

Caring for Smiles

Activity and Data Report

April 2023 – March 2024

Leigh Deas, Caring for Smiles Programme Manager

Maura Edwards, Consultant in Dental Public Health

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Caring for Smiles

April 2023-March 2024



1168 training episodes delivered

5977 health & social care
staff attended training
sessions



400 care homes & 79 'other'
services participating in non-
accredited training

3430 care home staff & 2061
'other' staff participated in non-
accredited training



114 care homes & 9 'other'
service participated in
accredited training

177 care home staff & 10 'other'
staff participated in accredited
training



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1. 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.

A clean and healthy mouth is a basic human right and fundamental to everybody's quality of life. Caring for Smiles aims to improve oral care for older dependent adults who rely on others for their care, by offering training and support to health & social care staff.

Training is delivered as either Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) accredited training or non-accredited training. The accredited training links to the Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) that health & social care staff undertake as part of their accreditation process for their role within care homes. The Caring for Smiles accredited training gives credits either towards the initial SVQ or to continuous professional learning. Training (accredited and non-accredited) is delivered in-person or online by oral health improvement teams, based in the geographic Health Boards.

Self-directed learning can also be undertaken through Open Badges, which are available as an online introduction to mouth care for care home and care at home staff.

This report will cover data collected for a one year period from April 2023 to March 2024.

2. Training Data April 2023 to March 2024

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 online or in-person); 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 delivering training.

Since 2023, we have continued to gather quarterly data but have now once again begun reporting this by accredited and non-accredited training. This section of the report will cover the data submitted by Health Boards focussing on April 2023 to March 2024. In some cases, this will be presented with the previous two years data to show trends over time. In addition, some annual data is being collected to demonstrate the overall number of services participating in the programme over the financial year.

2.1 Training episodes

As can be seen by Figure 2.1 below, the number of training sessions (episodes) per quarter, April 2023 to March 2024, was 1168. By the year ending March 2023, training delivery had recovered to pre-pandemic levels and has continued to rise in this current year. Over the full period, April 2021 to March 2024, 2563 training episodes were delivered.

Figure 2.2 presents April 2023 to March 2024 Health Board data.

Figure 2.1: Number of training episodes per quarter, Scotland-wide, Apr 2021-Mar 2024

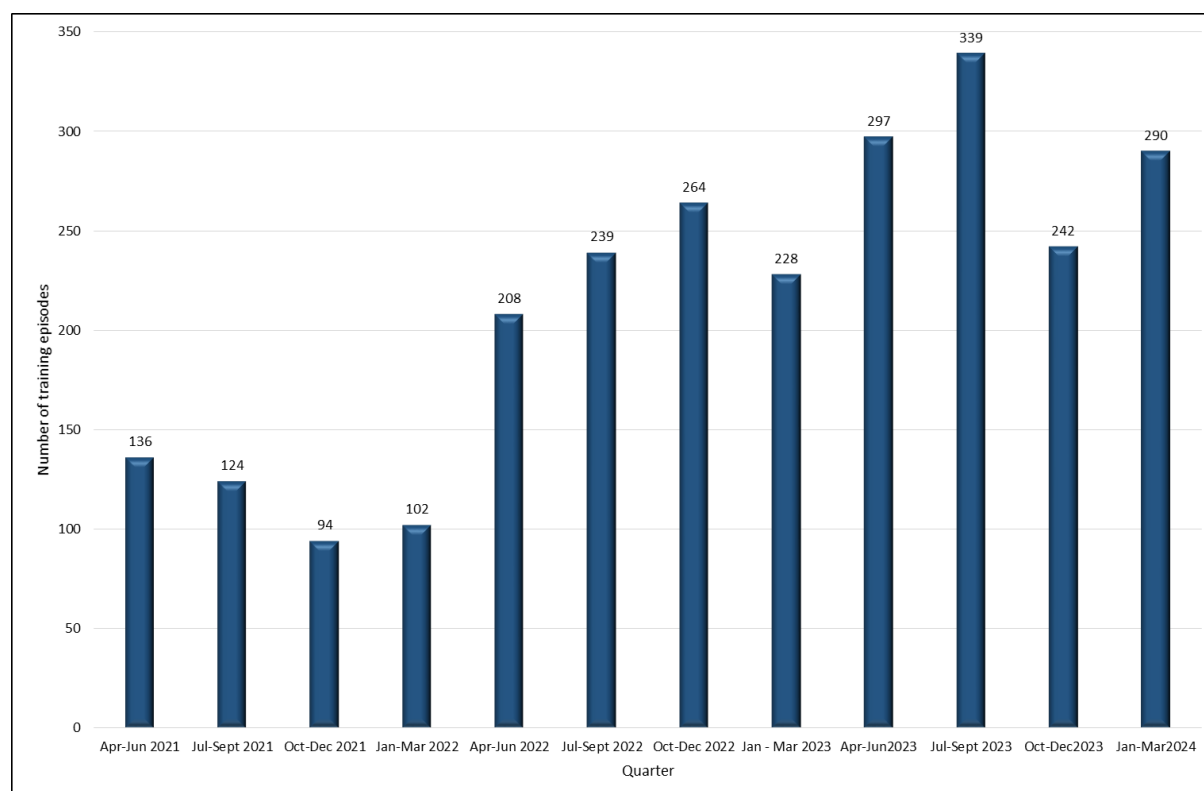
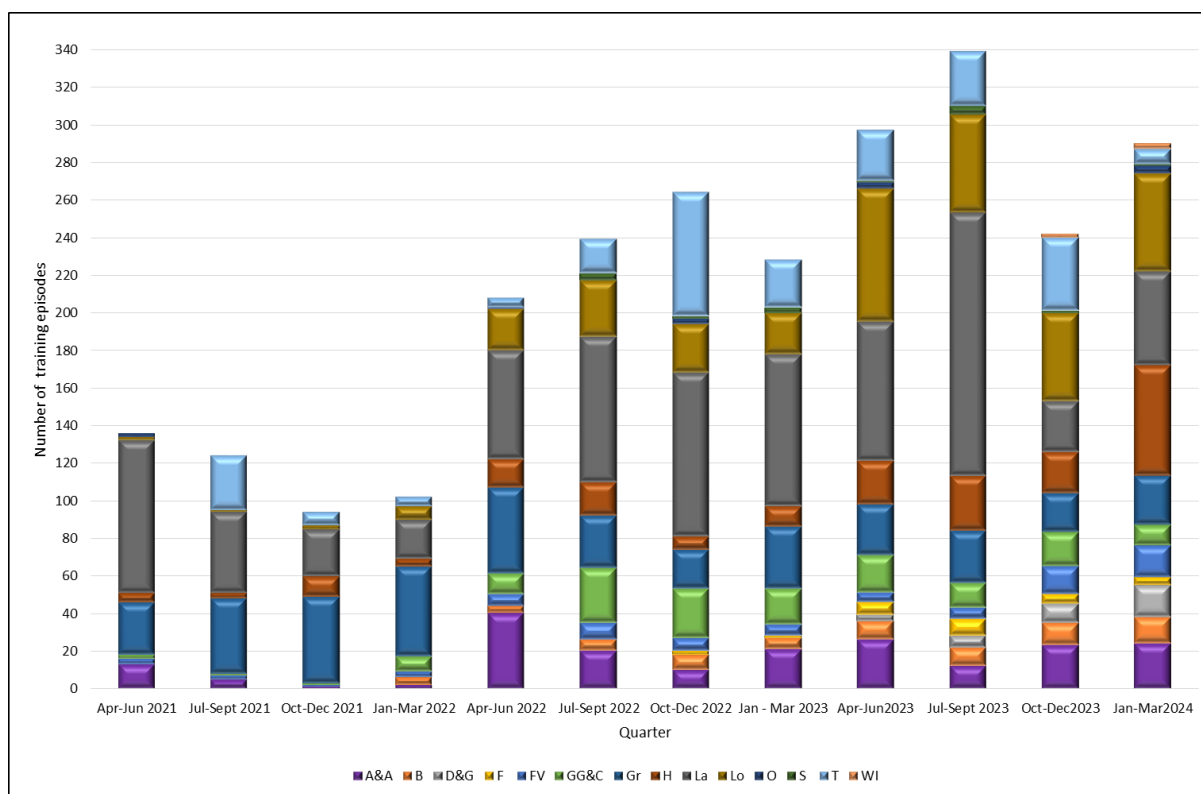


Figure 2.2: Number of training episodes per quarter, Health Board, Apr 2021 – Mar 2024



2.2 Health & social care staff trained

The programme also asked Oral Health Improvement Teams for the number of health & social care staff who attended training (this includes care home staff and 'other' health & social care staff). In the most current financial year 2023/2024, 5977 health & social care staff were trained.

