

BSPD welcomes new President

Dr Jenny Harris has been formally welcomed as the new President of the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry.

Dr Harris, a Consultant in Community Paediatric Dentistry, at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, will bring to her presidential role experience in a number of dentistry sectors including community dental services, as well as hospital and academic posts. Jenny leads a team working in a variety of clinic and school settings across Sheffield, often reaching children and young people experiencing significant health inequalities. Her clinical interests are in treatment provision for anxious children and those with extensive dental caries, and for children with communication impairment, learning disabilities and complex needs.

Dr Harris' clinical background and research and teaching interests have seen her focus on safeguarding children, particularly producing pioneering guidance on child dental neglect. The NSPCC, in 2018, awarded her Honorary Membership of Council in recognition of her contribution to their work on health matters and '*the development and promotion of safeguarding practice in dentistry*'.

In 2004 she initiated and led a project to develop an educational resource for dental teams, *Child Protection and the Dental Team: an introduction to safeguarding children in dental practice* (2006, updated 2013). This book, full of practical guidance, went to every dental practice in England, Scotland and beyond, and many changes in practice followed its publication. It remains available as a website, now hosted by the British Dental Association (BDA). More recently, Jenny with colleague Dr Jen Kirby developed a 'Was Not Brought' pathway to ensure children's needs are considered in relation to missed appointments.

Dr Harris is also hoping to oversee the publication of an update to BSPD's dental neglect policy document⁴ during her year. This was first published in 2009, with Jenny as the lead author – and, as part of the working group, she is anticipating sharing the revised iteration soon.

Dr Harris said: 'Most of my patients are referred by their paediatricians or other health or social care professionals because of their complex additional needs. It's a privilege to build a rapport with families over time and see how, with the right support and preventive care in place, this can positively impact their



oral health – with a good attendance pattern and reduced treatment needs going into adulthood.'

She added: 'I believe that if you are in the room where decisions are made together, we can change things. I passionately believe we need to step up and make a difference for our patients. Early on in my career I was given advice that when you speak up that things aren't right - you must also be prepared to be part of the solution. I've taken that to heart!'