



British Society of  
Paediatric Dentistry

Improving children's oral health

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## **In praise of dental nurses**

It's International Nurses' Day today and the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry is taking the opportunity to celebrate this important group of dental care professionals.

In normal times, dental nurses are essential to patient care and to the organised running of clinics. In the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, many dental nurses around the country have been redeployed, showcasing their transferable skills.

Claire Stevens, BSPD's spokesperson, said that she is extremely proud of dental nurse colleagues who have been redeployed. One of them is her colleague Jo Wrigley who works in the Paediatric Department at Manchester Dental Hospital. In March, Jo was told that she would be transferred to work with the Family Liaison Team at the Royal Manchester Infirmary.

With colleagues from the Manchester Dental Hospital, she has been an essential interface between terminally ill patients and their families. Donned up in protective wear and armed with an iPad, she has enabled sick patients to communicate with relatives, sometimes supporting them to say their farewells.

Empathy, calmness, and a commitment to making a difference are essential qualities for dental nurses being redeployed. Another dental nurse who has excelled is Amanda Hunter who is usually based in the Paediatric Dental Department at King's College Hospital. She and colleague Paige Holdaway, are now working in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit, also helping with some of the sickest patients with Covid-19.

One of her roles is to turn patients who are on ventilators who must not lie in the same position for more than four hours. She is also taking bloods, running monitoring for blood pressure, oxygen saturation and carbon dioxide output, fetching drugs, washing patients and making beds.

Liz Roebuck is a Consultant in Paediatric Dentistry at Edinburgh Dental Institute and a former President of BSPD and has seen the difference some of her team members have been making to medical services in Scotland.

Lesley Allan and Nicola Vale have both been redeployed to work at a Covid-19 Assessment Centre based at St John's Hospital in Livingston. All the patients who come into the hospital have been told they should see a doctor and Lesley and Nicola both help with giving patients safe access, and monitoring vital signs.

Dr Roebuck said: "Within dentistry, we know the crucial role of dental nurses in delivering effective patient care. A small, but important, benefit of the last two months has been the growing appreciation of their skills, expertise and professionalism across healthcare as a whole. Nurses Day 2020 has special meaning for all of us who are missing our dental nurse colleagues. There will be many emotional reunions as our teams regroup.

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/nurses-day>