

Platitudes and half-truths on NHS dentistry – but no action

The British Dental Association has lamented the wholesale lack of clarity from Government over plans to save NHS dentistry.

In the Opposition Day Debate on 9 January, the Government restated its ambition to provide access for all but offered no clarity on how to achieve that goal.

Ministers even attempted to sidestep the collapse in NHS dentist numbers since lockdown by comparing contemporary figures to those seen in 2010/11.

A Recovery Plan pledged last Spring remains

undelivered, and the Government has rejected the key recommendation from the Health and Social Care Committee – to make a clean break from the discredited contract fuelling the exodus from the workforce.

The Nuffield Trust warned last month the service faces the gravest crisis in its 75-year history, and universal access to care may be dead without radical reform and investment.

BDA Chair Eddie Crouch said: ‘When we needed clarity, the Government provided a full gamut of platitudes and half-truths. Ministers keep saying they want an NHS dentist for everyone. There is still no evidence of any plan to make that happen.’



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BFS opens applications for its Career Development Fellowship

The British Fluoridation Society (BFS), supported by The Borrow Foundation, is seeking to recruit a second candidate to its Career Development Fellowship.

Overall, £30,000 has been allocated for the provision of two British Fluoridation Society Career Development Fellowships. The first was awarded to principal dental surgeon Patrick Quinn in November 2023.

The BFS intends to appoint its second fellowship by March 2024 to start in June 2024, and is seeking applications from

dental professionals at the beginning of their career with an interest in water fluoridation.

Dr Ray Lowry, BFS secretary, explains: ‘This is an exciting career development opportunity for someone at the start of their professional career. Water fluoridation plays a significant role in preventing dental caries and securing good dental health for all.’

‘Despite its long history as a successful oral health intervention, only 10% of the UK population drinks fluoridated water,

and these people are benefitting from schemes that were introduced decades ago. Globally, more than four hundred million people have access to fluoridated water, and we are seeing an increase in political enthusiasm, including here in the UK, for more community water fluoridation schemes.’

‘Together with The Borrow Foundation, we have identified a need to bolster the professional foundation for fluoridation to keep research relevant, and to encourage our younger colleagues to pursue the issue as a viable career interest.’

‘Through our fellowship programme, we aim to help build a modern UK database of evidence and to encourage up and coming colleagues to engage in the subject. The BFS is the obvious organisation to initiate this sort of intervention as we work to support the next generation of fluoridation advocates.’

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to meet leaders in the field and work to develop a unique insight into water fluoridation and the issues surrounding it, using the fellowship funding and BFS international partnership networks.

The closing date for applications is 31 March, 2024. Applications and the information on the process is available at <https://bfsweb.org/career-development/>.



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