

CONFERENCE REPORT

National Conference on Socially Inclusive Dentistry 2016



On 17 November 2016, the first national conference on socially inclusive dentistry was held in Nottingham. The theme of the day was to focus the dental profession on developing dental care services for the socially excluded and marginalised members of our society by exploring the current barriers that may be preventing them from accessing care.

Keynote speakers included Dr Janet Clarke MBE, the Deputy Chief Dental Officer, who opened the day with her thoughts on the need for us to be flexible in our thinking and approach when exploring ways to reorientate services. Later, Stan Burrige discussed the innovative work of Pathway, a charity involved in improving healthcare for the homeless, and also gave a fascinating personal insight into the difficulties he faced whilst living on the streets. Of particular interest was the success of Pathway's 'Care Navigators': previously homeless people who have since undergone an NVQ level 2 apprenticeship to provide individualised support for other homeless patients, facilitating their journey through the healthcare system.

Throughout the day, delegates attended workshops led by a wide variety of subject experts. Through these workshops, delegates explored various social, economic and political barriers to accessing medical and social services, as well as the role of charities and the importance of research in this area. They debated their own ideas and solutions to making dental services more accessible to those who are marginalised, whether this be substance misusers, children in care, the traveller community, patients with disabilities or special care needs, immigrants, the elderly, or those from the lowest socio-economic groups.

With an ever-changing and ageing population, the type of dentistry we provide must be adaptable to meet this need, with increased emphasis on prevention. Furthermore, dental professionals need to ensure they utilise every opportunity and interaction with this cohort to improve general health outcomes, without focussing solely on dental health. The 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC) approach should be used to signpost people to other healthcare services as required, in order to improve integration and engagement over a sustained period of time.

Dr Janine Doughty and Mr Andrew Dickenson rounded off the conference by speaking about the importance of delegates' thoughts and opinions during the day, in having helped to generate ideas and possible solutions for the future. This was a truly inspiring and eye-opening conference that encouraged us to challenge our current system, and created awareness and enthusiasm for a more socially inclusive future for the profession.

By Sarah Baughan, DCT1 in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (pictured, left), and Louisa Rose, DCT2 in Paediatric Community Dental Public Health

Society news

British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

BAOMS has welcomed the launch of the Royal College of Surgeons of England's certification system for cosmetic surgery, which has been developed in consultation with BAOMS and other specialities in the field. Caroline Mills, BAOMS Surgical Specialty Interest Group Lead on Aesthetic/Cosmetic Surgery said that 'robust regulation for cosmetic surgery is vital to protect patients and will help them identify a highly trained surgeon.'

British Society of Paediatric Dentistry

Excessive sugar

The BSPD has welcomed the attention drawn by the Local Government Association to the unacceptably high number of decay-related extractions in children, as well as their call for Government to do more about excessive sugar consumption.

Spokesperson Claire Stevens said: 'I am one of the hospital-based paediatric dentists extracting children's teeth week in and week out, and the pressure is relentless. As soon as I have finished in theatre, another eight patients will have been added to our waiting list.'

'I can be taking out all the baby teeth of a child as young as two or three in one procedure; at another appointment I am providing dentures for teenagers. This is sad, especially when we know that dental decay is a disease which is almost entirely preventable.'

Oral health and quality of life

The BSPD has also welcomed the *State of Child Health report 2017* published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, which recognises the impact of poor oral health on a child's physical health and quality of life. The RCPCH report makes the point that the health of children in the UK has not improved at the same rate as in other wealthy countries and the stark inequalities in health have widened, and says that universal early years public health services need to be prioritised with targeted help for families experiencing poverty.

Guide for parents of children with autism

A new guide has been published by the BSPD in support of parents of children with autism. The guide covers all aspects of children's dental health from introducing the child to tooth brushing at home to preparing for dental appointments. <http://bit.ly/2jeHjq1>