Over the period April 2021 to March 2024, 11,976 staff were trained. As is shown from the numbers of staff trained in Figure 2.3, since the pandemic there has been a year on year increase in the number of health & social care staff trained as part of the programme (2021-2022, 1383 staff trained; 2022-2023, 4616 staff trained).

Figure 2.4 presents April 2023 to March 2024 Health Board data.

Figure 2.3: Number of health & social care staff trained per quarter, Scotland-wide, Apr 2021 – Mar 2024

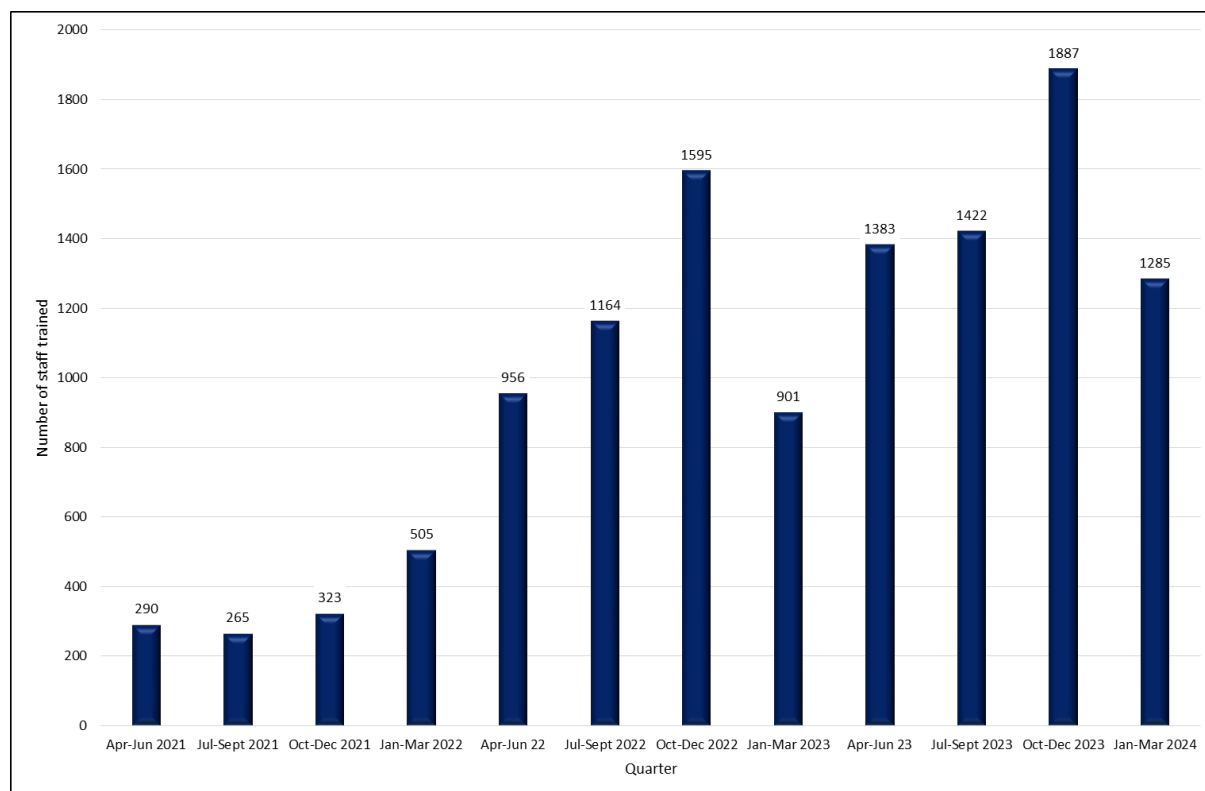
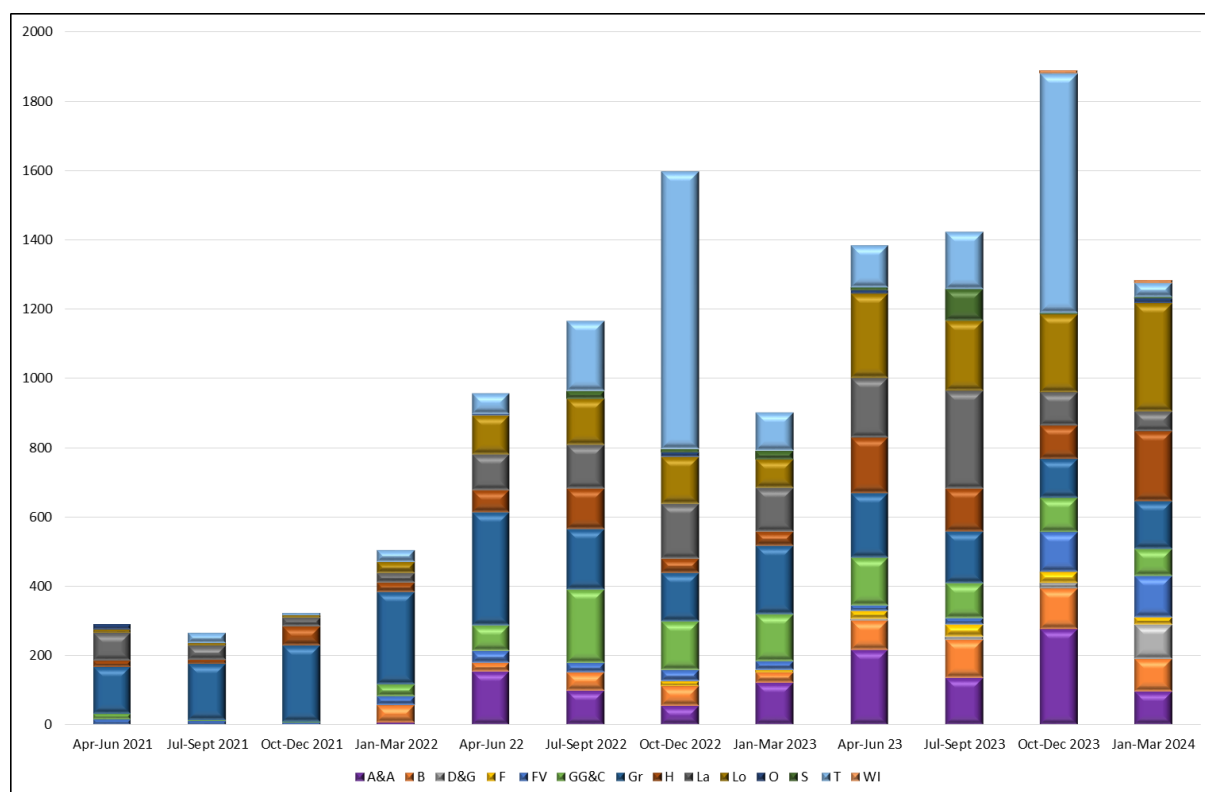


Figure 2.4: Number of health & social care staff trained per quarter, Health Board, Apr 2021 – Mar 2024



2.3 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 Public Dental Service colleagues.

