programme Manager

Maura Edwards, Consultant in Dental Public Health

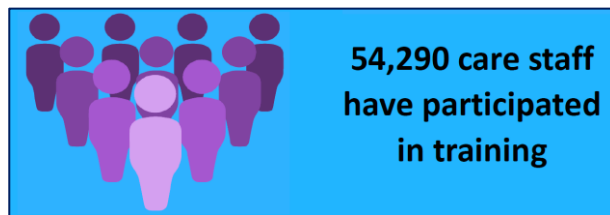
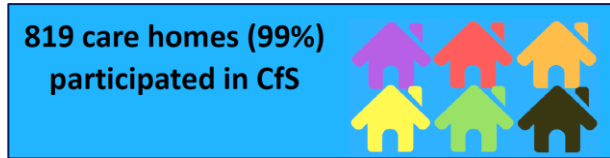
January 2024

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Introduction

Caring for Smiles, Scotland's oral health improvement programme for older dependent adults, has been delivering training and support to health & social care staff since 2010.



By March 2020, approximately 99% of all care homes had participated in the programme at some point, with over 54,000 health & social care staff participating in training. Some staff may have participated more than once as they completed the different parts of non-accredited and accredited training. The in-person elements of the programme were paused in March 2020 due to the pandemic. This report will cover the remobilisation of the programme and data will cover a three year period from April 2020 to March 2023.

Training Data April 2020 to March 2023

From April 2020, the programme began to gather data in a new way, moving from annual to quarterly data collection. The questions included the number of sessions delivered to health & social care staff (either on-line or in-person, as recovery started); the number of health & social care staff taking part; the number of unique care homes participating; the number of unique 'other' services taking part; the number of Caring for Smiles staff available for training and the number of Caring for Smiles staff redeployed. Training has not been split into accredited and non-accredited training, due to the restrictions during the pandemic, and because recovery was the aim of collecting data. This section of the report will cover the data submitted by Health Boards focussing on April 2022 to March 2023, although presenting data for the full period, January 2020 to March 2023. January to March 2020 data are included to demonstrate the change in training from pre-pandemic to pandemic times.

Please note the national programme did not put in place a definitive remobilisation date due to the impact of Covid-19 on the care home sector and the Caring for Smiles teams. Health Boards varied on their remobilisation, depending on local issues such as staffing availability.

Training episodes

As can be seen by Figure 1 below, the number of training sessions (episodes) per quarter, April 2022 to March 2023, exceeded those delivered in January to March 2020. There is no quarterly data prior to January to March 2020, as the Caring for Smiles data were not collected quarterly at that time.

This rise in training episodes has occurred since October to December 2020, when recovery of the programme began in greater numbers. However it is noticeable that the training sessions closely followed the various waves of the pandemic, a consequence of the pandemic response in the NHS and the care home sector. Over the full period, April 2020 to March 2023, 1505 training episodes were delivered.

Figure 2 demonstrates this same trend across the majority of Health Board data. Each Health Board provided training as their circumstances allowed. In those areas where redeployment eased sooner in the first two years of the period, the training episodes have increased or been maintained over time, rather than following the fluctuations of the pandemic.

Figure 1: Number of training episodes per quarter, Scotland-wide, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023

