

29 March 2023

Humza Yousaf MSP
The First Minister
Sent by email

Dear Humza,

On behalf of the dental profession in Scotland, please accept our congratulations on becoming First Minister.

As the new Head of the Scottish Government, we request that you take urgent action to address the deepening crisis in NHS Dentistry.

In our latest survey of General Dental Practitioners shows over half (59%) report that they have reduced the amount of NHS work they do from pre-pandemic levels. Now over four in five (83%) say they plan to reduce or further reduce their NHS commitment in the year ahead.

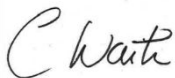
NHS Education for Scotland data shows that there was a 8% drop in high-street NHS dentists delivering care since lockdown, from 3,038 in March 2020 to 2,791 in September 2022. This understates the full-scale losses revealed in our data highlights. No attempt has been made to measure the Whole Time Equivalent NHS dental workforce, and this means that a dentist doing one NHS check-up a year carries the same weight as an NHS full-timer. And it's very clear an exodus is in motion.

The BDA has called for a sustainable funding model to be put in place by October for high street dentists and for the reformed payment system to be presented to the profession as a matter of urgency. The leadership election has caused payment reform deadlines to shift, so urgent action is needed.

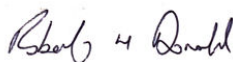
In 2021 the SNP made a promise to the Scottish electorate: free NHS dentistry for all. The decisions you take in your first 100 days will effectively determine if that promise is going to be kept.

Scottish Government must take action now to ensure that the dental system in Scotland is fully resourced to provide appropriate dental care for all, therefore ensuring that health inequalities are addressed. We would like to work constructively with you and the Scottish Government, to ensure that all those who wish to access NHS dentistry in Scotland can do so.

Yours sincerely,



Charlotte Waite
Director BDA Scotland



Robert Donald
Chair, Scottish Council



David McColl
Chair, Scottish Dental Practice Committee