In the period, April 2023 to March 2024, 400 care homes and 79 'other' services took part in non-accredited training and 114 care homes and 9 'other' services took part in accredited training. The care homes and 'other' services may have taken part in training more than once over the period April 2023 to March 2024, therefore this may not equate to the quarterly data presented.

Figures 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 demonstrate that the number of services taking part in Caring for Smiles training by quarter, April 2023 to March 2024.

Figure 2.5: Number of care homes and 'other' health & social care services participating per quarter, Scotland-wide, Apr 2021 – Mar 2024

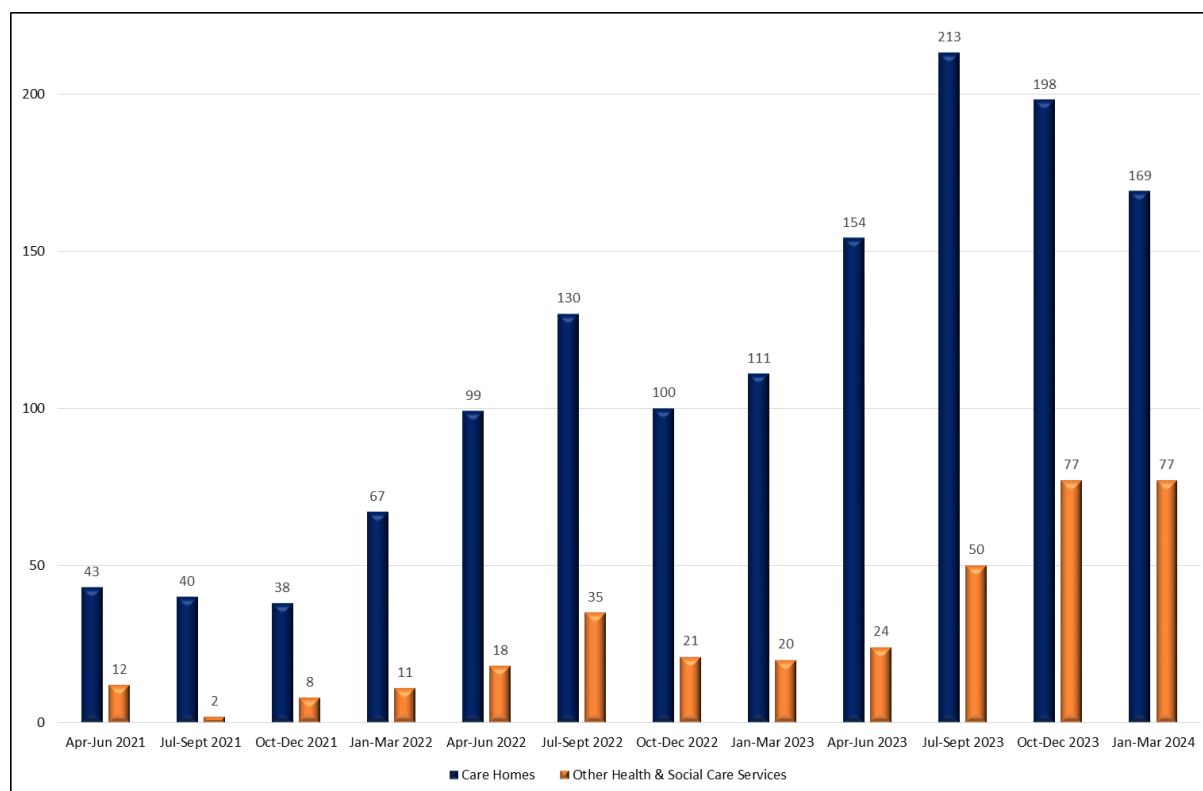


Figure 2.6: Number of care homes participating per quarter, Health Board, Apr 2021 – Mar 2024

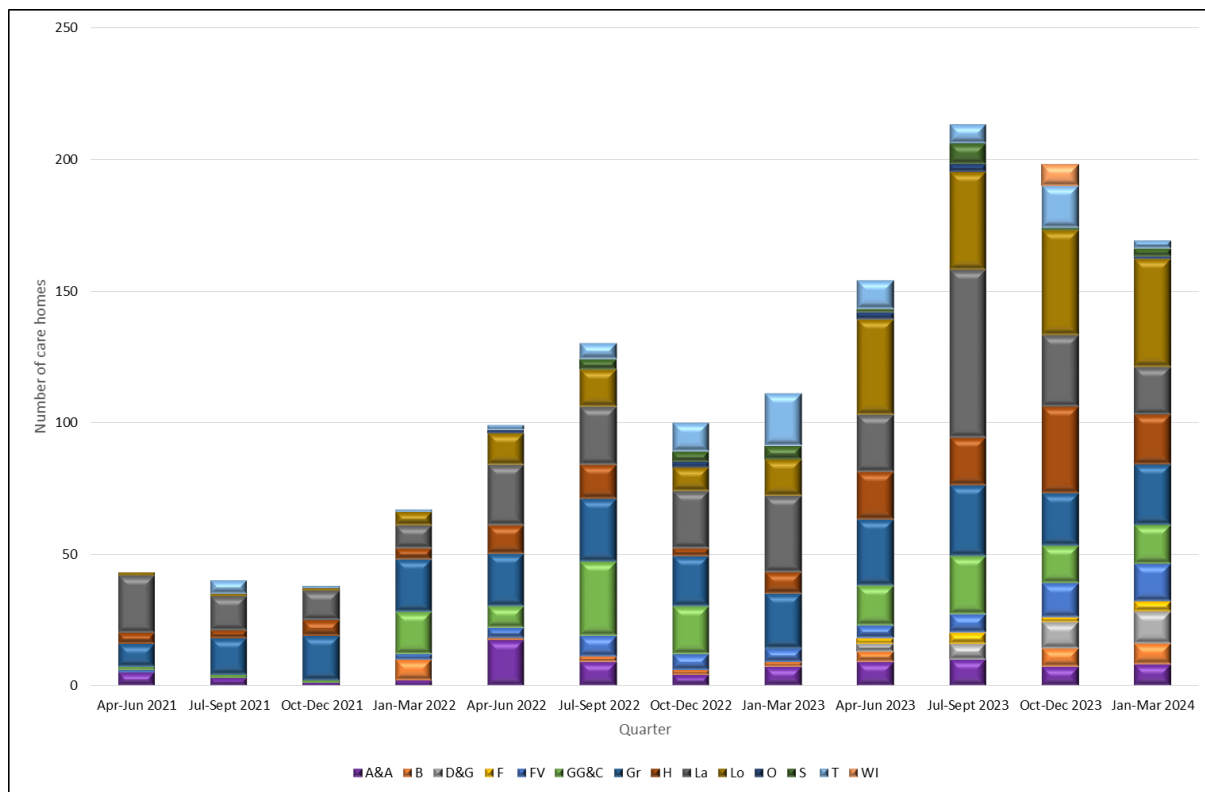
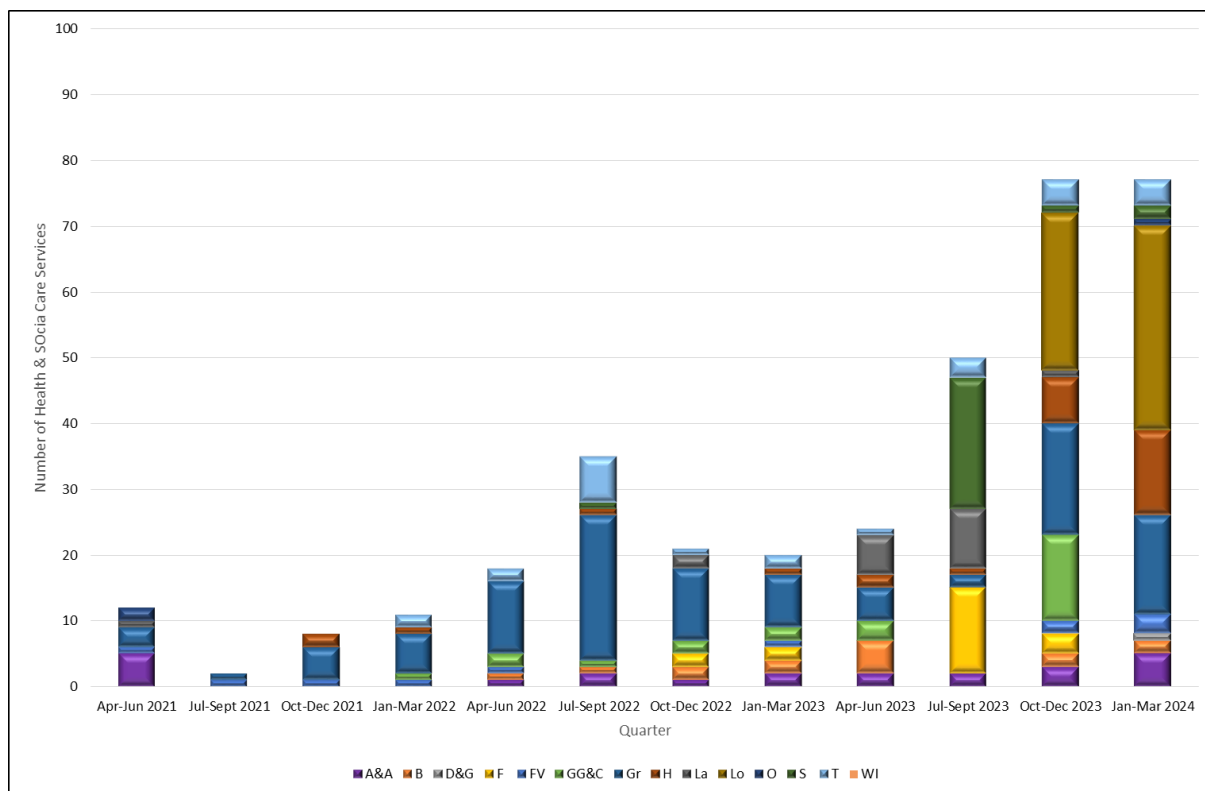


