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Childhood Obesity Strategy: ‘Oral health overlooked’ says Denplan

Following the unveiling of the Government’s long-anticipated Childhood Obesity Strategy, the UK’s leading dental payment plan provider, Denplan, has criticised the plan for overlooking oral health.

“The strategy shows small steps in the right direction but has ultimately been widely slammed by campaigners as being ‘weak’ and ‘watered down’,” says Henry Clover, Chief Dental Officer at Denplan. “Not only does the strategy omit the desired restriction on junk food advertising and multibuy promotions, it was also hugely disappointing to see that childhood tooth decay was only referenced once in the entire report. Although the strategy focuses on obesity, the knock-on effects of implementing tougher sugar restrictions on manufacturers and retailers could only have been positive for our children’s dental health too.”

The strategy fails in the eyes of many health experts, campaigners, and MPs to fully tackle the issue of unhealthy eating habits and does not impose tough enough restrictions on manufacturers and retailers.

Central to the Strategy is the Government’s ‘challenge’ to manufacturers and retailers to voluntarily reduce the sugar content of produce popular with children by 20 percent by 2020, with a five percent reduction in the first year. George Osborne’s already-announced sugar tax on soft drinks was also referenced in the plan, but the expected restrictions on junk food advertising during peak family TV shows and bans on supermarket cut-price promotions on unhealthy foods were ignored.

“It’s fair to say that the long-anticipated Childhood Obesity Strategy was expected to be a lot more robust,” says Henry. “Asking manufacturers and retailers to reduce sugar content on a voluntary basis may not achieve what is needed to both reduce childhood obesity and tooth decay. Far too many children experience tooth decay, and it remains the single most common reason for five to nine year olds in England to be admitted to hospital, with many of those children needing multiple tooth extractions under general anaesthetic.”¹

¹ Faculty of Dental Surgery, Royal College of Surgeons. ‘The state of children’s oral health in England’ – January 2015. <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds/policy/documents/fds-report-on-the-state-of-childrens-oral-health>



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Notes to editors

About Henry Clover

Henry Clover joined the Professional Services team of Denplan in 1998, having worked as a dentist for 17 years looking after patients' oral health in his own practice. He now holds the position of Director of Dental Policy at Simplyhealth and is also Chief Dental Officer at Denplan. Henry playing a vital role in Simplyhealth's Leadership Team and is at the forefront of private dentistry liaising with more than 6,500 member dentists.

About Denplan

Denplan is the UK's leading dental payment plan specialist, with more than 6,500 member dentists nationwide caring for approximately 1.7 million registered patients. Established in 1986 by two dentists who pioneered the concept of dental payment plans, Denplan has been at the heart of dental care for nearly 30 years and today the company is owned by Simplyhealth. Denplan has a wide range of dental plans for adults and children, enabling patients to budget for their private dental care by spreading the cost through a fixed monthly fee. We support regular attendance and preventive care, reducing the need for clinical intervention and helping patients to maintain healthy teeth and gums for life.

For further information visit www.denplan.co.uk. For oral health tips and advice visit www.myteeth.co.uk.
Patient enquiries telephone: 0800 401 402 Dentist enquiries telephone: 0800 328 3223

- Denplan Care: all routine and restorative care + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Essentials: routine care only + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Plans for Children: routine and other agreed care + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Membership Plan: registered with the dentist + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Emergency: worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover only
- Company Dental Plans: company funded, voluntary and flexible benefit schemes

Denplan also provides a range of professional services for its member dentists and their practice teams, including the Denplan Quality Programme, Denplan Excel Accreditation Programme and Denplan Training, plus regulatory advice, business and marketing consultancy services and networking opportunities.

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About Simplyhealth

Since 1872 – long before the existence of the NHS – we've been helping people to make the most of life, by managing their everyday health needs. We ensure 3.5 million people in the UK have access to health products, services and support they need, when they need them and at a price they can afford.

We're proud to be the leading provider of health cash plans, dental payment and pet health plans. Whereas once we were known purely for cash plans, we now offer a wide range of products and services to cater for peoples' everyday health needs – now and into the future.

Helping people make the most of life is our sole purpose and giving back is a huge part of that. In 2015 we were able to donate £1.6 million to charitable causes, touching the lives of nearly 825,000 people across the UK. Our future success and performance will enable us to deliver our ongoing pledge to donate 10% of our



profits to charity each year.

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