Hello!

It’s fabulous that your department want to be part of the KeepBritainSmiling campaign. If you log onto Instagram you will see that several other hospitals have joined already. The key message is to promote oral health and orthodontics in your local area, but with a link to a national campaign supported by The British Orthodontic Society. What started as a small local project to engage teenagers and young people is on the way to becoming a national movement, with real potential to encourage the next generation to have a smile to be proud of!

Before you do anything we advise you talk to your hospital Communications team. They need to support you joining the campaign and will help guide you through local social media policies and procedures. You can direct them to look at KeepStokeSmiling (Instagram/Facebook/Twitter) or KeepDerbySmiling (Instagram) to see the idea and content. KeepStokeSmiling has been live since January 2018. We’ve posted over 300 oral health messages, departmental stories and orthodontic videos. The resource proved an invaluable way of communicating ever changing information with patients during the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recommend you start with one social media platform. Instagram is probably our favourite as it seems to have the greatest appeal to our patient age group. Once you’ve set up your page and posted a ‘hello’, KeepStokeSmiling (and, most likely, the other KeepSmiling members) will re-post on their pages. This will introduce you to all the people who follow us (professional bodies, individual professionals, dental trade, other hospital Trusts etc) It’s a good way of increasing your followers really quickly. Of course, you’ll need to advertise locally too – tell the patients to ‘follow you’, get a sign printed for the waiting room, get staff to add it to their e-mail sign off.

With regards to what to post, we’ve found this particular format to work quite well:

* Oral health message
* Before/After treatment pictures
* National Campaigns – Mouth Cancer Awareness Month, National Smile Month, World Orthodontics Day, Nurses Day, NHS Birthday etc)
* Departmental News - Debbie’s 50th birthday, Registrar passes MOrth, Gloria’s new baby, Dr Smith presents at international meeting etc. etc

We try to do one of each on a regular basis! The departmental news posts and ‘before and after photos’ are always the most successful and well ‘liked’. Patients really favour these and often comment on them. Interspersing this type of post with oral health messages seems like the best way to get the really important information across to young people and we’ve seen evidence it seeps in via fingertip osmosis as they scroll through the information!

We’ve included a couple of pictures in the tool-kit to get you started. Feel free to use them if you like. The map, sad can and ring pulls were created by graphic designers as part of an on-line competition run by KeepStokeSmiling

Any further information or help you need, please don’t hesitate to drop me an e-mail or message through social media

Good luck!

Karen Juggins and The KeepStokeSmiling Team