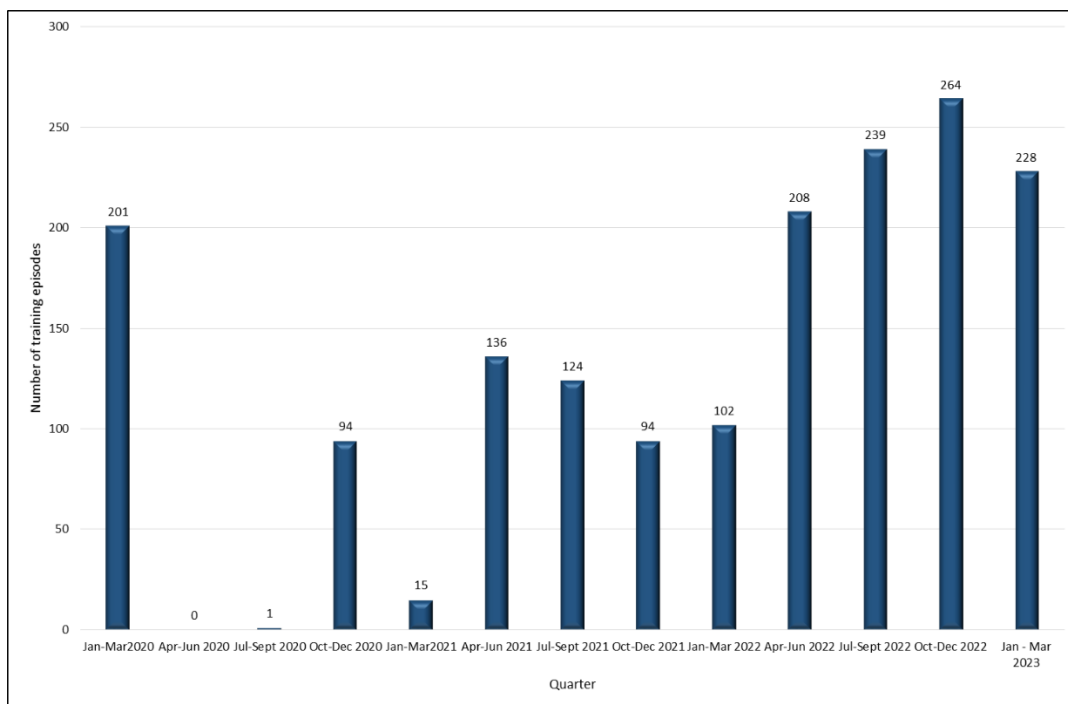
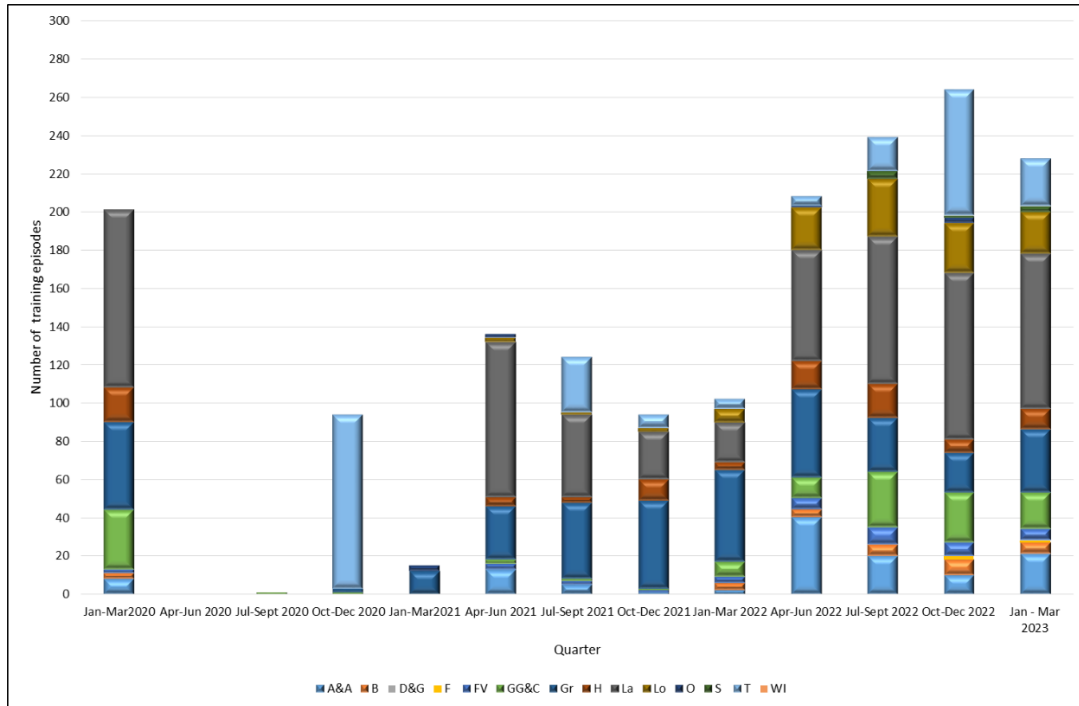


Figure 2: Number of training episodes per quarter, Health Board, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023



Health & social care staff trained

The programme also asked Caring for Smiles Teams for the number of health & social care staff who attended training. In the most current financial year 2022/2023, 4,616 health & social care staff were trained. This has exceeded the average number of staff trained per year (3,304 health & social care staff) in the preceding three financial years (2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020). However, please note that in the financial year 2019/2020, some health & social care staff were unable to complete their training due to the pandemic.

Over the period April 2020 to March 2023, 6217 staff were trained. As is shown from the numbers of staff trained in Figure 3, this followed the waves of the pandemic but has been increasing over time as staff are released from redeployment.

Figure 4 demonstrates the same trend across the majority of Health Boards. However, those Health Boards who had staff released from redeployment earlier in the first two years of the reporting period had a sustained quarter on quarter increase in the number of staff trained.

