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All NHS Dental Teams

15 June 2021

Dear NHS Dental Team

I wanted to write to all dental teams in Scotland to inform them that today 15 June we laid a legislative instrument in the Scottish Parliament to provide free at the point of use NHS dental care for young people, aged 18 to 25 inclusive.

You may be aware that this Government made an election pledge to abolish all NHS dental charges during the course of this Parliament. We also have a 100 Days Commitment to remove dental charges for young people that are care experienced. In laying this instrument it is the intention of the Government to widen the commitment to all young people.

Our rationale is that the oral health of young people often suffers as they move out of the family home, away from the supervision of parents for the first time. I am also particularly mindful of the disproportionate economic impact of the pandemic on our young people.

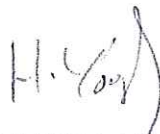
At the same time I fully appreciate the challenges that NHS dental teams continue to face during this period. The situation is particularly hard on the dental sector, with added infection, prevention and control measures making it impossible for dental teams to see the same numbers of patients as before the onset of the pandemic. I appreciate that all of you are having to work through a significant backlog of patients under these restrictions.

I am therefore taking a close interest in the welfare of our NHS dental service. We currently have in place a set of emergency financial support measures to mitigate the worst financial impact on NHS dental services during the pandemic. However, in a recent meeting with BDA Scotland I was impressed by the need for interim financial support, offering a more sustainable support base as we move forward with the remobilisation of NHS dental services. I can confirm that we are looking at this alongside the legislative changes, and will be discussing these arrangements with BDA Scotland during the summer. We have recently announced £5m of new funding to support improved ventilation in practice, as well as a 50% increase in free PPE to NHS dental teams.

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In summary, it is my intention to get NHS dental services back to normal service as quickly as possible. Our commitment as a Government is for patients to receive NHS dental care and treatment, and it is my intention to ensure that NHS dental services emerge from this pandemic well placed to care for the oral health of the population.



**HUMZA YOUSAF**

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