

BOS URGES DENTAL PROFESSION TO CHAMPION #KEEPBRITAINSMILING



L-R: Chris Baker, BOS Head of Communications; Karen Juggins, Founder of Keep Stoke Smiling; Anjali Patel, BOS Director of External Relations and Nikki Attack, BOS President

On the first day of the British Orthodontic Society's (BOS) annual conference in London in September, the Keep Britain Smiling campaign called out to dental professionals across England and Wales to become Keep Britain Smiling ambassadors by pledging their support to champion the campaign in their area.

Tooth decay continues to be the most common reason for hospital admissions for children aged six to ten, with a staggering 40,000 children admitted every year for dental extractions. The Keep Britain Smiling campaign, supported by BOS, helps to tackle the issue head-on by empowering children to take simple steps to improve their oral hygiene. Feedback to date on this groundbreaking campaign from children, parents and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive.

Keep Britain Smiling has already harnessed support from The English Football League and The Premier League Primary Stars who are using the power of football to connect with young children about the importance of good oral health.^{1,2}

The Premier League Charitable Fund offers a free resource called 'Taking care of our teeth'. It includes worksheets and online activities to boost the dental health habits of children aged 7–11, available to every primary school in England and Wales. It

encourages classroom-based discussions on the sugar levels in different food types, the effects that sugar can have on oral health and how to make healthy choices to keep teeth strong.

Premier League Head of Community and Football Policy, Nick Perchard said: 'Premier League Primary Stars uses the power of football to encourage children to talk about a wide range of issues in the classroom, supporting them to make healthy, positive life choices. This education resource, which includes full lesson plans and interactive content, is a great example of our ongoing work to support health and wellbeing.'

The national campaign builds on the success of Stoke City Community Trust's award-winning Keep Stoke Smiling project, which has used the appeal of football to deliver diet and dental health messaging to 11,000 primary school children in Staffordshire.^{3,4}

Speaking at the British Orthodontic Conference Dr Karen Juggins, consultant orthodontist and Founder of Keep Stoke Smiling, said: 'Never before has the need been more urgent to revolutionise the way dental health care messaging is delivered. I'm delighted that our campaign in Stoke is now spreading countrywide with Keep Britain Smiling which is supported by the British Orthodontic Society. We now want

to harness the power of collaboration and encourage dental communities to champion the campaign in their area.'

The Royal College of Surgeons have endorsed the campaign. Dr Charlotte Eckhardt, Dean of the Faculty of Dental Surgery at The Royal College of Surgeons of England, said: 'Keep Britain Smiling is simple and effective. It delivers clear messages like "spit, don't rinse" that empower children by encouraging positive oral health habits at a young age. I'm delighted to support Keep Britain Smiling and look forward to seeing it continue to go from strength to strength.'

If you would like to support Keep Britain Smiling and champion oral health among children in your area, please visit the campaign website to find out more and enter your details: <https://www.keepbritainSmiling.co.uk/>.

References

1. BOS joins forces with Premier League on oral health resource for schools. *Br Dent J* 2023; **234**: 856.
2. Baker C. We are Premier League! *BDJ Team* 2023; **10**: 6–7.
3. Four billboards outside Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire... *BDJ Team* 2019; **6**: 6.
4. Oral health campaign gains momentum. *Br Dent J* 2021; **230**: 276.