



Manuela Perteghella

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The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries Unit
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Our Ref: MP06282

2 October 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

Oral Health Support in Residential and Social Care

I am writing regarding a case recently raised by the family of a constituent with learning disabilities in residential care.

My constituent, who has been in social care since 1977, has recently had dental X-rays that revealed severe gum disease and bone loss. False teeth are no longer an option and without urgent support for daily dental hygiene the small number of teeth they have left will also be lost. This will force a transition to a soft diet, depriving them of one of their few daily pleasures and seriously diminishing their quality of life

Dental professionals confirm that this problem is widespread among people with learning disabilities and others in care settings. High staff turnover and reliance on agency workers mean oral health support is inconsistent and often absent. Outreach by local dental services is valuable, but not enough to embed daily good practice.

This is a preventable issue. Oral hygiene support should be:

- Written into care providers' contracts and prioritised by leadership; and
- Included in councils' adult social care commissioning and annual placement reviews.

These measures would not increase costs to the NHS or local authorities. On the contrary, they are likely to save money by reducing the need for complex dental treatment. Most importantly, they would preserve quality of life for vulnerable people who are otherwise at risk of avoidable pain and loss of one of life's basic pleasures.

I urge you to consider incorporating these expectations into policy and guidance for residential and social care provision.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Manuela Perteghella'.

Dr Manuela Perteghella MP

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