Figure 3: Number of health & social care staff trained per quarter, Scotland-wide, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023

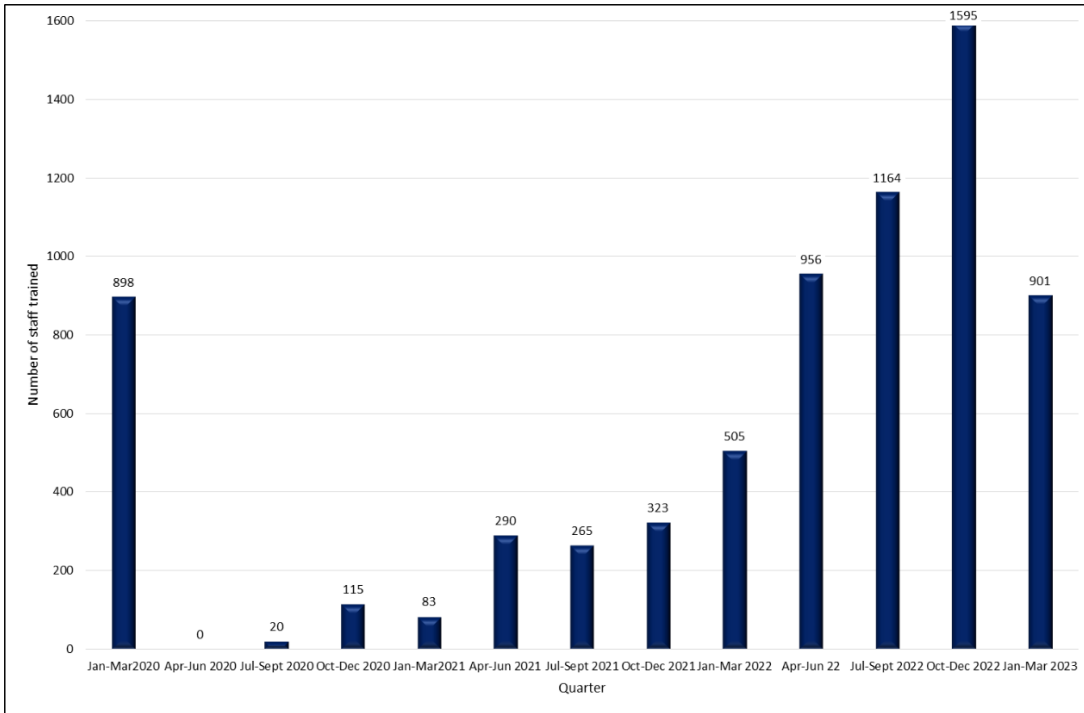
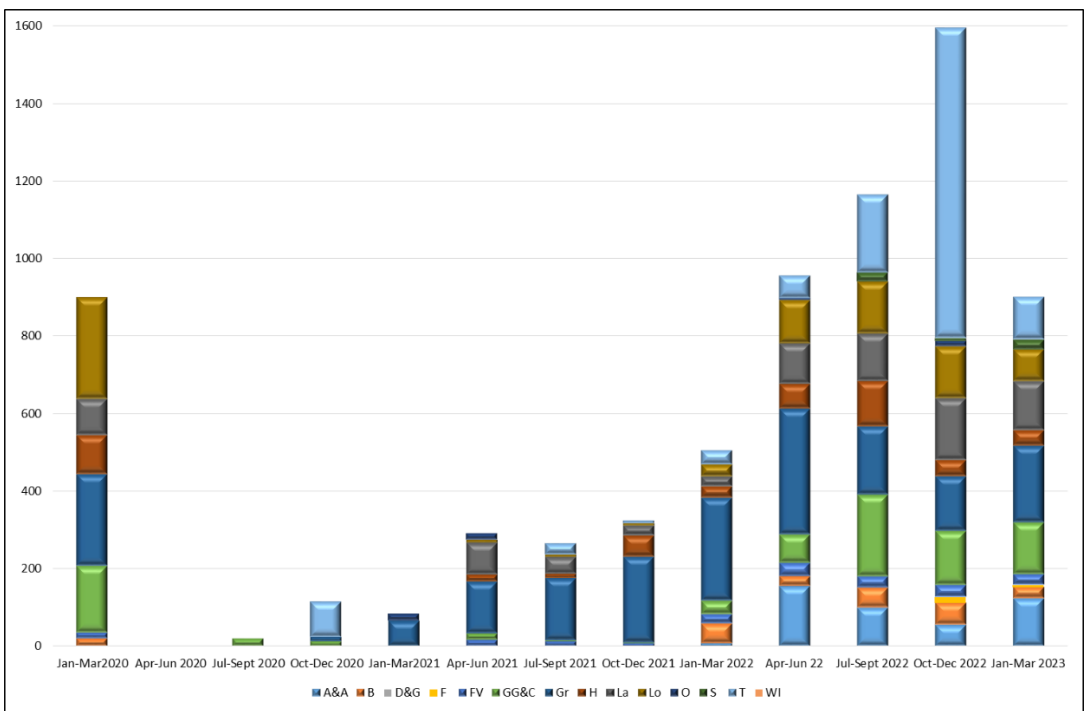


