



UK Chief Dental Officers
Sent by email

17 January 2024

Dear Andrew, Caroline, Jason and Tom,

Further to my correspondence on 1 September 2023, I am writing once again to seek your commitment to address international developments concerning the future of dental amalgam, which are likely to significantly affect the delivery of dentistry and population oral health in the UK.

This has taken a new urgency now that the European Parliament has voted in favour of a proposal to phase-out amalgam by 1 January 2025.

We are extremely concerned about the impact this EU phase-out will have on services across the UK, both directly under post-Brexit arrangements and indirectly as a result of supply chain collapse in Europe.

NHS dentistry is already in precarious situation across the UK, with the Nuffield Trust recently warning that the service has most likely “gone for good”. The loss of a vital restorative material and its replacement with more expensive and time-consuming alternatives is only a further blow to the financial viability of NHS dentistry. It is a particular loss in the context of high needs patients for whom amalgam remains the best treatment option.

This recent EU development is of critical importance for Northern Ireland, where we do not believe that a phase-out is feasible by 1 January 2025 given the significant state of unreadiness in oral health prevention and mitigation strategies currently in place. Urgent action must be taken.

We urge all four UK CDOs to work together and with the profession and industry to:

- 1) Urgently address the impact of the direct application of the EU regulation to Northern Ireland
- 2) Adopt a renewed focus on prevention to reduce the need for dental restorations
- 3) Work with industry to secure an ongoing supply of amalgam
- 4) Work with the BDA to ensure that there is no financial impact on dentists from the need to use alternative materials

The BDA has welcomed previous opportunities for dialogue with the CDOs on this issue and we hope for further constructive discussions now to urgently to deal with the consequences of the EU ban.

Without decisive action this could be the straw that breaks NHS dentistry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E Crouch', is written over a light blue grid background.

Eddie Crouch
Chair, British Dental Association