

Stephen Kinnock MP  
Minister of State for Care  
Department of Health and Social Care

The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern  
Minister for Skills  
Department for Education

*Sent by email*

30 March 2026

Dear Baroness Smith and Mr Kinnock,

**RE: The dental academic workforce and expansion of dental student numbers**

We are writing to you to raise our grave concerns over the exponential decline of the clinical academic workforce. The Government's recent announcement that it will train 50 more dentists per year from 2027 has illustrated a stark disconnect between the Department of Health and Social Care's intentions and the reality of dental education on the ground.

The Dental Schools Council's latest census has revealed that, since 2024, the number of clinical teachers has reduced by 25 per cent, professors by 17.6 per cent, and lecturers by 13.3 per cent. Moreover, more than a quarter of clinical academics are now aged over 55, indicating a growing risk of sudden gaps in senior expertise.

If this downward trajectory is allowed to continue, our dental academics will simply not have the capacity to meet the demand you have now placed on them. In fact, the BDA's 2025 survey data highlighted that this workforce is already on the brink of a capacity crisis, with 90 per cent of respondents indicating concern or extreme concern about their current workload, and many reporting poorer working conditions and unrealistic pressure from management, coupled with fewer staff.

We hope the coming workforce plan will tell us that 50 additional UK-trained dentists is not the sum total of the Government's ambition here. But even at these very modest levels, we lack the academic capacity to make it happen.

Without action here, the Government's promise to expand dental undergraduate numbers simply cannot be kept. Proportionate investment towards the expansion of the dental academic workforce's size and capacity is non-negotiable, and essential to safeguarding the future of NHS dentistry.

Yours sincerely,



Petros Mylonas  
Chair, BDA Dental Academic Staff Committee



Eddie Crouch  
Chair, British Dental Association