

Press release

2nd September 2024

BSPD's incoming President, Dr Shannu Bhatia

looks to future-proof the paediatric dentistry workforce

This September, BSPD's Annual Scientific Conference heads to Cardiff where the Society will welcome President-Elect, Dr Shannu Bhatia, Cardiff University's Clinical Reader and Honorary Consultant in Paediatric Dentistry. Dr Bhatia will be taking over as BSPD President from Professor Paula Waterhouse during the conference, which this year has the theme of ***"The Right Care, at the Right Time"***.

Cardiff is Dr Bhatia's home-city and as BSPD members convene in the Centre for Student Life at Cardiff University from 12th to 13th September, we will hear from our new President about her research focus shaping the future of our profession through nurturing dentistry talent.

The profession is familiar with the concept of delivering the right care at the right time - making sure patients are guided down the most appropriate clinical pathway to ensure they receive the right intervention, in a timely manner and ideally near to their home. However, for Dr Bhatia this conference strapline has a 'double-entendre'. Timely, appropriate patient care is of course, fundamental - however she is also striving to show the importance of ensuring the mental and physical well-being of dentistry students, trainees and staff – and that this in the long-term supports the delivery of high-quality patient care.

Having faced some personal challenges during her own career, Dr Bhatia now focuses on supporting and encouraging dental students - who will become tomorrow's workforce. She believes this is integral to securing the long-term future of the profession.

Dr Bhatia grew up in India and having graduated from Maulana Aza Medical College (MAMC) in Delhi university she completed her postgraduate training at Calcutta University. A significant challenge came as she transitioned to the UK to follow her husband to Swansea while they both pursued their early careers as junior doctors in oral and maxillofacial surgery. Shannu credits this period in her life, where she might only see her husband passing in the corridor on ward rounds, as developing the resilience that has helped her appreciate the proportionate relationship between hard work and reward.

Dr Bhatia found her real calling in paediatric dentistry as a house officer in Edinburgh and then worked at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. By this time her resolve was strengthened to specialise in paediatric dentistry, so she undertook specialist training programmes at the Eastman Dental Hospital UCLH and Cardiff University Dental Hospital to become a consultant in Paediatric dentistry.

Dr Shannu Bhatia, President-Elect, BSPD said: *"I care passionately about our profession. So, for me 'The Right Care, at the Right Time' is as much about nurturing the well-being of the dental workforce, as it is delivering for our patients. At the heart of what we do is people. Working with people - our patients, our students and our staff.*

"As paediatric dentists, we hold a unique and profound role in shaping the oral health and wellbeing of the youngest members of our society. Our work is not merely treating teeth; it is about nurturing smiles, fostering confidence, and laying the foundation for a lifetime of good oral health. This philosophy aligns with the ethos of BSPD – and will be a focus during my Presidential year. I am incredibly excited, honoured and humbled to be incoming President for BSPD 2024/5."

Note to editors:

About Dr Bhatia: Dr Shannu Bhatia is Clinical Reader and Honorary Consultant in Paediatric Dentistry at Cardiff University. She is the academic lead for Paediatric dentistry. As the Director of Staff and Student Matters over the last few years she has established pathways for supporting staff and students and for the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace, including establishing an international Community of Practice for Wellbeing and launching a voluntary oral health promotion programme called 'Talking teeth' to engage with local communities and for widening participation. Over the last 12 years as a clinician and an educator she has been actively involved in clinical care and also in teaching and learning - supporting and inspiring her team and the community.

- Read more about [Dr Shannu Bhatia](#)
- Discover more about BSPD's Annual Scientific Conference 2024 here: [BSPD Annual Scientific Conference 2024 Cardiff](#)

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 3year 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>



Dr Shannu Bhatia, President 2024/5, BSPD
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