

# impact

(Smile Together)

Special Edition 2023



## #SmilesAtSeaUK

**Free dental treatment at the harbourside  
for fishermen and their families**

Funded by Seafarers Hospital Society and Smile Together and delivered in partnership with The Fishermen's Mission as part of their national SeaFit service, including their partner network of healthcare providers

# Back for a seventh consecutive year

in our pink and purple mobile dental unit!

Our 2023 #SmilesAtSeaUK tour of harboursides across Cornwall and Devon was an immense success. We know the difference our award-winning Smiles at Sea tour makes to local fishing communities, so we were thrilled to be back out again tackling oral health inequality and helping to improve the oral health of fishermen who so rarely get to see a dentist due to the demands of their work. This year we visited three additional ports thanks to generous funding from Seafarers Hospital Society.

Demand for our emergency and referral dental services is at an all-time high, and access to dentistry in Cornwall, particularly for vulnerable and hard to reach groups, is especially challenging. Being able to take our own mobile dental unit into the heart of local communities enables us to make even more of a difference to those who need us most, underpinning our mission of tackling oral health inequality.

All those who attended received a free pack of oral health items including top dental tips for the family along with a toothbrush, toothpaste, 2-minute timer, and every eligible person who saw our oral health team was entered into a free prize draw to win an electric toothbrush. Congratulations to Barry, our winner this year!

Alongside urgent and emergency care, we provided oral health advice and oral cancer screening, encouraging fishermen to regularly check for any unusual changes in the mouth, supporting the Oral Health Foundation's national Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign at each harbourside location, particularly during November. Together we created a new 'checking for oral cancer' film complementing the one produced last year with The Fishermen's Mission.

Patients could simply pop in and see us at their nearest harbourside location and here's where we went:



# Our impact at a glance

We enjoyed some great conversations over the four month tour. Some days the sun shone and some days it rained (a lot) but thankfully we had our bright purple gazebo for cover (except on the very windy days when local harbourmasters provided shelter)!



8 harbourside locations visited between September and December 2023



119 fishermen and their dependent family members treated – an average of 12 patients each day!



4 patients referred for more complex urgent care/oral surgery or suspected oral cancer



39 fillings, 16 extractions, 16 scale and polish, and 59 x-rays



100% of adult patients received oral cancer screening



10 children seen



Everyone seen received a free oral health pack plus toothbrushing and dietary advice



All adult patients signposted to regular dental care if not already registered with a dentist



17% of patients hadn't visited a dentist for over a year, 11% for more than 5 years



27 members of our team got involved



Over 350 miles travelled in our mobile dental unit



97% of the fishermen rated us (😊) and said they would visit us again

## A partnership approach to health inclusion

#SmilesAtSeaUK is an exemplar integrated healthcare initiative funded by Seafarers Hospital Society and Smile Together and delivered in partnership with The Fishermen's Mission as part of their national SeaFit service.

Healthy Cornwall provided free health checks, advice and guidance and in some locations we were also joined by Healthwatch Cornwall, Macmillan Cancer Support, The Hepatitis C Trust, Fairwinds Cornwall and Diabetes UK and other SeaFit healthcare partners.

We encouraged local schools and others in each coastal community to visit us harbourside and bring along their old toothbrushes and toothpaste tubes for recycling as part of our Colgate TerraCycle oral care recycling programme. We even completed a beach clean in Newquay, contributing to the Surfers Against Sewage 'Million Mile Clean' – just what you'd expect from a B Corporation team who celebrated their certification on the beach at Godrevy! So collectively we were improving oral health care, wellbeing at sea and our environment – thank you to all who got involved.



# Patient feedback

*'Lovely treatment from everybody, really appreciate the service'*

*'Very happy cheerful people. Made me feel very relaxed'*

*'Absolutely brilliant. Couldn't see any other dentist so was so happy that I could be helped today. Was in a lot of pain'*

*'All good. Happy smiley ladies!'*

*'Local handy service. Very helpful team!'*

*'Thank you very much for coming down here. It's fantastic!'*

*'Just fantastic to turn up and be fitted in'*

*'Every member of staff I have met has been fantastic. All round excellent, much appreciated needed service'*

*'Very friendly and helpful team, proactive dental nurse and very informative. Thank you all'*

*'Genuinely very impressed. Efficient. Very happy'*



## What our partners & team had to say

Sandra Welch, CEO of Seafarers Hospital Society:  
*"Everyone should enjoy good oral health and that is why we are delighted to be working in partnership to provide this vital service to fishermen and their families at the quayside".*

Carol Elliott, SeaFit Manager: *"SeaFit was designed around partnership working and the dental care tour is a perfect example of how working together to bring health and wellbeing services to the quayside can really benefit fishermen and fishing communities".*

Smile Together colleagues enjoyed supporting Smiles at Sea 2023:

*"Fisherman were very grateful so it feels like a very valuable service to be offering and I felt proud to be part of that"*

*"Really proud of the company I work for, there was a great team spirit and the patients were very appreciative of the service"*

*"It was so rewarding helping the fishermen and their families and working together with other healthcare providers to make a real difference. Always great to see lots of smiley patients leaving the mobile unit and they are always so grateful to us being there. A really brilliant initiative"*

## An even deeper reach:

We were interviewed harbourside by BBC TV 'Spotlight' (which led to further coverage on BBC Radio 4), Pirate FM and Radio Newquay, and we generated 9 stories in national dental and fishing media, a Coast magazine double-page feature plus news coverage by ITV West Country. During Smiles at Sea 2023 we saw:



**11,552**  
new website users



**3,846**  
engagements  
on social media  
channels



**>2x**  
social media  
engagement  
compared to  
Smiles at Sea 2022

**(Smile:Together)**

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