Figure 2.7: Number of 'other' health & social care services participating per quarter, Health Board, Apr 2021 – Mar 2024



3. Non-accredited and Accredited Training

Prior to 2020, the programme reported on the training split by non-accredited training and accredited training but this was suspended during the pandemic due to lower training numbers. From April 2023, we have returned to asking Oral Health Improvement Teams to report data by each type of training.

3.1 Non-accredited Training

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present the data on the number of care homes and 'other' health & social care services taking part in non-accredited training, Scotland-wide. Non-accredited training is a large factor within the Caring for Smiles programme, and is one of the many ways that staff can be trained in oral care. Care homes and 'other' health & social care services can participate in more than one quarter.

Figure 3.1: Number of care homes participating per quarter in non-accredited training, Apr 2023 – Mar 2024

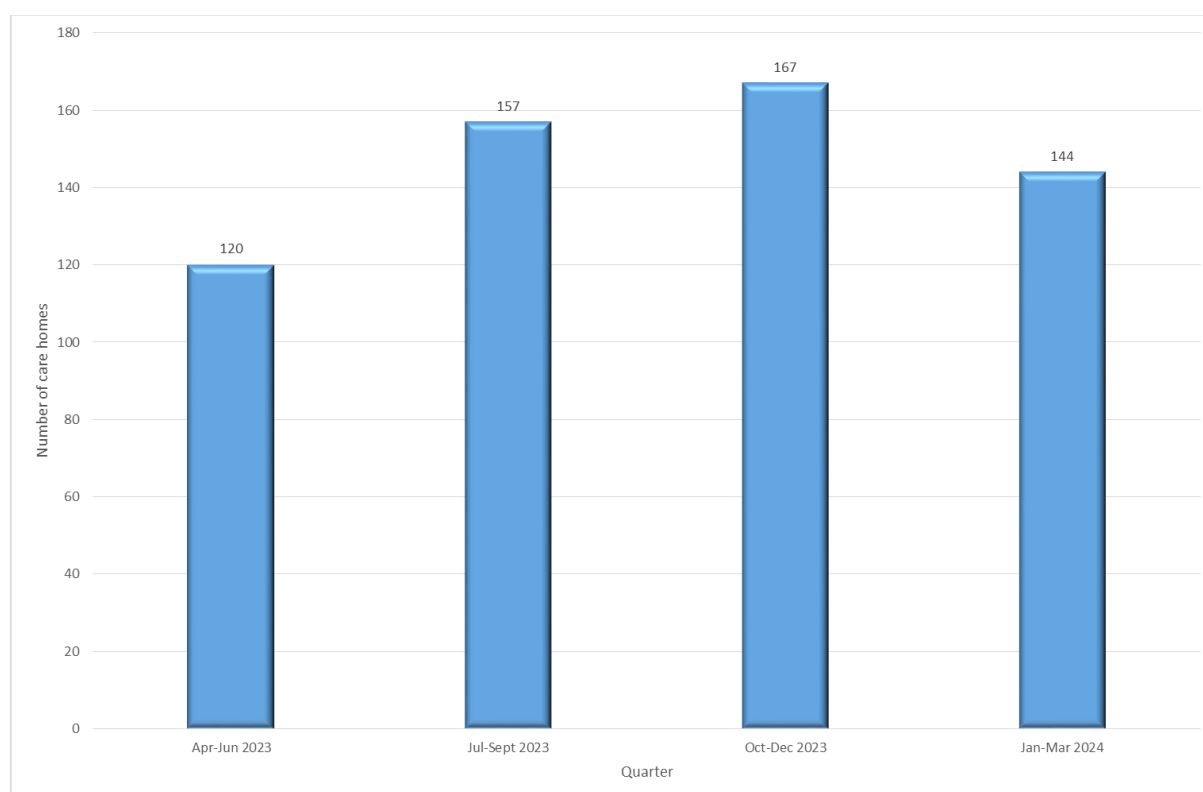
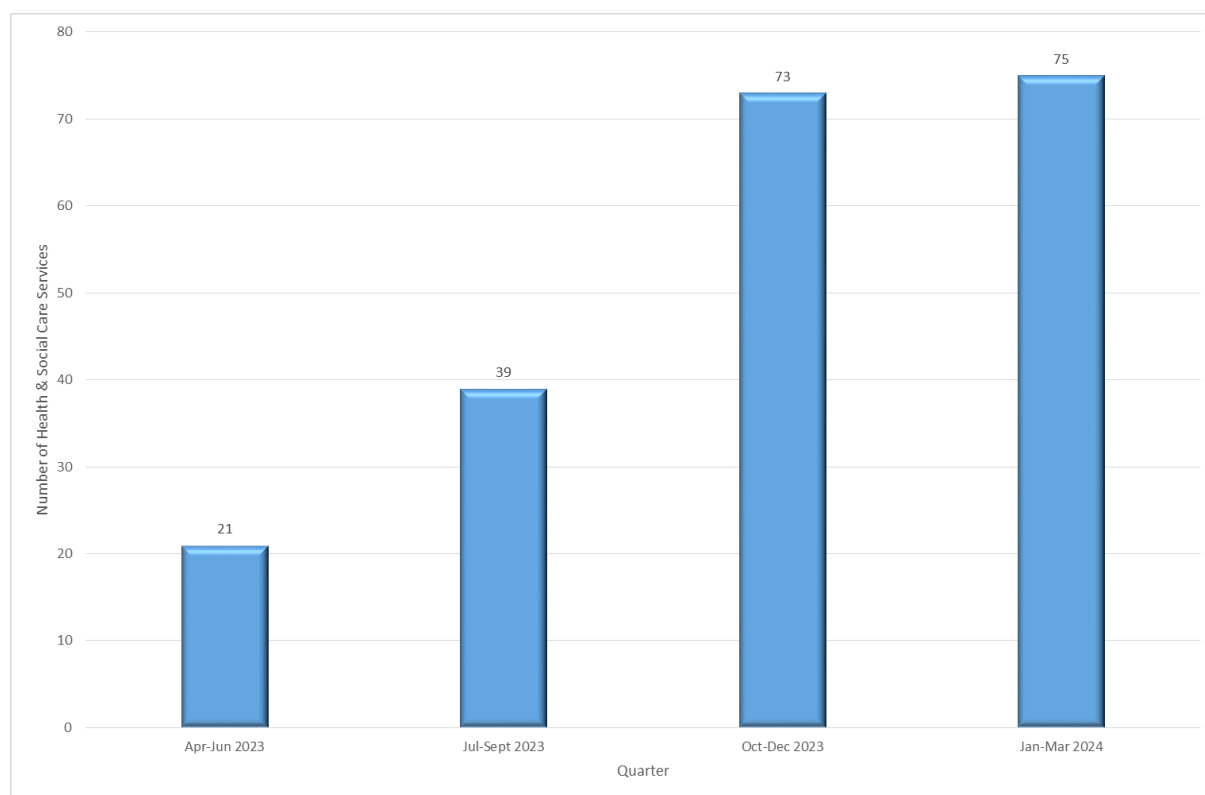


