

## Police break up queues in Bristol at the sharp end of NHS access crisis

The British Dental Association has warned the Government that sticking plaster policies will not ease the crisis in NHS dentistry, following unprecedented scenes in Bristol last month as police attempted to disperse hundreds of people seeking NHS care.

Lines formed early this morning outside a former Bupa Dental Care site, now reopening as Saint Pauls Dental Practice. Videos posted on X show police attempting to turn away crowds. The Government has repeatedly stated its goal is to provide NHS dental care for all who need it. The BDA has not seen anything in trailed policies capable of meeting that objective.

Shawn Charlwood, Chair of the British Dental Association's General Dental Practice Committee said: 'Does the future of NHS dentistry involve the police turning away desperate patients? If Ministers think sticking plaster policies will solve this crisis, then these scenes will be repeated. Nothing short of fundamental reform can save this service and restore access to millions.'



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## 'No new adults': PM discovers what life is like at a typical dental practice

The British Dental Association has responded to news that Rishi Sunak inadvertently visited a practice unable to take on new adult NHS patients.

The Prime Minister met staff and patients at Gentle Dental in Newquay on Thursday 8 February. He said that 'it hasn't been easy enough for people to access NHS dentistry over the past couple of years' but claimed 'the announcements this week will make a significant difference, and quickly'.

'It's a very significant new investment in dentistry so that everyone can get the access that they need,' Mr Sunak said.

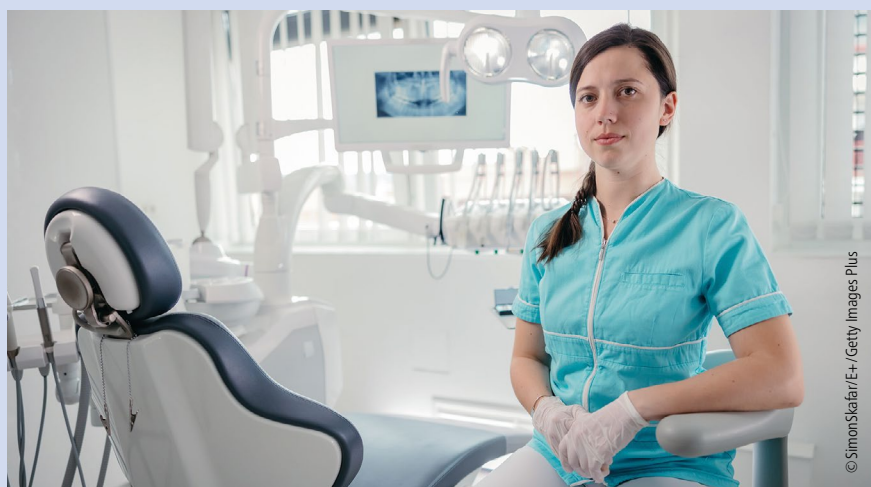
The BDA has slammed the wholesale misrepresentation of the money behind the plan. It remains unclear if the £200m is 'new' money, but either way it is less than half of the colossal underspends set to be lost from the service, from the struggling practices failing to hit their punitive targets. The dental budget has remained effectively

frozen since 2010, hovering around £3bn, translating into savage real-terms cuts of over £1bn.

The professional body described the Recovery Plan as 'unworthy of the title', stating nothing in it can meet the Government's stated objectives of providing NHS care to all who need it, or the PM's pledge to 'restore' NHS dentistry.

A recent BDA survey indicated 82% of dentists have treated patients who have attempted DIY dentistry since lockdown.

BDA Chair Eddie Crouch said: 'Rishi Sunak is seeing what life is like for millions across this country. The difference is he has options. The PM won't have to queue around the block to get an appointment. He won't face travelling hundreds of miles for care. He'll never find himself reaching for a set of pliers. The paucity of the Government's plan means many patients will keep facing these horrific choices.'



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## Dentists back disposable vapes ban

The British Dental Association has backed Government moves to ban disposable vapes, which have been widely criticised for being marketed to younger users.

The professional body acknowledges the use of smoking cessation aids, such as vapes, however remains concerned about the rise in their use among people who don't currently smoke, especially in children and young people.

Though there are current gaps in the science with respect to the use of vapes and their impact on oral health, recent academic studies raise concerns over oral dryness, irritation, and gingival diseases possibly caused by the use of vapes.

The BDA says among those trying to quit tobacco vapes should not be viewed as a 'silver bullet' and should be used as part of a smoking cessation package alongside other

interventions. BDA Health and Science Committee Chair Mick Armstrong said: 'A ban on disposable vapes that transparently target the young is the right choice at the right time.'

'The MPs bleating about attacks on personal liberty need to grasp that these products are only two decades old. We're still paying catch up on the science, but there is enough evidence for caution and common-sense restrictions.'