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“Polish dentists to ease shortfall

Twenty Polish dentists are set to take up NHS positions in Devon and Cornwall.

Health Secretary John Reid made the announcement on Tuesday while on a fact finding mission in the South West.

He is visiting NHS and social care services across the region with his ministerial team to see how services are delivered in a mainly rural area.

Dr Reid said: "I know that getting to see a dentist is a particular concern in the region, so this should help to ease that."

During his first stop at the Beacon Centre, in Falmouth, he added: "It'll make a world of difference because the worst thing in the world is to have toothache if you can't find a dentist."

He said waiting times for CT scans had also been cut from 18 months to four to five weeks thanks to the provision of new scanners.

Wage levels

"All of these are symbols of a NHS that is making huge progress," he said.

The Health Secretary's visit comes one day after a report was leaked, claiming the region's health service could lose out on £100m funding.

The report by the South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority says planned changes in the government's NHS funding formula means Devon and Cornwall will miss out on £102.3m.

It claims the biggest losers will be the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust, which will be paid £20m less.

It says the formula works on the basis of wage levels which are lower in Devon and Cornwall than the national average.

Health trusts in the region say they are worried about the formula and it is expected senior managers will question Dr Reid over the leaked proposals during his visit to the region today."