Figure 4: Number of health & social care staff trained per quarter, Health Board, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023



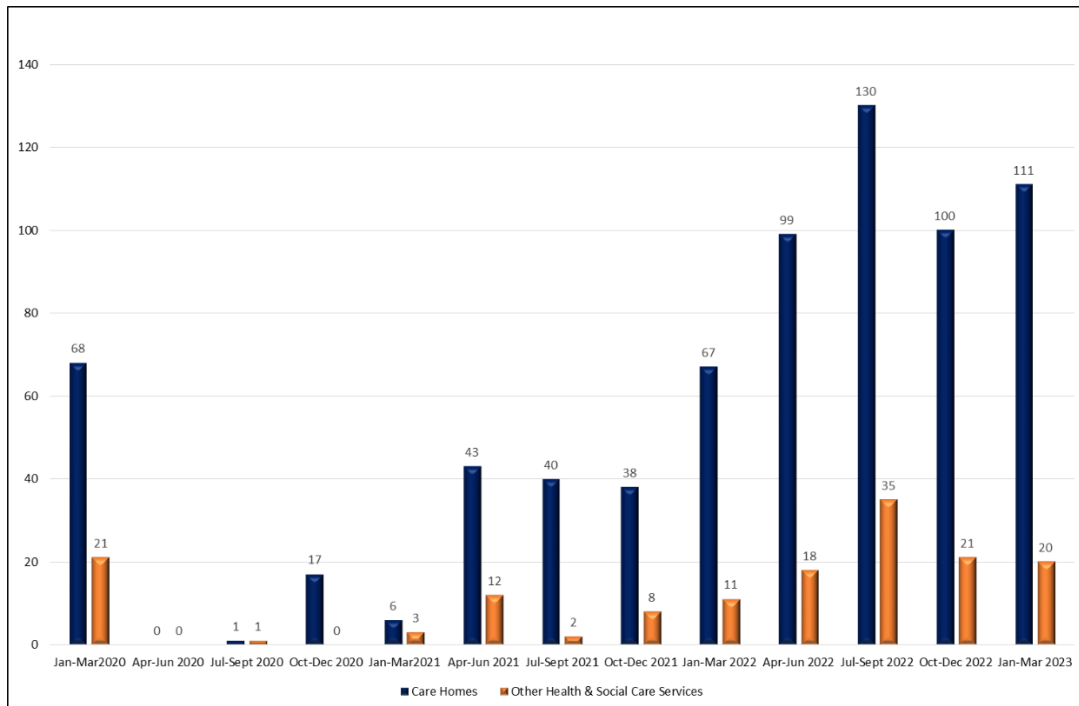
Health & social care services participating in training

Caring for Smiles is largely delivered to care home services across Scotland, however, ‘other’ health & social care services also take part in training. Over the period reported this included, but is not limited to, care at home services, hospitals, supported living services, hospices, colleges, carers of family members living with dementia and PDS colleagues.

In the period, April 2022 to March 2023, 440 care homes and 94 ‘other’ services took part in training. This has not reached the average number of care homes participating¹ (717 care homes) in the preceding three financial years (2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020). However, if considering care homes and ‘other’ services (534 care homes and ‘other’ services), the financial year 2022/2023, has had similar participation to the year directly preceding the pandemic (536 care homes participating in 2019/2020).

Figures 5, 6 and 7 demonstrate that the number of services taking part in Caring for Smiles training by quarter (January to March 2020 to January to March 2023).

Figure 5: Number of care homes and ‘other’ health & social care services participating per quarter, Scotland-wide, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023



¹Some ‘other’ health and social care services may have been counted within the care home participation data prior to 2020.

