

FIGHTING TO PROTECT THE TEETH OF TOMORROW

An open letter to Government, industry and all those with the power to make change.

Dear The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP and The Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP,

Children's oral health is in crisis.

In the UK today, 4.3 million children live in relative poverty, and many families simply cannot afford the basic tools for oral hygiene. That's a stark and unacceptable reality.

One in four five-year-olds in England already show signs of tooth decay, and now it's starting to affect their adult teeth too. One in six 10–11 year olds have already experienced tooth decay in their permanent teeth. **This isn't good enough and our children deserve better.**

Oral health is intrinsically linked to our overall health and if we don't fix this now, future generations will pay the price - in pain, missed potential and long-term health consequences.

We're already seeing the dire impact, in 2022-23 alone (the most recent robust data available), over **47,000** tooth extractions took place in NHS hospitals for under-19s. Two thirds of those were due to tooth decay. On average, 119 extractions take place every working day across England. Costing **£40.7 million** a year and costing our children far more.

This isn't inevitable.

With better access to effective oral care products at home, many of these cases could be avoided entirely.

That's why we're taking action. Every child deserves a healthy smile, and financial barriers should never stand in the way of prevention. Right now, families are forced to pay 20% VAT on essential children's oral care products. That's not just unfair – it's a penalty on prevention. All children should have access to the basic tools to protect their health.

Let's be clear, oral care is an essential, not a privilege.

We're calling on you to abolish the 'tooth tax' on children's oral care products.

It's time for change. Ease the financial burden for families and the long-term pressure on the NHS.

We're doing the best we can, but we can't fix this alone. It's a small ask with a big impact: fewer extractions, fewer missed school days, and a fairer, healthier start for every child.

This crisis is bigger than us, but together we can **protect the teeth of tomorrow.**

Because oral care isn't a privilege. **It's an essential.**

Because **prevention is better** (and cheaper) than cure.

Because every child deserves access to **good oral care at home.**

The question is simple: **Will you act?**

ABOLISH THE TOOTH TAX TODAY.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

Barty Walsh

Founder, Ordo

On behalf of the Ordo team

