



Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care

sent by email

29 January 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

BBC investigation into the impact of imposed targets for NHS General Dental Services

I am writing following the revelations exposed today by the BBC on the impact of the recently imposed dental activity targets, and further to the correspondence from Jo Churchill on 27 January.

As you are no doubt aware staff at a leading dental corporate have been told by management to prioritise routine check-ups over patients requiring urgent care.

We are not at all surprised by this story. During our negotiations with NHS England, we were clear on where the 45% activity targets would lead. As the Member for Portsmouth South observed during the Backbench Business debate on 14 January, dentists across England have been sent a clear message to focus on volume over need.

The fault here lies squarely with the Government's targets. Certainly, the chain will not be alone in taking this approach, given the ever-present threat of sanctions and chaos caused by patient cancellation and staff availability during the new lockdown. This is not a model of care we could ever deem acceptable, yet it is the inevitable logic of a policy imposed on NHS dentists across England.

As your Parliamentary colleagues noted on 14 January, the Government's pragmatism and willingness to change tack on policy in response to emerging evidence is something to be applauded. An insistence on sticking to these targets in the face of the facts is not.

You might be aware that the Scottish Government, which planned to shortly impose similar – though significantly lower – targets on practitioners in Scotland, has decided to delay their introduction until at least June in the light of surging infection rates and tighter restrictions. We hope you will also recognise the changing circumstances and adapt your approach.

So again, I must urge you now to drop these targets and instruct NHS England to re-enter meaningful negotiations. Let us find a way forward that reflects the reality on the front line, and which places priority on the patients who need us most.

We will be sharing this message with the Members of Parliament who participated in the

Backbench Business Debate, as well as members of the Health and Social Care Committee and opposition health teams.

Patients in pain should never be left without options. We remain committed to finding an approach which best supports patients and are happy to meet with you and your colleagues at any time.

Yours sincerely,



Shawn Charlwood
Chair, General Dental Practice Committee
British Dental Association

cc: Jo Churchill MP, DHSC, Sara Hurley, NHSE, Jon Ashworth MP, Alex Norris MP, Health and Social Care Committee, Debbie Abrahams MP, Peter Aldous MP, Fleur Anderson MP, , Duncan Baker MP, Paula Barker MP, Apsana Begum MP, Sir Paul Beresford MP, Olivia Blake MP, Paul Blomfield MP, Dawn Butler MP, Ian Byrne MP, Lisa Cameron MP, Rosie Cooper MP, Judith Cummins MP, Alex Cunningham MP, Janet Daby MP, Alex Davies-Jones MP, Rosie Duffield MP, Tim Farron MP, Nick Fletcher MP, Mary Foy MP, Barry Gardiner MP, Lilian Greenwood MP, Jonathan Gullis MP, Rachel Hopkins MP, Jane Hunt MP, Tom Hunt MP, Imran Hussain MP, Christine Jardine MP, Kim Johnson MP, Caroline Johnson MP, Rt Hon David Jones MP, Ben Lake MP, Caroline Lucas MP, Shabana Mahmood MP, Anthony Mangnall MP, Scott Mann MP, Rachael Maskell MP, Steve McCabe MP, Rt Hon Esther McVey MP, Navendu Mishra MP, Stephen Morgan MP, Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP, Sarah Owen MP, Andrew Percy MP, Yasmin Qureshi MP, Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, Andrew Rosindell MP, Selaine Saxby MP, Jim Shannon MP, Virendra Sharma MP, James Sunderland MP, Christian Wakeford MP, Philippa Whitford MP, Mick Whitley MP, James Wild MP, Munira Wilson MP, Beth Winter MP, Mohammad Yasin MP.