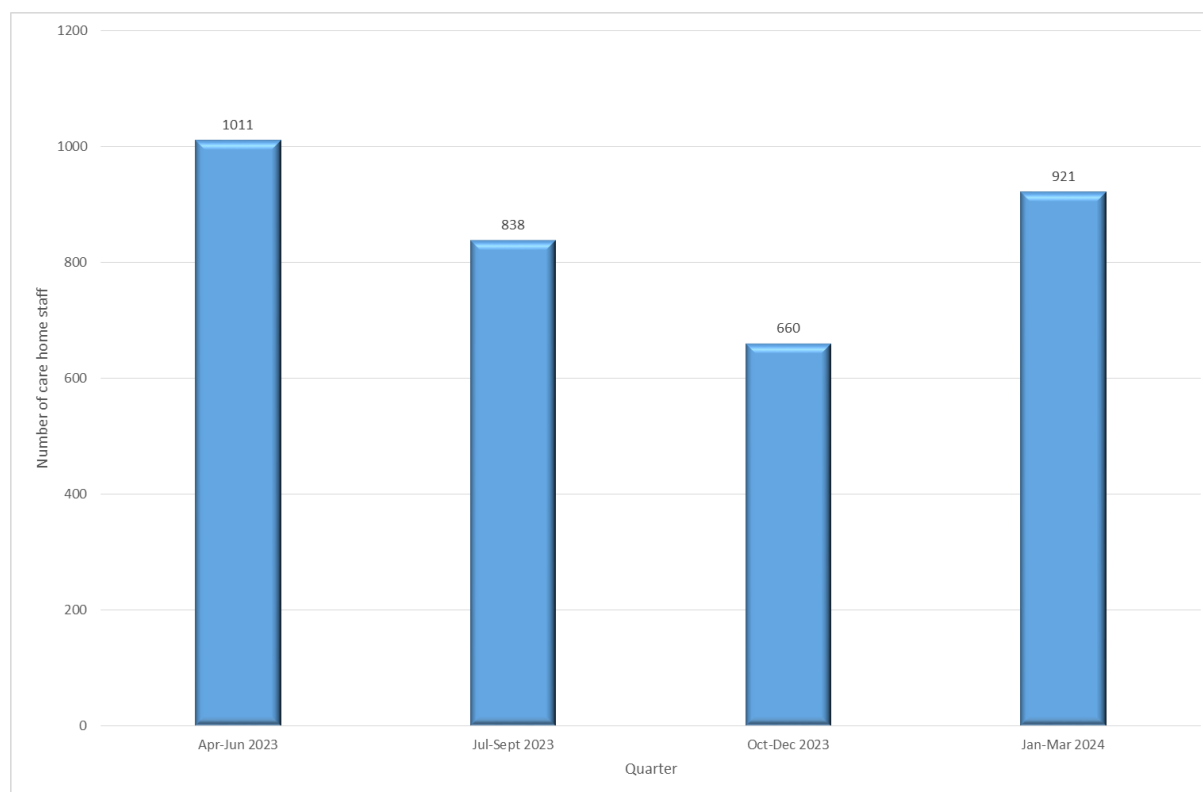
Figure 3.2: Number of 'other' health & social care services participating in non-accredited training, per quarter, Scotland, Apr 2023 – Mar 2024



Figures 3.3 and 3.4 present the data for care and 'other' health & social care services participating in non-accredited training, at Health Board level.

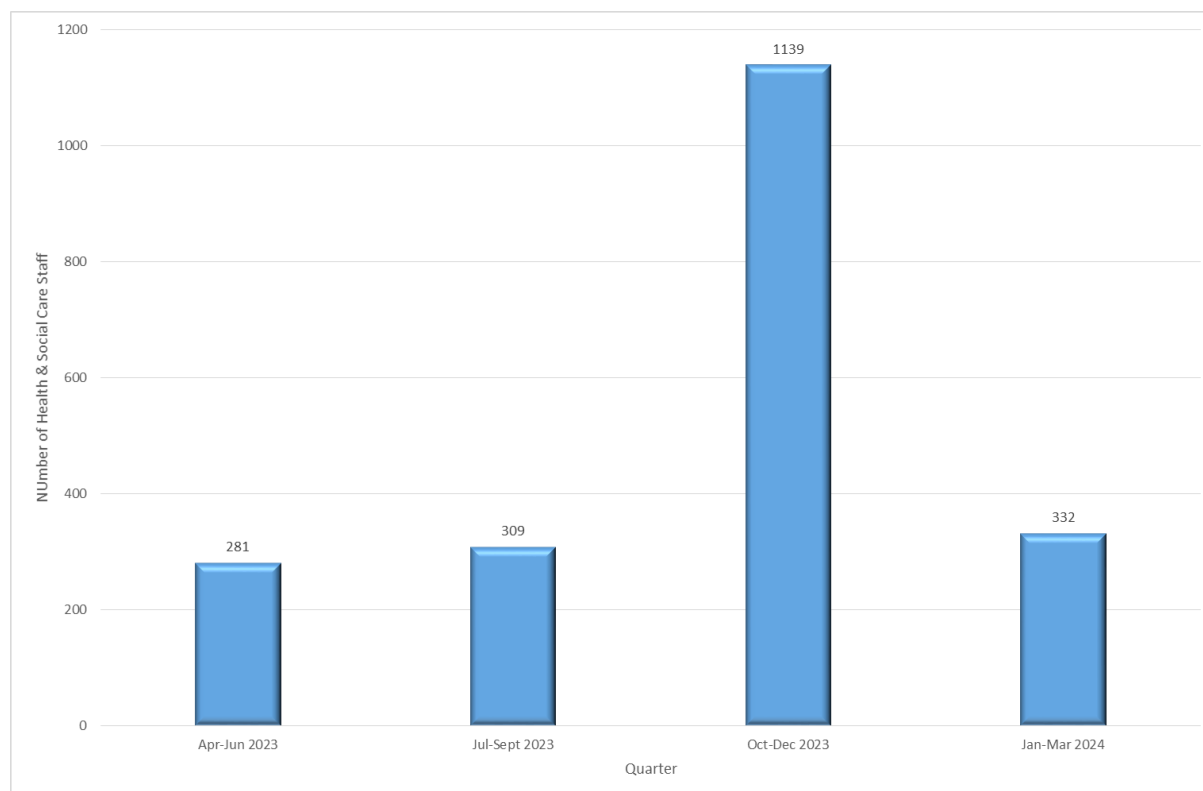
Figures 3.5 and 3.6 present the number of care home and 'other' health & social care staff completing non-accredited training between April 2023 and March 2024, Scotland-wide.

