

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

BRUSHING BUDDIES: A SUPERVISED TOOTH-BRUSHING SCHEME - EVALUATION REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the evaluation of the *Brushing Buddies* supervised tooth-brushing scheme, which forms part of the County Council's commissioned oral health promotion service, to request that Members consider whether there is any additional action that they wish to be taken, and to seek approval for promotional activity to publicise the *Brushing Buddies* service and the results of the evaluation.

Information

2. Nottinghamshire is similar to or better than the national average with regards to oral health outcomes. National surveys of both adults' and children's oral health show improvements over time, reductions in decayed, missing and filled teeth in children, and adults keeping teeth longer as they age. However, oral health diseases continue to be widespread, despite being highly preventable. Tooth decay affects around 20% of five-year olds in Nottinghamshire, and oral health inequalities persist, usually associated with socio-economic background.
3. As part of its Public Health responsibilities, the Council has a statutory duty to "provide or commission oral health promotion programmes to improve the health of the local population, to the extent that they consider appropriate in their areas".
4. The Council commissions an oral health promotion service, which provides oral health promotion training for frontline staff in dental, children's and older people's services, a resources service and a supervised tooth-brushing scheme. These activities are all in line with National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) and Public Health England (PHE) guidance¹. Contract performance is reported to Committee within the quarterly report on performance and quality in Public Health commissioned services. The service is provided by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.
5. As part of this service, the *Brushing Buddies* supervised tooth-brushing scheme operates in 23 Nottinghamshire schools with linked nurseries, selected on the basis of local oral health need. The evidence-based intervention aims to introduce a life skill and improve the oral health of children aged between 3 and 6 years of age, giving them an opportunity to brush their teeth

¹ NICE PH55 *Oral Health: Local authorities and partners (2014)*; and PHE *Oral Health Toolkit for Local Authorities (2014)*

during the school day. 140 teachers have been trained to deliver the programme and around 2,900 children are currently taking part. Whilst the Brushing Buddies scheme itself is restricted to the target schools, all county schools have access to the service's Teeth Tools for Schools curriculum-based resource for teaching staff, which is actively used by around two thirds of schools at present.

6. Research demonstrates that the application of fluoride toothpaste in a supervised school-based intervention can have a significant beneficial effect on children with high risk of tooth decay. PHE estimates the return on investment to be £3.66 per £1 spent after ten years. In the local scheme, analysis of pre-participation questionnaires given to parents showed the opportunities for improvement of children's oral health, with 22% of responding parents stating their child only brushed their teeth once a day and 28% that they had not been to a dentist.
7. Teacher and parent comments demonstrate that the scheme is valued, with both reporting positive impacts for the children. For example, one father wrote: "*My little girl hated tooth-brushing before, but now she encourages the whole family to tooth-brush*". Obtaining feedback from the young children themselves is done imaginatively by asking the children to draw pictures of themselves tooth-brushing. Year 1 children (aged 5-6) are also asked some simple questions, for example whether they brushed their teeth that morning or whether they had ever visited the dentist. Responses show that the Year 1 children understand why brushing their teeth is important. 100% of teachers who took part in the scheme stated that their knowledge and confidence had increased as a result. Overall the evaluation has provided evidence for improving the approach to oral health in children.
8. The service continues to use the results of monitoring and evaluation to plan its activity, with the following actions planned for 2019/20:
 - a. Encourage communication between schools and linked dental practices
 - b. Offer more engagement opportunities to parents
 - c. Encourage partnership working, for example with the Schools Health Hub and Healthy Families Teams
 - d. Create opportunities for child engagement, such as drawing competitions
 - e. Continue to offer oral health promotional activities to children and parents
 - f. Plan to participate in National Smile Month for 2020.
9. The 2018/19 Annual Report on the *Brushing Buddies* programme is attached at Appendix A. This contains a detailed evaluation of the work of the supervised tooth-brushing scheme.

Other Options Considered

10. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. To provide an opportunity for Members to consider and comment on the quality of Public Health activity commissioned by the Council.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

13. The commissioned oral health promotion service has a total annual value of £83,000, which is met out of the Public Health grant.

Implications in relation to the NHS Constitution

14. The supervised tooth-brushing scheme is a targeted element within the wider oral health promotion service. The targeted schools were selected on the basis of local oral health need. As such, the scheme is compliant with the wider social duty in the NHS constitution to promote equality through the services it provides and to pay particular attention to groups or sections of society where improvements in health are not keeping pace with the rest of the population.

Implications for Service Users

15. Evaluation of Public Health services is a mechanism by which commissioners can secure assurance about the safety and quality of services funded with Public Health grant.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That Committee considers the *Brushing Buddies* annual evaluation report and decides whether there is any additional action that Members wish to be taken.
- 2) To approve promotional activity to publicise the *Brushing Buddies* service and the results of the evaluation.

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Constitutional Comments (LW 30/10/2019)

16. Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (DG 10/10/2019)

17. The costs are funded from the Oral health promotion service which has a budget of £83,000, which is met out of the Public Health grant.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- [Public Health England \(PHE\) Children's oral health profile for Nottinghamshire compared to England](#)
- [PHE return on investment of oral health improvement programmes for 0-5 year olds](#)
- [NICE Public Health Guideline 55 Oral Health: Local Authorities and Partners](#)
- [PHE Local Authorities improving oral health: commissioning better oral health for children and young people – an evidence-informed toolkit for local authorities](#)

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

- Wards where participating schools during 2018/19 were located are as follows:
 - Arnold South (Arnbrook Primary and Nursery; Arnold Mill Primary)
 - Ashfields (Leamington Primary and Nursery)
 - Beeston Central and Rylands (John Clifford Primary)
 - Blidworth (Blidworth Oaks Primary)
 - Bramcote and BeestonNorth (Beeston Fields Infants)
 - Carlton East (St John the Baptist Primary)
 - Eastwood (Brookhill Leys Infant and Nursery; Springbank Primary)
 - Farndon and Trent (Christ Church CofE; Mount CofE)
 - Hucknall West (Holgate Primary)
 - Kirkby North (Abbey Hill Primary; Morven Park Primary and Nursery)
 - Mansfield East (Oak Tree Primary and Nursery)
 - Newark West (Sir Donald Bailey Academy)
 - Newstead (Burntstump Seely CofE; Hawthorne Primary)
 - Retford West (St Joseph's)
 - Southwell (Holy Trinity)
 - Sutton North (Healdswood Infants)
 - Sutton West (Brierley Forest Primary)
 - Toton, Chilwell and Attenborough (Sunnyside Primary)