

NHS reforms set to deliver on BSPD's key campaigning aims

Leaked news of the government's plans to reform the NHS has been welcomed by BSPD which believes that joined-up care in the interests of children is now on the horizon. Claire Stevens, BSPD's spokesperson, says the proposed legislation set out in the leaked White Paper has the potential to make a significant difference to children's oral health.

"There are three reforms which are most relevant to paediatric dentistry - reducing barriers to community water fluoridation, a reduction in advertising of high sugar products and an emphasis on joined up care."

Claire said: " BSPD supports water fluoridation as a highly effective measure for preventing dental disease. Only 10% of the UK has access to fluoridated water yet this public health measure can reduce general anaesthetics for the extractions of decayed teeth in young children by as much as 68% in the most deprived areas.

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"For some time BSPD has been pressing for improved food labelling and for a restriction on the advertising of products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS). According to the plans, the government will proceed with both, which we welcome."

Claire continued: "Once enacted, the proposed new legislation should ensure that dental leaders are working collaboratively with medical, public health and commissioning teams to make decisions about health provision in the best interests of their local population."

Nationally, Claire is already briefing medical leads on dental issues. “They are beginning to understand that good oral health is critical to the overall health and wellbeing of young patients. Paediatric dentistry is recognised as a national priority and this will allow us to work with the developing Integrated Care Systems to reduce the unacceptably long waiting times for dental treatment under general anaesthesia.

“A perfect example of greater integration would be that services recognise the links between obesity and caries and collaborate so children who are at risk of both get the care and support they need. This is already happening in some places but needs to be developed.”

She added: “There is a long way to go but I have genuine hope that we are on the cusp of significant and positive change.”

BSPD’s position statements on water fluoridation and dental caries and obesity can be found here.

<https://www.bspd.co.uk/Professionals/Resources/Position-Statements>

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