

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
Sent by email

17 October 2022

Dear Mr Hunt

Funding for NHS dentistry

On behalf of the British Dental Association please accept our congratulations on your appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

We have heard your messages on the need for transparency, honesty and candour on the government's plans. Follow today's emergency statement we feel compelled to offer the same.

In blunt terms, NHS dentistry is approaching the end of the road. The government has set worthy objectives to improve access and workforce retention. However, these goals cannot plausibly be achieved within the historic financial constraints set by the Treasury.

As things stand, a reform process looks doomed before it has even begun, with little scope do more than rearrange the deckchairs as the ship goes down.

Recent NHS England board papers confirm officials are euphemistically "*taking steps to maximise access from existing resources*". We know what that means. Yes, we recognise the unparalleled pressures on public spending. Equally, we cannot escape the hard fact that a service millions depend on materially lacks the resources to underpin any rebuild.

You have also spoken of the need for all Departments to seek 'efficiency savings'. Since the Financial Crash NHS dentistry has faced cuts with no parallel anywhere in the health service, going into the pandemic with lower government contributions - in cash terms - than it saw a decade ago. As we have told your predecessors, it would take an extra £880m a year simply to restore levels of resource to those we saw in 2010.

There is simply no more fat to trim, short of denying access an even greater proportion of the population.

We never imagined we would need to defend the wholly inadequate resources currently offered to us. But it seems we must. However, the stark reality remains that sustainable investment is urgently required if we are going to bring this service back from the brink.

In your former role, we believe you recognised the scale of this crisis. NHS dentistry is already on the critical list. Any further cuts will kill the patient.

Yours sincerely,



Eddie Crouch
Chair
British Dental Association



Martin Woodrow
Chief Executive
British Dental Association



Shawn Charwood
Chair
General Dental Practice Committee