



Northumberland

County Council

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

11 MAY 2023

Northumberland Oral Health Strategy 2022-2025

Report of: Councillor Wendy Pattison - Adult Health and Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Gill O'Neill, Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities

Purpose of report

This report presents the updated Northumberland Oral Health Strategy, following Boards agreement to extend it from 2022 to 2025.

Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to

- Note the work of the Oral Health Strategy and Implementation Group (OHSIG) to update the strategy and devise a new action plan for the corresponding period.
- Accept the updated Northumberland Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan 2022-25.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the 'Living' priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2021-2024 and its overarching theme of tackling inequalities within our communities, supporting our residents to be healthier and happier. The extended Northumberland Oral Health Strategy 2022-2025 will facilitate improvements to the oral health of our communities and will contribute to the reduction of oral health inequalities.

Key issues

Oral health is an important part of the overall health and wellbeing of individuals and poor oral health will have significant impacts on many aspects of an individual's life throughout the life course.

Oral health has improved considerably in the UK, with some areas now almost entirely free of dental decay in 5-year-olds. However, pockets of inequalities and areas with greater need remain, as seen in Northumberland. The 2022 Oral Health Survey of five year olds shows that 16.7%% of 5 year olds in Northumberland had experience of tooth decay¹.

¹ OHID: [Oral health survey of 5 year old children 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/oral-health-survey-of-5-year-old-children-2022)

Oral health is also a key issue for adults, and the 2017 Oral Health Needs Assessment noted the needs of the older population and the likely increase in the size of this group in the future. In terms of other indicators of oral health, the age standardised oral cancer mortality rate per 100,000 of the population in Northumberland in 2017-19 was 3.4 (i.e. 3.4 deaths per 100,000 of the population each year), which is lower than the England value of 4.7 and the North East value of 6.0².

Data are not currently monitored on how many people are 'registered' with a dentist as the current arrangements do not record access in this way, and dental services are not currently provided on a 'registration' basis in the same way that GP services are. We can look at the proportion of people who are able to get an appointment with a dentist if they want one. In Northumberland in 2020/21 78.6% of the population successfully obtained a dental appointment, which is slightly lower than the average for the North East at 80.1% but higher than the England average of 77%³. This is lower than in previous years, as the coronavirus pandemic impacted dental services severely in 2019 and recovery has been slow.

Key elements of a county-wide and population approach to reducing oral health inequalities include community water fluoridation and NHS dentistry. Responsibility for fluoridation lies with the Secretary of State, and local dentistry commissioning transferred to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) from 1st April 2023. The Northumberland Oral Health Strategy and action plan, as described in this paper, and its implementation group partners, acknowledge the importance of these issues. We will continue to undertake oral health promotion activities as part of the wider multi-disciplinary approach as set out in the action plan and will work with relevant partners to influence and support the elements of dentistry and fluoridation which are outside Northumberland County Council (NCC) jurisdiction.

Background

Progress during 2019-2022

A paper outlining the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on dental provision and the implementation of the 2019-22 oral health strategy was presented to Health and Wellbeing Board on 12 May 2022.

A number of issues were raised at the meeting (in bold). Current position is stated for the Board's update:-

Toothbrushes and toothpaste were a luxury for some families, and it was suggested that supplies of these be sent to foodbanks. - Toothbrush and toothpaste packs were

² OHID Fingertips:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/oral%20cancer#page/3/gid/1/pat/6/ati/402/are/E06000057/iid/92953/age/1/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/3/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/car-do-0> Accessed Dec 2022

³ OHID Fingertips:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/dental%20access#page/3/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/402/are/E06000057/iid/92785/age/168/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/tre-do-0> Accessed Dec 2022

sent to Foodbanks during the pandemic. NCC Public Health maintains this link for toothbrush/paste provision to some of our most vulnerable residents.

Changing responsibilities for consultation on any variation to the community water fluoridation scheme. – The process has changed since comment was made in the Board meeting last year. Responsibility no longer lies with local authorities and has transferred to the Secretary of State. Directors of Public Health continue to seek clarification about this new process and any implications for local authorities from the Department of Health and Social Care and will provide updates as and when information is released about community water fluoridation extension schemes consultation process. The Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities will keep Council and Health and Wellbeing Board up to date with any progression and implications for Council and partners.