Figure 6: Number of care homes participating per quarter, Health Board, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023

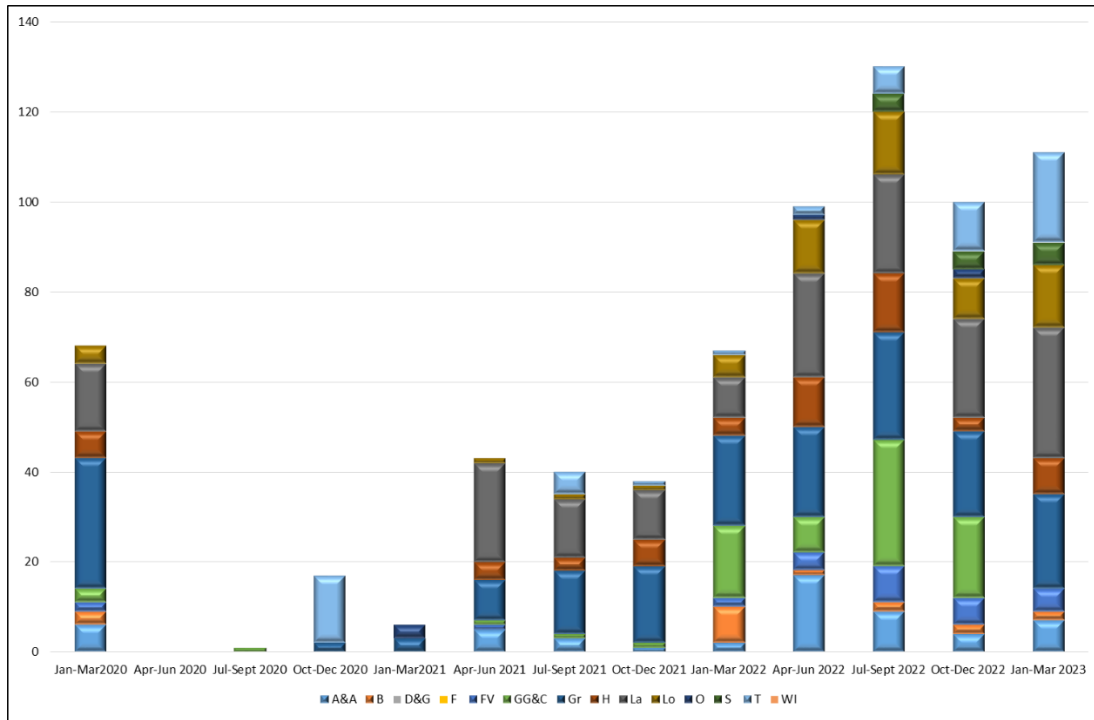
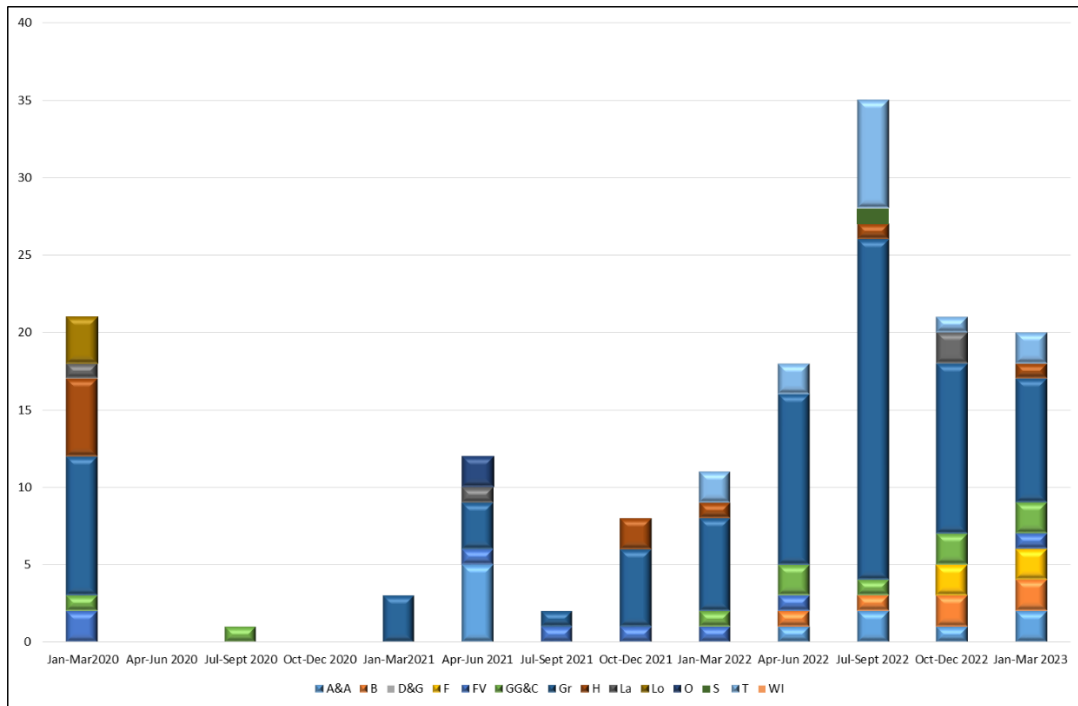


Figure 7: Number of 'other' health & social care services participating per quarter, Health Board, Jan 2020 – Mar 2023



Caring for Smiles staffing

Redeployment is no longer an issue nationally for the Caring for Smiles teams and by the summer of 2022, no staff were redeployed. However, Figure 8 shows that there has been a reduction in staff across Scotland from pre-pandemic to post-pandemic periods. The reasons behind this reduction would require further investigation.

