

Dental Priority Groups



Case Study Seven: **Dental Priority Groups**

The Priority Groups work stream within the Dental Directorate delivers and supports a number of Scottish Government Health Department (SGHD) initiatives to improve oral health in Scotland, with a particular focus on groups who are disadvantaged economically and/or socially or who have additional needs which makes access to oral care difficult.

The Childsmile programme focuses on reducing inequalities in oral health and ensuring access to dental services for every child across the country. The Priority Groups work stream has played, and continues to play, a key role in supporting health boards in achieving SGHD ambitions through the continuing provision of training places for Childsmile training, including the development of a Childsmile e-learning package to support the identification of those with dental disease and appropriate referral.

In partnership with the charity, Scottish Action for Sick Children, Priority Groups are incorporating the use of the 'Dental Playbox' in training for Extended Duty Dental Nurses (EDDNs) and Dental Health Support Workers (DHSWs) who are part of Childsmile. This aims at increasing the engagement of children with additional support needs with Childsmile through play and is a response to a Scottish Government directive to extend Childsmile coverage to these 'hard to reach' children. The delivery of dental treatment for these children can often be difficult making the delivery of prevention even more desirable.

A SCQF Level 6 qualification in oral health was launched at South Lanarkshire College. This has been developed with one F.E. College in South Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Health Board and will be an optional element of the nursery nurse qualification from autumn 2016. This will strengthen support from this group of staff for Childsmile nursery. This qualification has been offered to other colleges across the country and Priority Groups will support its introduction in to the curriculum.

Another core development within the work stream has been the 'Caring for Smiles' programme (improving the oral health of dependant older people). Priority Groups support the delivery of training to care home staff towards achieving accredited qualifications through the quality assurance of assessment and evaluation. This involves partnership working with health, social services and the private sector.

A 'train the trainer' pilot involving nine care homes in Greater Glasgow and Clyde is currently underway. Some care home staff have been trained to intermediate level and in turn will be able to train other staff to Foundation level. This will extend coverage of the qualification across the care home sector.

Further projects include 'Smile4Life' which is aimed at improving the oral health of homeless people and 'Mouth Matters' which is aimed at improving the oral health of the prison population.

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Case Study Seven: **Dental Priority Groups** (Continued)

NES has hosted launches for these oral health initiatives and continues to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to identify the most effective ways of engaging with these groups and embed the oral health message in the more general health and social messages.

Priority Groups have developed and maintain online communities of practice to support all these initiatives. These give access to national training resources for key stakeholders in health, social services, third sector and private organisations.

The work stream also develops and delivers courses to support dentists who are involved in the delivery of dental care to patients in Priority Groups. Examples include: child safeguarding/wellbeing, Adults with Incapacity Legislation and how this relates to dental treatment and Training in Conscious Sedation for the delivery of dental treatment.

The Priority Groups projects address inequalities across the causal chain, not only focusing on mitigating the effects of individual experiences but the work stream also has a key preventative role, for instance through embedding oral health education within qualifications and by supporting staff, carers, parents and families in becoming more health literate in relation to oral health. Awareness raising is a key aspect of the work stream, with key messages including how poor oral health can have an effect on wider health issues and how oral disease in older people is particularly debilitating. Links between oral health and employability are also very relevant, and improving employability is a planned impact for the Smile4Life project.

All of the Priority Groups projects promote active collaboration and integration between health and social services, and the independent third and private sectors.



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