

BSPD issues oral health guide to support parents and carers of autistic children

The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) has developed a leaflet providing oral health advice for parents and carers of autistic children and young people (CYP). Written in consultation with autism experts and parents of autistic CYP, this leaflet provides up to date support for those caring for neurodivergent children or those with additional sensory needs.

Covering topics which include 'Is my autistic child more likely to get dental decay?', how to 'Get off to the best start' and 'Your child's first check-up', the guide provides confidence-building advice, as well as practical tips and links to further reading and resources.

The Society wants to reach and support every individual and professional for whom

meeting the oral health needs of an autistic CYP is an important part of their personal or professional life. The Society hopes that this advice will help support families with an autistic child to enable them to achieve healthy teeth and gums for life, ultimately giving them the smile they deserve. For a parent or carer of an autistic child or young person, it may feel daunting to take them to the dentist for the first time.

Dr Shannu Bhatia, BSPD President said: 'BSPD hopes that this new advice leaflet will provide both confidence and valuable support to those caring for an autistic child, since we all want to ensure that every child has the opportunity to have a healthy smile for life.'

To access the guide, visit <https://bit.ly/3THY7cG>.



Dentists greet deadline for reform



The British Dental Association has greeted clarity from the Department of Health that fundamental reform will take place before the next election.

In response to questions from the Health and Social Care Committee Minister for Care Stephen Kinnock said 'we are absolutely clear we need to fix this before the end of this Parliament... Fundamental contract reform has to happen within this Parliament.'

Echoing comments made by Wes Streeting in January that NHS dentistry was at 'death's door', the Minister acknowledged the need for urgency, stating the service was 'on a burning platform.'

The 10 Year Health Plan for England had spelled out that 'by 2035, the NHS dental system will be transformed.' The BDA had warned this risked being too late a date to save the struggling service.

Changes put out to consultation by government have been characterised by the BDA as positive interim measures, but not the systemic change required to restore access to care or provide the service with a sustainable future.

Minister Kinnock stated that the process for fundamental reform would commence once the allocations from the Comprehensive Spending Review are made, by the end of summer at the very latest.

Shiv Pabary, Chair of the British Dental Association's General Dental Practice Committee said: 'Today the Government set out what's been missing to date: a deadline to save NHS dentistry. But there's still no evidence the resources will be brought to bear to restore care to millions.'

'NHS dentistry remains at death's door. We are ready to work at pace with Ministers to ensure the reform and funding are in place to give this service a future.'

Collection in focus: Dental Tourism

Dental tourism is a hot topic, and with more patients forecast to head overseas for treatment – not to mention countries providing treatment forecasting huge increases in revenue based on the sector – we canvas the profession to find out what it thinks of dental tourism.

The new collection includes articles from the first themed issue on the topic from *BDJ In Practice* and can be found at <https://www.nature.com/collections/daeccbceca>.

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