Care homes get in on the act to help improve
the oral health of residents

As part of the national Caring for Smiles programme NHS Ayrshire & Arran’s Oral Health Promotion team has been working closely with three care homes to develop a training DVD ‘Care-related stress and distress’.

The training DVD will give staff the knowledge and understanding of what communication and behaviour skills can be used to help provide oral care for residents with dementia. For those residents who are dependent on help from care home staff, dementia is the main cause of residents becoming distressed during oral care. People with dementia, especially those who have their natural teeth, are likely to present staff with the greatest challenges. However, if residents don’t have regular oral care this can create a vicious circle of pain and discomfort leading to increased distress.

We worked with three care homes that very kindly gave us the use of their premises to film and released care staff from their duties to take part in the production. These were:

- Airlie House, Ayr;
- Suncourt Nursing Home, Troon; and
- Glenfairn House, Ayr.

Staff from each care home were involved in the filming and took on the acting roles of residents and care home staff. To make the characters more believable we used a makeup artist to make the care staff playing the part of the resident look older. We produced the DVD in partnership with Being There Media. We also received guidance and support from the Public Dental Service and Janice McAlister, Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Nurse Consultant for NHS Ayrshire & Arran’s Mental Health Services.
Karen Parker, Assistant Dental Services Manager, commented: “Good oral health is important for both our physical and mental health. We hope this training will help offer a better understanding of the challenges of providing oral care to residents with dementia. Which will hopefully lead to less stressful situations for both residents and staff.”

At the moment the Oral Health Promotion team is using the DVD to deliver training for care homes across Ayrshire who take part in the Caring for Smiles Programme. The resource will also be used in other health board areas across Scotland to provide staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to equip them to confidently and proficiently provide the best oral care for the people they look after.

For more information contact the Oral Health Promotion team on 01292 513 293 or email hazel.andrew@aapct.scot.nhs.uk.

Ends

Date of release: Wednesday 25 March 2015

Sharlene, Janice (complete with makeup) and Gemma from Suncourt Nursing Home, Troon take part in the training DVD.