



Newsletter: June 2009

A Tale of Two Cohorts

At last this week we have seen a statement from the Conservatives about Dentistry.

Health shadow secretary Andrew Lansley yesterday branded the Government's 2007 scrapping of compulsory primary school dental checks as 'shameful'. has promised to re-introduce free check-ups for primary schools at a cost of £17 million.

This statement was immediately criticised by the British Dental Health Foundation who rightly, (in my opinion) point out that compulsory school screenings are simply a waste of money when there are far more effective measures available.

"We live in an age of evidence-based medicine and dentistry and the evidence is overwhelming that school dental check-ups are not effective. Indeed, far from improving pupils' oral health they have been shown to increase existing disparities.

"Screenings are not a preventative measure since they diagnose existing decay. Instead the proposed additional budget would be best spent on real preventative measures from water fluoridation to targeted programmes in schools with the application of fluoride varnishes and supervised brushing."

At the other end of the scale we have the older generation, who did not grow up in a time of prevention and minimal intervention and now many need access to a full oral health assessment and planned complex care to maintain their dental health for as long as possible.

I hope Professor Jimmy Steel's report, when published, will be the reference framework for all the parties to use when launching their policy on dentistry and we don't just throw money at easy slogans. NHS Dentistry is in need of a serious fix.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Smith".

David Smith



REGISTERED MEMBER