Figure 3.5: Number of care home staff participating per quarter in non-accredited training, Scotland, Apr 2023 – Mar 2024¹



¹ In some cases, staff may begin accredited training and subsequently decide not to complete this. Those staff are then counted within the non-accredited figures so that they are recorded in participation data.

Figure 3.6: Number of ‘other’ health & social care staff participating in non-accredited training, per quarter, Scotland, Apr 2023 – Mar 2024



Figures 3.7 and 3.8 present the number of care home and “other” health & social care staff completing non-accredited training between April 2023 and March 2024, at Health Board level.

3.3 Accredited Training

Accredited training involves a training session (either in-person or online), a multiple choice questionnaire, 10 reflective accounts and a final direct observation of practice. As is shown in the data, accredited is improving in the number of staff completing it, but uptake is not the same as non-accredited training.

Figures 3.9 and 3.10 present the participating care homes and 'other' health & social care services in accredited training.

Figure 3.9: Number of care homes participating in accredited training, per quarter, Scotland, Apr 2023 – Mar 2024

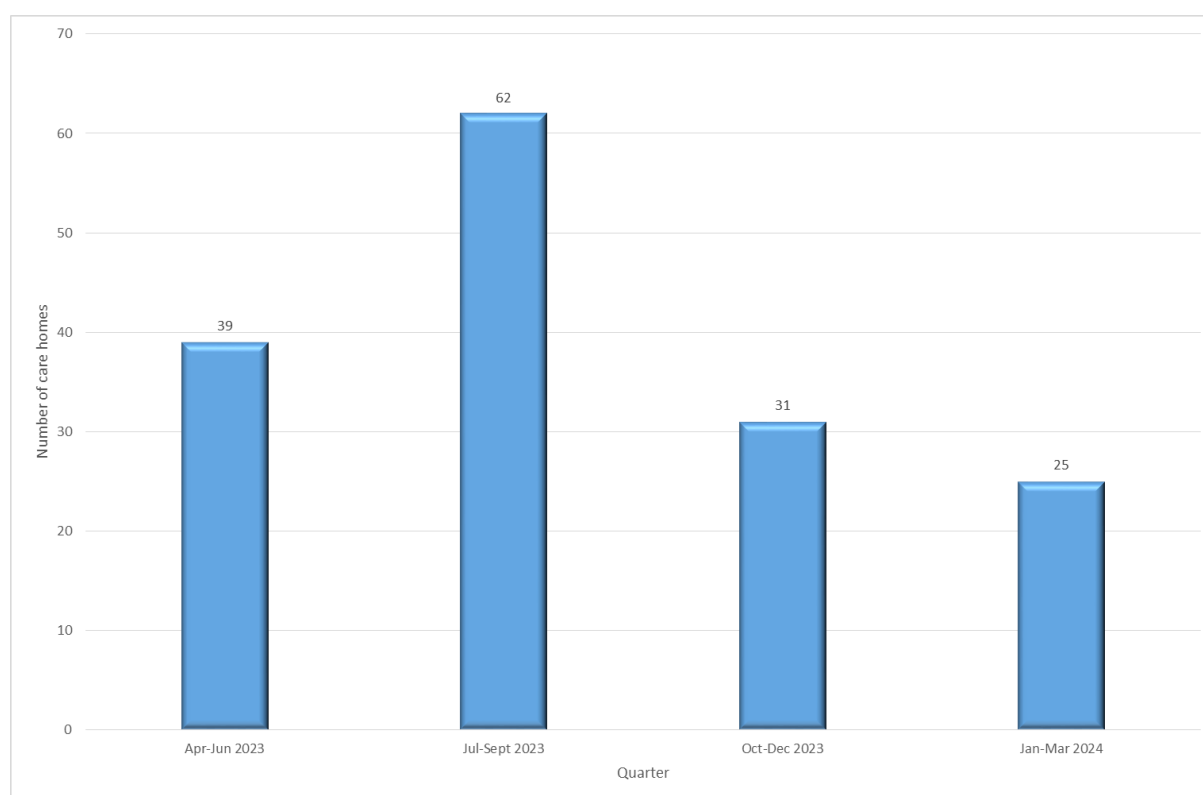
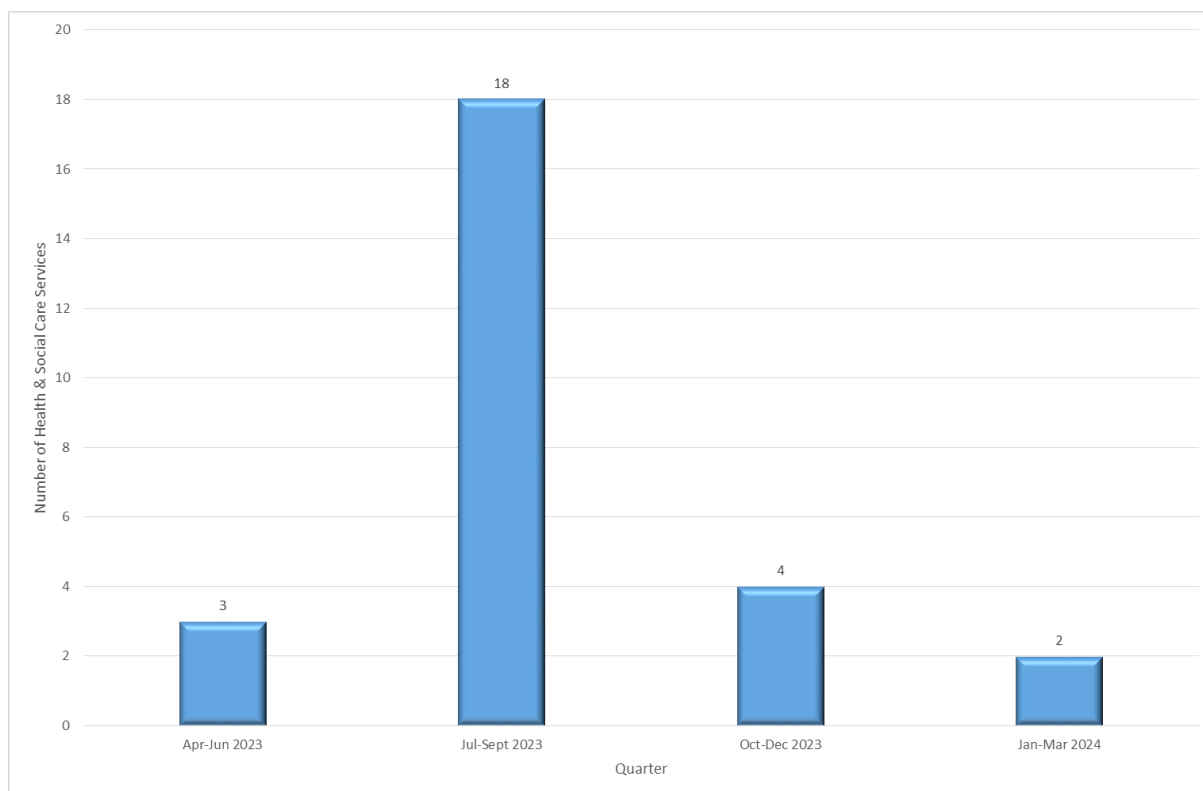


Figure 3.10: Number of 'other' health & social care services participating in accredited training, per quarter, Scotland, Apr 2023 Mar 2024



Figures 3.11 and 3.12 present the participating care homes and health & social care services by Health Board, April 2023 to March 2024.

