



## PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

### **SEAFIT breaks down barriers with free dental checks and emergency treatment to fishermen and their families in Poole**

Fishermen in Poole have been relieved of dental pain thanks to the SeaFit Programme. Free dental checks and emergency treatment were offered to fishermen and their families at the quayside earlier this month and the response was even better than last year.

Local fisherman Luke Bures, was typical of many of the day's patients: *"I haven't been to the dentist for 10 years and I'm nervous about the whole thing. I've not been able to eat on one side for about a year now because it hurts too much. But I just put up with the toothache because I've had it so long."*

Dental charity, DentaId, were commissioned by SeaFit to provide the free treatment and they succeeded in putting Luke and his fellow fishermen at ease. Working from their high-tech mobile unit fitted with the latest dental equipment, the DentaId team were at the quayside treating patients and talking about dental health. During the course of the day they conducted 10 examinations and oral cancer screenings, 9 fillings and 4 scale and polish.

Reflecting on the success of the day, DentaId's UK Project Manager Naomi Roche said: *"This was a busy clinic and the recurring theme was that fisherman are so hard at work that they often forget to take care of themselves. Many had missed appointments due to the irregular hours they work so they were no longer registered for dental care. We saw some nervous and anxious patients who hadn't seen a dentist for several years. It was great to get them on board the unit and help to break down those barriers."*

Finding time to see the dentist is certainly a problem, as fisherman Sarah Tait explained: *"I've not been to the dentist for 29 years apart from the odd emergency appointment. When you work in this business you're part of a team and you can't just have time off as you'd let your family and your customers down. We can't take sick days*

*- we just have to keep going. It's the same with the dentist - we can't go to an appointment if we need to be on the boat."*

Fisherman Chris Skinner had experienced similar problems and was pleased with the SeaFit service: *"My teeth just needed cleaning properly,"* he explained. *"But I was finding it hard to see a dentist. If you hadn't come here, I wouldn't have gone. But they gave me some really good advice today and it's a good idea."*

As well as free dental checks and treatment from Dentaid, cancer information specialists from Macmillan Cancer Support were there to answer questions about all aspects of cancer. Elaine Perry, Macmillan Information and Support Specialist, who attended the event last week said: *"We had a great day at the quayside in Poole talking to fishermen and women about cancer and helping them with any concerns or worries. Thank you to our friends at the SeaFit Programme and the Fishermen's Mission for inviting us along."*

SeaFit is a joint initiative from respected maritime charities, the Fishermen's Mission and Seafarers Hospital Society (SHS), working in partnership to deliver sustainable improvements to the health and wellbeing of fishermen and their families around the UK. The SeaFit Programme includes a range of initiatives covering physical, dental and mental health and is funded by Seafarers UK.

Free dental checks and initial treatment are now a key element of the SeaFit Programme, as Carol Elliott, SeaFit Project Delivery Manager, explained: *"Getting to see the dentist when you work at sea is notoriously difficult and we know that many fishermen neglect their dental health as a result. We're making it easier for fishermen to look after their teeth by bringing the dentist to the harbourside in fishing ports around the UK. Our next trip will be to Cornwall and Devon with Smile Together in September. We'll be there for three weeks this year and we expect to be busy!"*

**For more information about the SeaFit Programme contact Carol Elliott, SeaFit Project Delivery Manager, tel 07486 319621/01489 566 910 or email [PDMSeafit@fishermensmission.org.uk](mailto:PDMSeafit@fishermensmission.org.uk)**

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDS**

**ABOUT SEAFIT**

- The SeaFit Programme is a joint initiative from the Seafarers Hospital Society and the Fishermen's Mission. These two respected organisations are working in

partnership to deliver sustainable improvements in the health and wellbeing of fishermen and their families around the UK

- The Programme covers all aspects of health and wellbeing. It includes health checks on the harbourside; health trainers in the community; free dental checks and treatment; access to mental health and wellbeing support; and development of a network of physiotherapists trained to meet the specific needs of fishermen
- With funding from Seafarers UK, this is a two-year programme starting July 2018

## **ABOUT DENTAID**

- Dentaaid was founded in 1996 and works to improve oral health around the world. The charity sends volunteer dental professionals and reconditioned equipment to support the work of dentists in poor and remote communities
- Dentaaid also runs education, training and toothbrushing programmes
- In 2015 Dentaaid expanded its work to the UK with an oral health education programme called BrightBites and the purchase of the mobile dental unit which is used to deliver dental care for people who find it difficult to access treatment

## **ABOUT MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT**

- We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.
- For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk).

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- **For all press enquiries, call Laura Simons, Consultant to the SeaFit Programme, on 0774 773 2039 or email [laurasimons@lms2.demon.co.uk](mailto:laurasimons@lms2.demon.co.uk)**