



Janet Finch-Saunders MS

janet.finch-saunders@senedd.wales

27th January 2025

Dear Janet,

I am writing in response to your written question: WQ95378. Please see the substantive response below.

Janet Finch-Saunders (Aberconwy): How does the Government plan to support children who are unable to access routine NHS dental appointments and are instead presenting at emergency departments with severe dental issues? (WQ95378)

Jeremy Miles: Access to NHS dentistry is not where we want it to be. We are reforming the NHS dental contract around the principles of prevention, risk and need and access.

A core component of prevention is giving children and their parents the tools to maintain oral health. The Welsh Government's national oral health programme Designed to Smile is targeted at schools and nurseries in disadvantaged areas and works with families and young children aged 0 to 7.

In the 2023-24 academic year:

- 1176 schools and nurseries participated in the toothbrushing programme engaging just over 59,000 children – an increase of 173 settings and more than 8,700 children
- 4,668 school/nursey staff received toothbrushing training
- More than 203,000 tooth brushing packs were distributed
- 624 settings participated in the fluoride varnish programme engaging 40,997 children.

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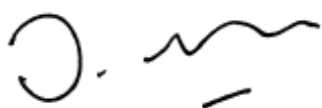
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We have been working with the NHS to improve access to NHS dentistry and practices have been offered a variation to their existing contract. This includes the requirement to provide treatment to new patients. Since April 2022 nearly 166,000 new child patients have gained access to an NHS dentist across Wales.

General dental practitioners are obliged to provide access to urgent treatment for their regular patients within normal surgery hours. Access to urgent treatment outside surgery hours or for people who do not have a regular NHS dentist is covered by the emergency dental service, which is available by calling 111.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care