Figures 3.13 and 3.14 present the number of care home and ‘other’ health & social care staff completing accredited training between April 2023 and March 2024, Scotland-wide.

Figure 3.13: Number of care home staff participating per quarter in accredited training, Scotland, Apr 2023 – Mar 2024

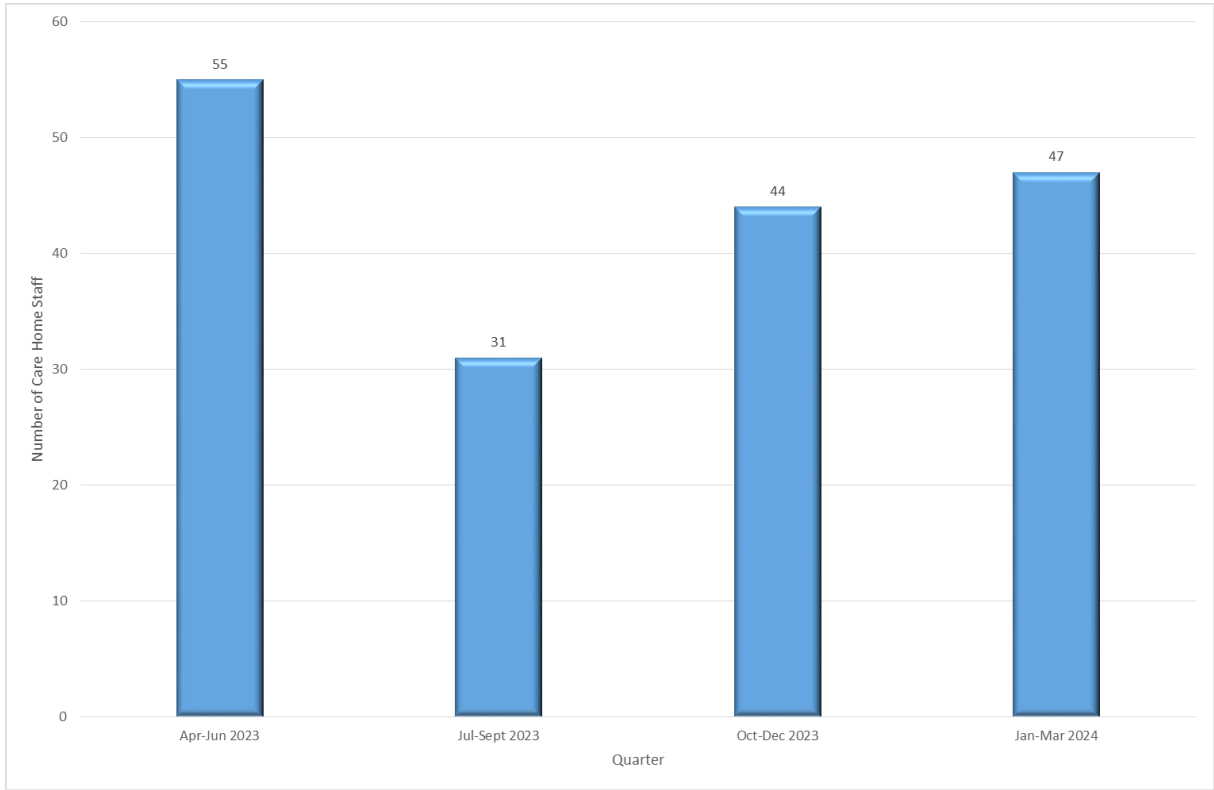
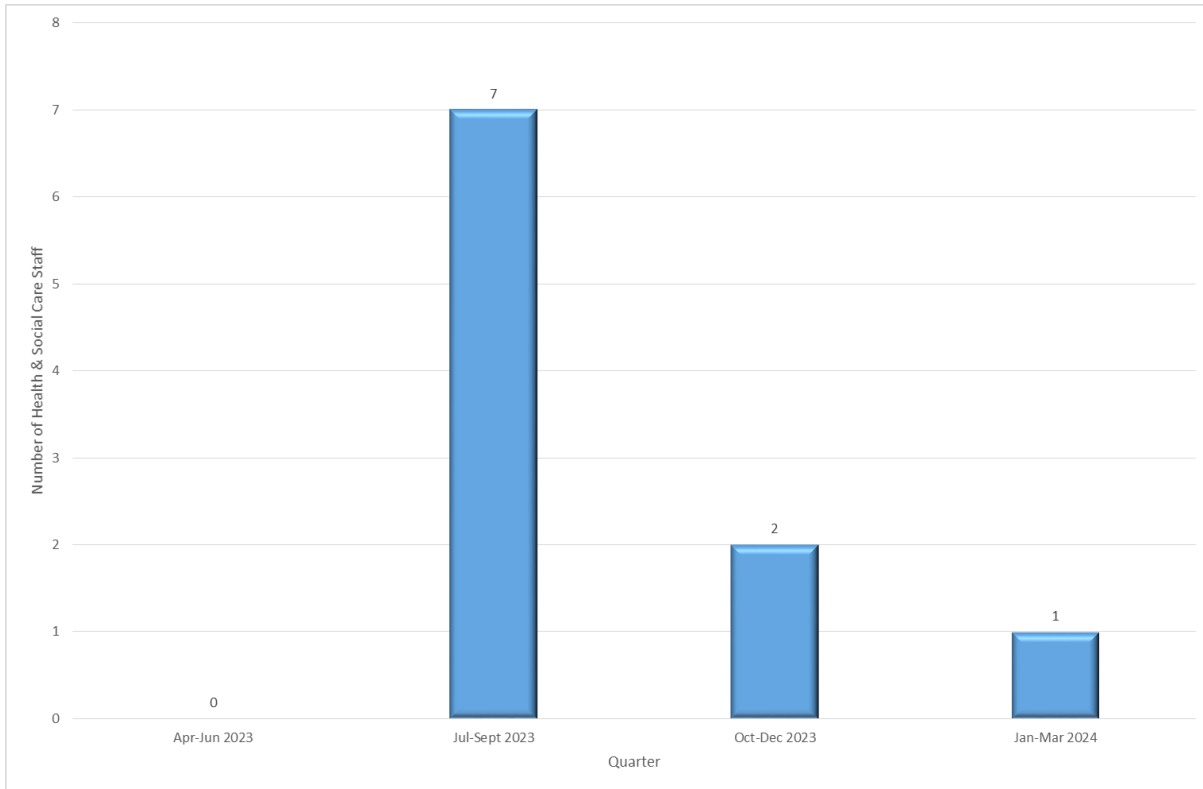


Figure 3.14: Number of 'other' health & social care staff participating in accredited training, per quarter, Scotland, Apr 2023 – Mar 2024



