

# A day in the life: community dental services

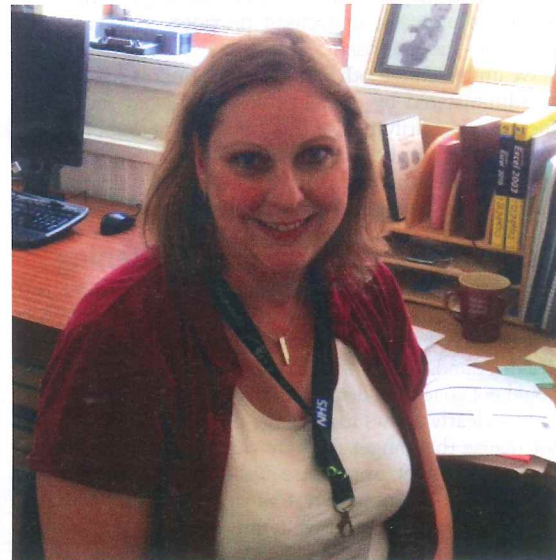
**Amy Schiller** details her role as operations director for community dental services in Suffolk

In 2012, the Suffolk Community Dental Service merged with CDS-CIC, which is an employee-owned social enterprise. The company is not for profit, with all surplus monies being invested back into the delivery of patient care. It also has a charity arm that funds initiatives to improve the health and well being of those in our local communities.

In my role as operations director, I spend one day per week performing clinical duties. Ultimately this means providing dental care for patients with additional needs who find it hard to either access care from a high street

dentist, or who need additional physical or other support to obtain dental care. This includes those with a physical or mental disability, those with learning difficulties and hard to reach groups such as the homeless. All of our clinics are wheelchair accessible and many have a wheelchair tipper in place.

We also provide sedation for patients that are too anxious to accept dental care in the conventional way. All of our surgeries are equipped with inhalation sedation equipment, of which the majority of our dentists and nurses are qualified to administer – myself included.



## Varied responsibilities

Because the needs of all of our patients are so different, part of my role is to remain flexible and know how to adapt to different situations using various techniques and approaches. It is for that reason that no two days, or sometimes even two hours, are ever the same. I may be providing care with inhalation sedation for a young and anxious child at 9am and by 10am be travelling to a care home to see a house bound patient as a domiciliary visit.

The rest of my time is taken up with everything from ensuring we are compliant with national regulations – such as CQC standards – to making sure we meet our commissioned performance targets. In addition to that, I work alongside the rest of the executive team to develop a business strategy fit for the future.

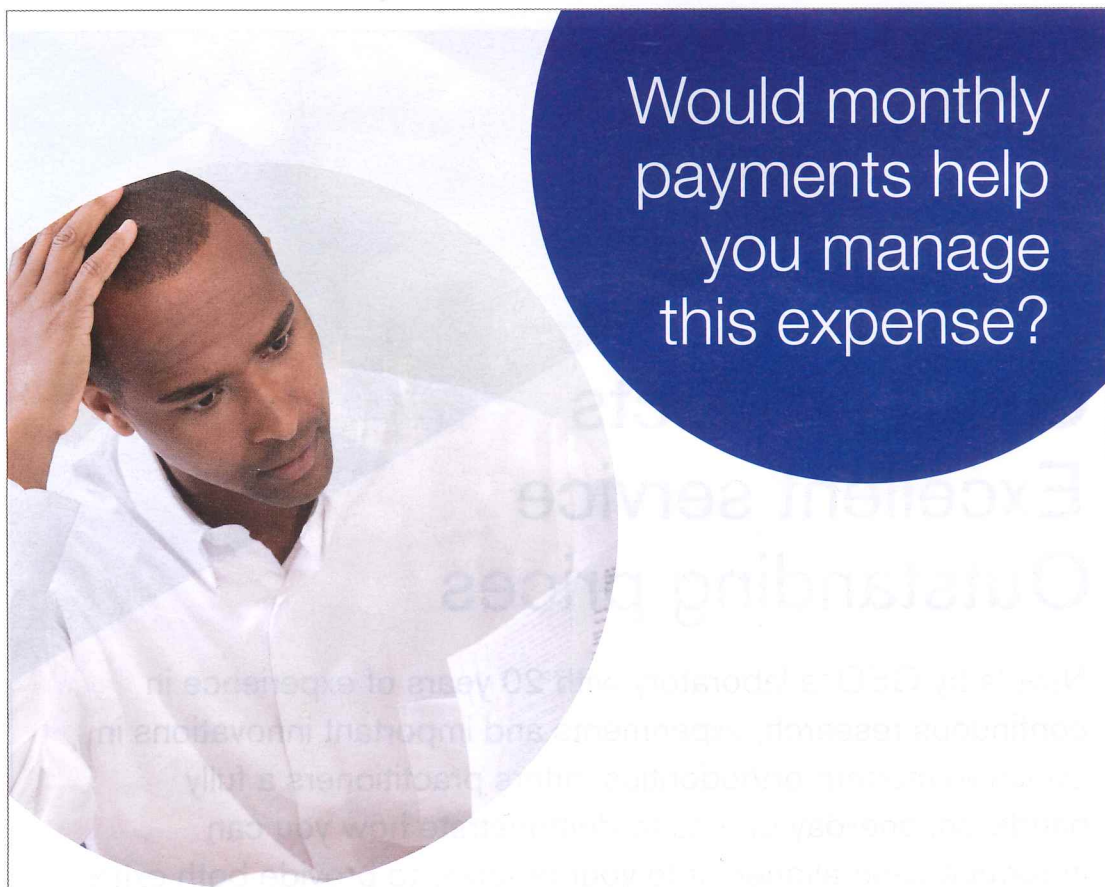
Once a month I meet with the executive team at our head office in Bedford to provide a monthly report that details our performance to contract, financial position and highlights any areas of concern or outstanding performance. I also sit on a monthly clinical governance committee in Suffolk. In Suffolk, I lead a small senior management team. We meet monthly to discuss day-to-day operations management in Suffolk, and to set action plans for areas that require improvement.

## A real change

Within my role as an operations director I have noticed real change in the business since the merger – not only have we become more innovative in the way we deliver our services, but everyone has an extremely positive attitude and approach to work and a real sense of ownership and belonging.

Moreover, it has provided me with experience in a wide array of both clinical and non-clinical tasks, as well as the opportunity to develop my skills in dentistry, clinical governance, management and more recently, in organisational business development. As such, working for CDS-CIC has allowed me to progress from senior dental officer to my current role. **D**

Amy passed her degree in dental surgery in 1997 and completed her postgraduate certificate in dental education in 2012. She is a foundation dental trainer for Health Education East of England and has had additional training in inhalation sedation, dental service management and clinical leadership.



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