



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Neil O'Brien MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Primary Care and Public Health
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Steve Brine MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
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26 September 2023

Dear Steve

Thank you for your letter of 20 September about the delay in our response to the Health and Social Care Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2022–23 on NHS dentistry.

First, I want to emphasise that we are grateful to the Committee for undertaking this important and comprehensive inquiry on dentistry, which reviewed evidence from a broad range of representatives from the dentistry sector. I see the inquiry as an important part of our working together with our system partners to improve the wider experience of NHS patients.

The Department therefore apologises for not meeting the deadline of 14 September 2023. As you are aware, we are working towards a Dentistry Recovery Plan, which we expect to announce shortly. This will respond to the challenges facing the sector which are highlighted in the Committee's report. With this in mind, we consider that it is sensible to wait until the Dentistry Recovery Plan is published before we respond to the report.

In the meantime, please be assured that we are continuing to make progress by working with NHS England and other partners to fully implement our initial reforms of July 2022, and to identify what more we can do to improve the dental system.

I am sorry that I cannot provide any firmer indications of the time at this point, but I hope that you will acknowledge the reasons. I will keep this under review.

Yours Sincerely

NEIL O'BRIEN MP