'This is a reminder of just how far off from "normal" we remain. It's for Government to choose if they actually want better for patients.'

Professor Martyn Cobourne, Dean of the Faculty of Dental Surgery (FDS) at the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCS England), also commented on the new analysis from the Nuffield Trust[4] and said: "We have consistently called for fundamental reform of the NHS dental contract, and the Nuffield Trust's analysis reinforces the need to move beyond incremental changes. We need a sustainable NHS dental service that improves access for patients and puts prevention at the centre.

'While the changes already introduced to the contract are welcome, they must be part of wider reform that addresses the factors driving practices and clinicians away from NHS dentistry. The Government should now deliver the next phase of its promised dental contract reforms and set out a clear route to sustainable NHS dentistry and improved access for patients.

'Regular NHS dental care helps prevent disease and identify problems early. When patients cannot access care, conditions can become more serious and require more complex treatment, placing additional pressure on already stretched hospital services and patients facing longer waits for the care they need.'

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New service launches in Buckinghamshire to improve oral health



Pictured left to right at Elmhurst School in Aylesbury are: Rebecca Smith, Assistant Head Teacher, Elmhurst School; Nicole Bray, Reception Class Teacher, Elmhurst School; Daniel Flecknoe, Public Health Consultant, Buckinghamshire Council; Lauren Davidson, Oral Health Improvement Practitioner, Community Dental Services CIC (CDS)

Buckinghamshire Council, working in partnership with Community Dental Services CIC (CDS), has launched a new oral health improvement service aimed at improving oral health and reducing health inequalities among children and young people (CYP) across Buckinghamshire.

The Buckinghamshire Oral Health Improvement Team will work closely with local communities and education settings to promote good oral health and support those most at risk of poor oral health outcomes.

The launch follows a successful supervised toothbrushing pilot at Elmhurst School in Aylesbury where Reception children have been taking part in a daily brushing routine since November 2025, with staff reporting high levels of participation and enthusiasm from pupils.

The new service will deliver a range of evidence-based oral health improvement programmes tailored to local needs, working with partners to target support where it can have the greatest impact.

Key areas of work will include:

- Delivering supervised toothbrushing programmes in schools and early years settings
- Providing oral health promotion sessions that aim to educate and support CYP, staff, parents and carers about ways in which to improve oral health.
- Through these initiatives, Buckinghamshire Council and CDS aim to improve oral health awareness, encourage healthy habits, and help reduce inequalities, ensuring more local residents can enjoy the benefits of good oral health throughout their lives.

Kirsty Needham, Headteacher at Elmhurst School in Aylesbury, said: 'We have seen first-hand the positive impact this programme has had on our children, helping them develop good oral health habits that will benefit them for years to come. We are proud to have been involved in the pilot and are excited that other Great Learners Trust schools are now planning to come on board, enabling even more children to benefit from this fantastic initiative.

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