Staff from Caring for Smiles teams were redeployed to a number of roles within the wider health service to support the pandemic response. The levels of redeployment from early 2020 to summer 2022 are shown in Figures 9, 10 and 11 to highlight the number of staff available and redeployed from Caring for Smiles teams at Scotland and Health Board level. In Figure 9, redeployment peaked in July to September 2020 at 59 staff across Scotland redeployed, with staff slowly being released back since this time. The Health Board data, Figures 10 and 11, demonstrate how this affected individual Health Boards.

Figure 8: Caring for Smiles total staff (available and redeployed), Scotland-wide, Jan 2020 – March 2023

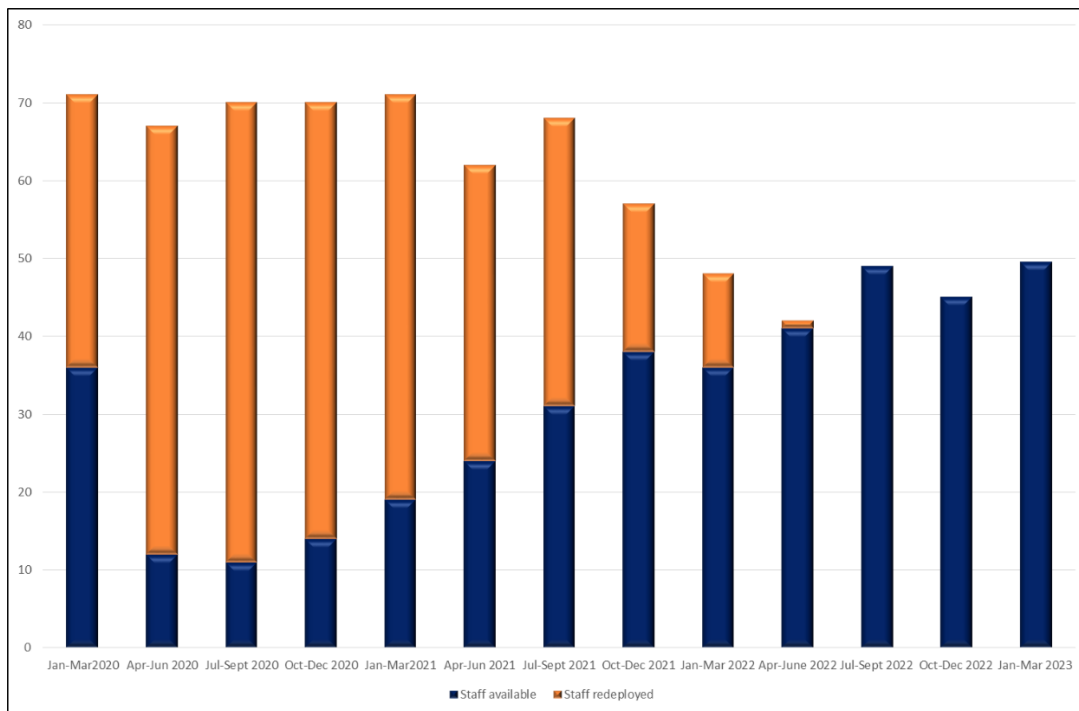


Figure 9: Caring for Smiles staff available / redeployed, Scotland-wide, Jan 2020 – March 2023

