

## BSPD President demands end to unethical age-profiling dental X-rays

The President of the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD), Professor Paula Waterhouse calls for an end to the unethical practice of taking dental X-rays for asylum seekers in an attempt to verify age. BSPD is speaking out following the news this week that the Home Office will be using teeth and bone X-rays to verify the age of asylum seekers arriving in the UK.

BSPD has learnt that the Home Office's new legislation (see note to editors) that they have now approved for practice, came into force on 10<sup>th</sup> January. The details outline the use of what the Home Office calls scientific methods to be used to assess the age of asylum seekers to the UK using radiographs of molars, hands and wrists, as well as MRI scans of thigh bones and collarbones. Failure to comply can incur penalties.

**Professor Paula Waterhouse, BSPD President** said: *"Age profiling using dental X-rays has absolutely no evidence base whatsoever. This wholly inaccurate approach to assessing the age of those seeking asylum in this country is morally wrong, because it means that vulnerable children will be exposed to unnecessary radiation without any clinical benefit."*

*"We have been through this debate on numerous occasions and believed that it had been shelved for good. Frustratingly, it appears this is not the case. The discussion around using X-rays for age profiling asylum seekers has been debated for nearly two decades. Our members will not be taking X-rays unless they are clinically justified."*

*"BSPD calls on the Government to stop this immoral and unethical practice once and for all."*

Ends

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### Notes to editors:

Discover more on the Home Office announcement: [HERE](#)

Discover more on the history of campaigning against X-rays for age profiling [HERE](#)

### About BSPD

- The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) has an established place in the dental profession thanks to the dedication of dentists stretching back over 70 years. BSPD's mission is to improve the oral health of children and young people. The Society's executive committee provides strategic direction in line with our 3-year plan and oversees our engagement with other special interest groups and political decision makers. BSPD is now in a strong position to campaign for and implement improvements in children's oral health in the UK.
- BSPD membership has grown steadily over the last few years with a broadened profile. Anyone in the dental profession with an interest in children's oral health is welcome to join the Society. There are full and associate membership categories which encompass our growing groups of members. These include dentists, dental care professionals (DCPs), dental and DCP students, international members and all members of the dental team. We are clear that you do not need to have a dental qualification to be a member of BSPD, just a genuine passion for children's dentistry. Discover more at <https://www.bspd.co.uk>