

Gum Health Day 2026 – Hospital Category Submission

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In celebration of Gum Health Day 2026, our team at King's College London and Guy's Hospital delivered a large-scale, multi-week awareness and engagement campaign focused on improving understanding of periodontal health amongst both healthcare professionals and the public.

The initiative extended far beyond a single awareness day and involved active engagement with undergraduate dental students, postgraduate students, consultants, clinical teachers, dental nurses, compound area staff, PhD students, post-doctoral researchers, and the wider dental team. Throughout the campaign we promoted the importance of periodontal screening, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment, while signposting colleagues and students to British Society of Periodontology & Implant Dentistry (BSP) educational initiatives, resources, and patient support materials.

The centrepiece of the campaign was a vibrant public and patient engagement event held in the foyer of Guy's Hospital. Supported by an enthusiastic multidisciplinary team of students, clinical nurse specialists, staff volunteers, and educators, the event created a welcoming and highly visible environment that encouraged open conversations about gum health in a busy hospital setting.

Over 200 patients and members of the public received personalised oral hygiene support, including:

- Hands-on toothbrushing demonstrations
- Interdental cleaning instruction
- Brief behavioural interventions
- Written oral hygiene guidance
- Recommendations on oral care products and self-care routines

The team distributed BSP educational leaflets alongside donated oral hygiene products including toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and interdental brushes. We are extremely grateful to the oral healthcare companies who generously supported the initiative through sponsorship of patient samples and educational materials. Student-created posters and visual displays were also developed to attract attention, encourage conversation, and make gum health messaging engaging and accessible to the public.

Our communication strategy adopted a simple “When, Where & How” approach to support patient understanding and increase the likelihood of engagement with oral hygiene behaviours. The emphasis was on delivering achievable, practical advice in a

short interaction window, helping patients leave with confidence, clarity, and realistic self-care goals.

One patient commented:

“I have struggled to clean in between my teeth. What I have been shown today looks so much easier and I like the idea that I can do it in the morning. I always struggle at night-time as I get tired.”

The atmosphere throughout the event was energetic, positive, and inclusive. There was laughter, enthusiasm, and genuine curiosity from patients and staff alike. The initiative successfully created opportunities for people to openly discuss gum health, ask questions, and receive supportive, non-judgemental advice in an approachable environment.

Importantly, the event also provided a powerful experiential learning opportunity for students. Students gained first-hand experience communicating with a diverse patient population with varying oral health needs, confidence levels, health literacy, and dexterity challenges. They developed skills in delivering concise, patient-centred oral hygiene instruction and adapting communication styles rapidly within a busy hospital environment.

One undergraduate student reflected:

“I was so nervous about talking to a patient at the stand but as soon as I spoke to the first one, I felt like I was doing something so simple but it would make a huge difference to the patient.”

Another student shared:

“I did not know how to start the conversation with people initially and I was terrified. Having that opening sentence and greeting really helped me to break the silence and the patients were really nice, asked very good questions, and were so grateful for the advice. It made me realise that communication and the first impression needs to be super positive. I would love to do more of these — it was a great experience and having so many patients in a short time, I had to think and work fast, but still get the message across clearly.”

The event highlighted the importance of prevention-focused dentistry, behavioural communication, and collaborative public engagement within a hospital setting. It also demonstrated the value of empowering students through real-world patient interactions that build confidence, communication skills, professionalism, and public health awareness.

Overall, the campaign successfully raised awareness of gum health across both the hospital community and the public, strengthened engagement with BSP initiatives,

promoted evidence-based prevention strategies, and fostered a highly positive and memorable educational experience for patients, students, and staff alike.

The success of the initiative was built on teamwork, enthusiasm, inclusivity, and a shared commitment to improving periodontal health through education, communication, and prevention.

To capture the energy, impact, and collaborative spirit of the campaign, we also created a highlights video documenting activities across multiple departments, student groups, and clinical teams throughout the initiative. The campaign spanned several weeks rather than a single day, reflecting our belief that meaningful public engagement and behavioural change require consistency, visibility, and repeated opportunities for conversation and education.

Our Gum Health Day philosophy became:

“Never miss an opportunity” and “Rome was not built in a day.”

These mottos reflected our commitment to embedding gum health awareness into everyday interactions across the hospital environment — whether in clinics, teaching spaces, communal areas, or public engagement settings. By creating repeated touchpoints and involving individuals at every level of the dental team, the initiative evolved into a truly whole-hospital approach to periodontal health promotion.