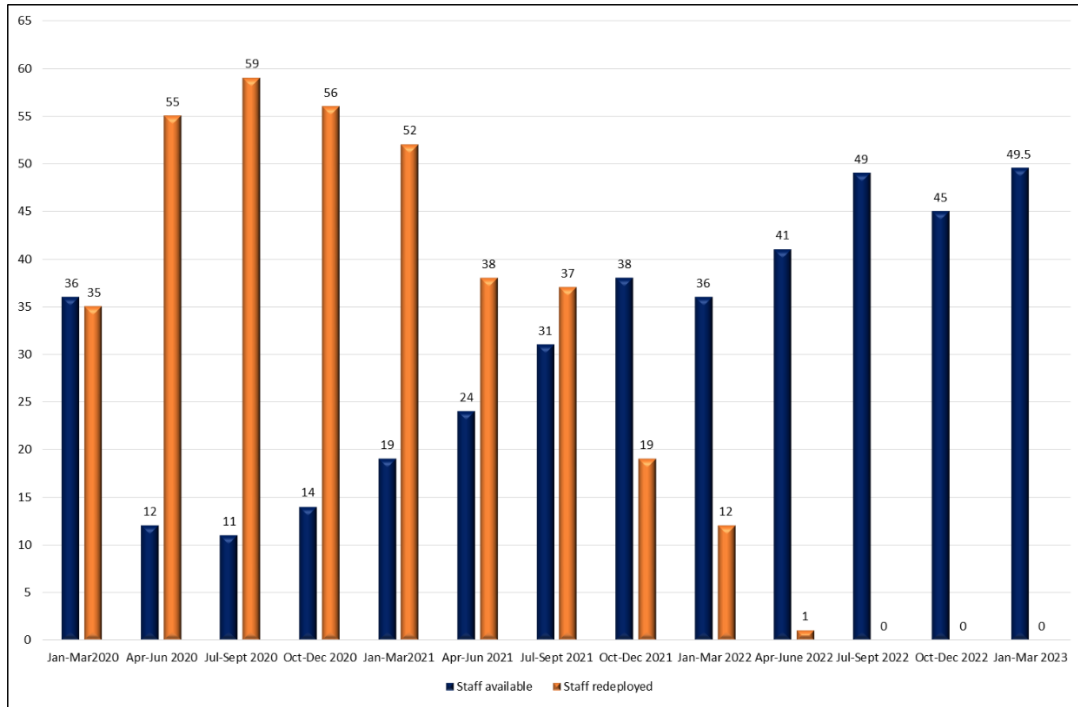


Figure 10: Caring for Smiles staff available, Health Board, Jan 2020 – March 2023

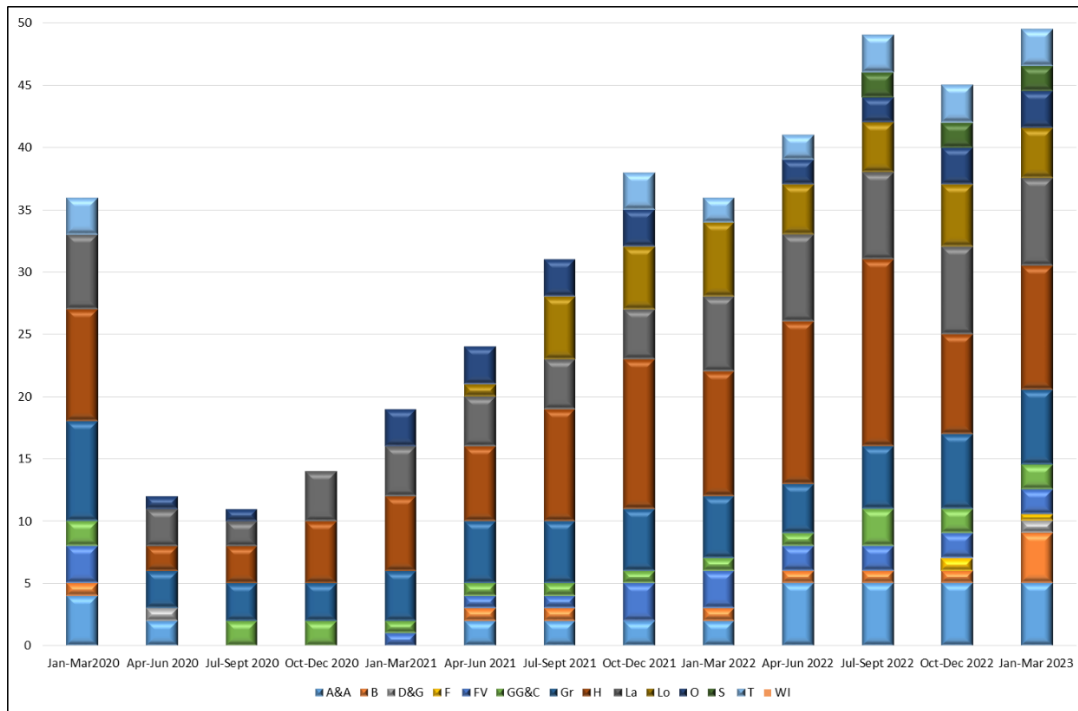
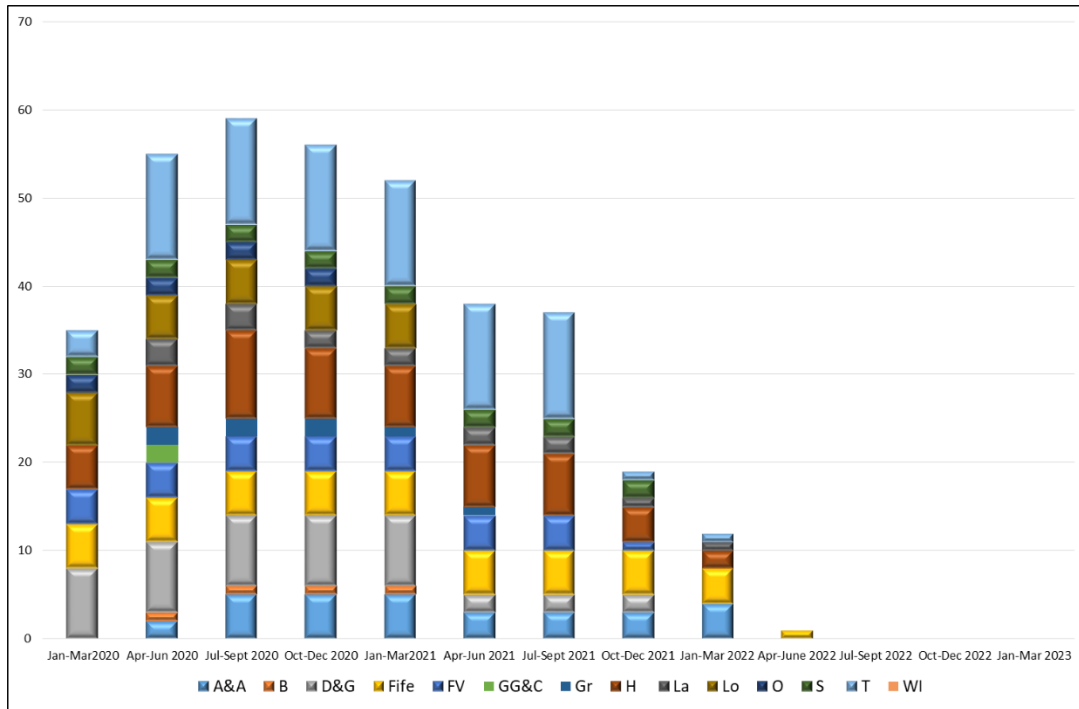