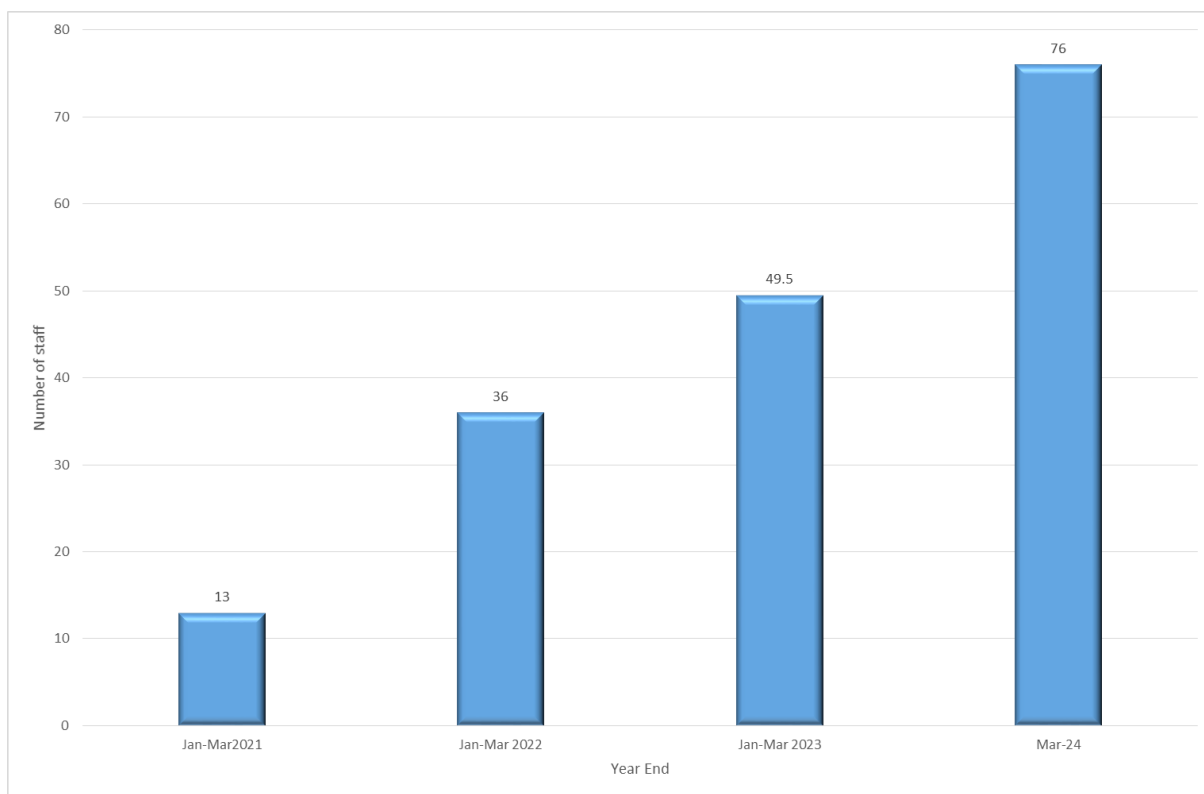
Figures 3.15 and 3.16 present the participating care home staff and health & social care staff by Health Board, April 2023 to March 2024.

4. Caring for Smiles staffing

Oral Health Improvement teams were shown to have reduced over the period of the pandemic. To analyse the data on the staff available in teams to deliver the programme, we have continued to collect some information on this. For this current year, data were requested for March 2024. Over the period of the pandemic, the data were collected quarterly, so to demonstrate changes over time, the data taken from the last quarter of each financial year are shown in the graph. As the data are a snapshot in time, these will indicate the staffing for the programme but should not be taken as current staffing levels as these can fluctuate throughout the year for many reasons.

Figure 4.1 will show the staff available for the programme over the years 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024.

Figure 4.1: Caring for Smiles total staff, Scotland-wide, Apr 2021 – Mar 2024



5. 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. These provided a form of training in the time of the pandemic, which could be

accessed online, 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 during the pandemic.

By March 2024, 130 learners completed the Open Badges, with 62 awards for the Care Home Open Badge and 68 awards for the Care at Home Open Badge.

6. National projects

Although training by local teams is an important part of Caring for Smiles, national strategic development of the programme is also needed to expand its reach and embed it in wider initiatives. Working with partners has been vital to raise the profile of the programme, and more importantly, the wider benefits of good oral health to dependent older people. We will continue to do this in forthcoming years, to ensure that the significance of good oral health is recognised by others.

6.1 Website

Nationally we have worked with National Services Scotland to create Caring for Smiles webpages on the new Scottish Dental website. The pages contain information about the programme, training, information for older people, and resources. Over time these pages will be developed to include more information about the programme which is relevant to the public and professionals alike. To do this, the programme is establishing a website group with staff from the Oral Health Improvement Teams considering the further development of the pages.

<https://www.scottishdental.nhs.scot/oral-health-improvement/caring-for-smiles/>

6.2 Dementia Post Diagnostic Service

Everyone in Scotland is offered a year of Post Diagnostic Support following a diagnosis of dementia. In this time, it would be of benefit to emphasise the need for dental treatment to be up-to-date and allow for forward treatment planning. Potential problems could be dealt with at a time when the patient is better able to cope with this, before issues with cognitive decline, capacity and consent arise might arise. We are working with Healthcare Improvement Scotland on the refresh of the Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) to help ensure the importance of appropriate dental care is emphasised.

Additionally, the programme has linked with Alzheimer Scotland to update the current information held on oral health after a diagnosis of dementia and is also working with Post Diagnostic Support staff to increase their awareness of oral health.

6.3 REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture)

We have worked with Public Health Scotland to find a new and improved way of collecting data for the programme. The REDCap system provides a way of collecting and holding data for the purposes of reporting. This has led to a more streamlined way of collecting data. For the Oral Health Improvement Teams, it is still a survey that is completed every quarter and annually for reporting purposes. Caring for Smiles piloted the system in 2023-2024 prior to it being in use for all the other adult oral health improvement programmes in 2024-2025.

6.4 Right Decision Service

The programme had the opportunity to work with Healthcare Improvement Scotland on the Right Decision Service to add an oral section to the website and app. The oral health section is for care home and care at home staff. It includes the oral health risk assessment, care plan, which can be completed in the app, and daily oral care record, which can be downloaded for completion. As part of the development process, the app was piloted with a small number of care homes and care at home services.

6.5 Input into the work by other national organisations

We had the opportunity to input into the update of the Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines. It was also highlighted in the guidelines that oral swabs with foam heads should not be used - a message that the Caring for Smiles programme has been promoting for many years. We have been working with partners to identify suitable alternatives. The section for mouth care is on the link below.

<https://rightdecisions.scot.nhs.uk/scottish-palliative-care-guidelines/symptom-control/>

We also responded to the Healthcare Improvement Scotland consultation for the Ageing and Frailty Standards. The importance of oral care was included in the standards, which can be accessed at the link below.

<https://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Ageing-and-Frailty-Standards-November-2024.pdf>

6.6 Collaborative working with other adult oral health improvement programmes

The adult oral health improvement programmes have been working together increasingly over this period. REDCap mentioned above is one of these pieces of work. Caring for Smiles has been sharing its learning in terms of data and logic modelling, amongst other areas. As resources come for review, Caring for Smiles, with the other adult oral health programmes, consider if the resource would be applicable to more than one programme. When this is the case, wording is changed to accommodate that as it the name of the resource. Public Health Scotland has also established meetings where all the oral health improvement programmes come together, which gives a forum to share information and ideas.

7. Conclusion

Having a clean and healthy mouth is a fundamental human right and crucial for a person's quality of life. The programme has maintained and increased its activity following recovery to pre-pandemic levels and is continuing to provide support to staff in care homes and 'other' health & social care organisations. In the year April 2023 to March 2024, 1,168 training sessions were delivered, with 5,977 staff attending those sessions, whilst, over the period of this report (April 2021 to March 2024) 2,563 training sessions were delivered with 11,976 staff attending those sessions. These figures show the significant reach of the programme into health and social care settings. We will consolidate this in the coming year, as we continue in our efforts to highlight the importance of good oral health for dependent older people.

Contact

Dr Maura Edwards

Consultant in Dental Public Health

maura.edwards3@phs.scot

Dr Leigh Deas

Caring for Smiles Programme Manager

Leigh.deas@appct.scot.nhs.uk