Healthwatch raised there are inequalities of dentistry access due to issues with the dental contract. – Dental practice has been commissioned by NHS England (NHSE) until responsibilities transferred on 1 April 2023. Health and Wellbeing OSC received a report from NHSE on 7 March 2023 outlining national and local recruitment and retention issues and the programme of dental system reforms. Eight Northumberland practices are accessing NHS funding to offer additional clinical capacity above contracted levels for urgent cases identified high-risk groups. NHSE stated that a formal procurement to secure a new long-term provider in the Berwick area is progressing which, subject to completion of a successful formal procurement process, is likely to be in place from April 2024. In the interim options continue to be explored to secure short-term solutions to increase access for patients who require urgent dental care. The Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities will continue to monitor this situation, respond to public enquiries where appropriate and report on developments.

The Administration supported fluoridation as part of its key theme of addressing inequalities – The Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities will inform the Administration and the Health and Wellbeing Board of any updates regarding national consultation and the implementation of the north-east community water fluoridation scheme variation.

On 12 May 2022 Board resolved that:

- (1) the report be received.
- (2) the impact on dental and oral health action and delivery caused by the COVID-19 pandemic be acknowledged.
- (3) the extension to the strategy period from 2022/25 be approved

Developing the new strategy and action plan

Following approval to proceed, the OHSIG met in June 2022 to begin work to update the strategy and devise a new action plan for 2022-2025. The meeting was held on Teams and all partners contributed to the development work via a shared 'RetroBoard' which public health managers had populated with the strategy themes. Participants added comments

and ideas in real-time and voted for actions suggested by other members. Any members not present were given the link and added their contributions subsequently.

This content was developed by NCC Public Health into the new action plan, which has been shared with all group members for their agreement and endorsement.

The new 2022-2025 plan continues the elements of the previous strategy still to be addressed and incorporates some new priorities and action. The OHSIG will continue to meet twice a year to report on action and monitor progress toward the actions and strategy aims.

The Strategy document has been updated to reflect the extension period. The majority of its content remains current and applicable but there are a few updated data and additions, most notably:

- Oral Health Survey of 5 year olds (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID), 2018/19) - 16.7% of 5 year olds in Northumberland had experience of tooth decay. This is a decrease since 2019.
- Change in inequalities indicator from ‘inequalities in tooth decay in children aged 5 years’ to ‘percentage of children in absolute low income families (under 16s) (OHID 2020/21) – 23.4%
- Data updates relating to e.g. Hospital admissions for tooth removal under general anaesthetic; Mortality rate from oral cancer; Percentage of adult smokers; Access to NHS dental services
- Reference to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on oral health
- Reference to the changing commissioning responsibilities for NHS dentistry (NHSE to ICB)
- Reference to the changing responsibilities regarding community water fluoridation (Secretary of State responsibility)

The updated strategy will be ratified by the OHSIG at their next meeting following this HWBB meeting. Any comments or guidance from Health and Wellbeing Board arising from this paper/meeting will be incorporated.

Implications

Policy	The oral health strategy supports the ‘Living’ corporate priority and the overarching theme of tackling inequalities with the commitment to provide a range of programmes which will help residents achieve and maintain good health.
Finance and value for money	The oral health strategy and action plan is based on evidence based and cost-effective interventions to improve oral health. Some funding to support the implementation of the action plan is identified in the ring-fenced public health grant. (£10K pa)
Legal	The transfer of the responsibility for varying Community Water Fluoridation schemes from LAs to the Secretary of State for

	<p>Health & Social Care removes the most significant legal implication.</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council.</p>
Procurement	Any opportunities for including elements of oral health promotion as part of arrangements between the council and commissioned providers will be developed as part of the normal commissioning process.
Human Resources	The oral health strategy and action plan will be delivered within existing resources.
Property	None identified
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Not undertaken for this report but have been undertaken for elements of the original oral health strategy.
Risk Assessment	Not undertaken for the oral health strategy
Crime & Disorder	No implications for crime and disorder identified
Customer Consideration	The strategy and recommendation set out in this report is based upon a desire to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups in Northumberland and put in place measures to address preventable ill health and promote good oral health.
Carbon reduction	It is not envisaged that the processes set out within this report will have any impact, positive or negative, on carbon reduction.
Health and Wellbeing	Good oral health is an essential component of overall good health. It supports better educational and social outcomes throughout the life course and is a key area where inequalities are apparent.
Wards	All

Background papers:

1.The extension to the Northumberland Oral Health Strategy was approved by Health and Wellbeing Board on 12 May 2022:

Paper –

<https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10381/05.%20Oral%20Health%20Strategy%20update%20paper%20HWB.pdf>

Minutes -

<https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g1588/Printed%20minutes%2012th-May-2022%2010.00%20Health%20and%20Well-being%20Board.pdf?T=1>

2. Northumberland Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2025 (DRAFT – subject to final ratifications by OHSIG and acceptance from this Board) [Draft Northumberland Oral Health Strategy 22-25 extension.docx](#)

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

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