Figure 11: Caring for Smiles staff redeployed, Health Board, Jan 2020 – March 2023



Open Badges

Two Open Badges, one for care homes and one for care at home services, hosted on the Scottish Social Services Council website were developed by NHS Education for Scotland, in collaboration with the programme, to provide a form of training in the time of the pandemic, which could be accessed on-line, at any time. It was felt that this was especially important as the programme was aware of new staff entering the health & social care workforce.

By March 2023, 113 learners completed the Open Badges, 54 awards for the Care Home Open Badge and 59 awards for the Care at Home Open Badge.

Covid-19 Pandemic

In March 2020, the programme was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Caring for Smiles Teams were redeployed in the pandemic response. This had an impact on the programme, however, the Caring for Smiles teams supported health & social care staff in any

way they could. This included phone calls, email support and delivering oral care supplies if required by care homes. Teams have also tried to deliver training in any way that they could.

Although face-to-face training was paused due to the pandemic, the programme worked with NHS Education for Scotland to develop a number of COVID-19 specific guidance and online training (Open Badges mentioned above). Three guidance documents were developed for care homes, care at home and hospitals to provide advice on delivering mouth care during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the programme provided remobilisation guidance documents, which brought together the advice for health professionals who worked with colleagues in care home settings.

Conclusion

Having a clean and healthy mouth is a fundamental human right and crucial for a person's quality of life. The programme has recovered to pre-pandemic levels of training and is continuing to provide support to staff in care homes and 'other' health & social care organisations. Training is back to, and exceeding, pre-pandemic levels. In the year April 2022 to March 2023, 939 training sessions were delivered, with 4,616 staff attending those sessions, whilst, over the period of this report, April 2020 to March 2023, 1,505 training sessions were delivered with 6,217 staff attending those sessions.

Informally, care at home services have been supported in an ad hoc manner when requested. In the coming year, 2024, the national programme will move more formally to support care at home staff in the delivery of mouth care to people they assist with personal care. Data for this aspect will be collected when this part of the programme is developed and rolled out.

Contact

Maura Edwards
Consultant in Dental Public Health
maura.edwards3@phs.scot

Leigh Deas
Caring for Smiles Programme
Manager
Leigh.deas@appct.scot.nhs.uk
