

BSPD supports publication of Looked After Children Oral Health Toolkit

A new practical guide for Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) offering recommendations on oral health for Looked After Children (LAC) has been published by the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) in the Resources section of their website.

This Oral Health Toolkit supports ICBs, Integrated Care Systems (ICs) and key stakeholders in children's oral health to identify the oral health needs, as well as plan and deliver dental services for LAC.

The toolkit has been written by a working group who have come together to share practical examples of activities and programmes that have been implemented in different regions of the UK. It contains personal reflections and case studies embedded in the document which provide practical and real examples of activities and programmes that have been implemented in different regions of the UK.

Whilst BSPD has not initiated this document, the Society supports the publication of this toolkit as part of the drive to ensure that the oral health needs of LAC are prioritised.

LAC are defined under the Children's Act 1989 as children and young people (CYP) who have been under the continuous care of a local authority for more than 24 hours. LAC are placed in care under a court or

through voluntary arrangements with their parents or carers. They can remain in care until their eighteenth birthday or older if they are in full-time education.

LAC also includes Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), a person under 18-years-old or who, in the absence of documentary evidence establishing age, appears to be under that age and is applying for asylum on their own right, is separated from both parents, and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so. Importantly, current government policy does not support using dental records or x-rays to assist with age estimations for UASC.

The LAC Oral Health Toolkit's four main authors are Laura Johnston, Vanessa Muirhead, Claire Stevens CBE and Katharine Julia Hurry, supported by 24 other experts with personal reflections on case studies; six individuals have provided feedback and comments prior to publication.

Dr Vanessa Muirhead, author and Clinical Reader, and Honorary Consultant in Dental Public Health, Queen Mary University of London said: 'Looked after Children are an overlooked and vulnerable group. Our research with LAC, care leavers and foster carers shows that they often have unmet dental needs despite the conscientious care



British Society of
Paediatric Dentistry

Looked After Children Oral Health Toolkit

A practical guide for Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)

Credit: Courtesy of BSPD

often provided in foster families. We created this practical toolkit to draw on evidence, to share examples of different programmes and to provide links to further resources. Tackling inequalities in LAC is essential and a key objective of NHS England national policies such as Core20PLUS5 for Children and Young People. We hope that this toolkit will be widely used to improve dental services for LAC and care leavers at a crucial time in their lives.'

<https://www.bspd.co.uk/Professionals/Resources>

Grant applications open for patient safety and wellbeing projects

The MPS Foundation – a global not-for-profit research initiative that aims to shape the future of patient safety – has opened for applications for its 2024 grant programme.

Medical Protection Society (MPS) – of which Dental Protection is part – launched the Foundation in 2022. Now in its third year, it has already supported over 30 research projects from across the world.

UK projects awarded funding in 2023 include a study aimed at understanding students' experiences in oral surgery

departments across two UK dental schools, and another study exploring dental professionals' perceptions of resilience.

The Foundation is now inviting new research grant applications from both MPS members and non-members. It will invest in research and analysis with a key focus on patient safety and the wellbeing of healthcare professionals and teams, both medical and dental. Applications will be considered from the jurisdictions where MPS has members.

Research projects supported by The MPS Foundation need to be academically robust

and evidence based. Available funding will range from £5,000 to £200,000, or equivalent in local currency, depending on the scale, focus and duration of the proposal.

The funding focusses on five main areas:

- The impact of human factors on patient safety, outcomes, and risk
- The impact of processes and delivery modes on patient safety, outcomes, and risk
- The personal and professional wellbeing of healthcare professionals and teams ►►