

REVIEW BY THE EXTERNAL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S DENTAL SERVICES

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Jane Palmer Councillor Sue O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Cabinet Member for Families, Education and Wellbeing
Officer Contact(s)	Nikki O'Halloran, Democratic Services
Papers with report	External Services Select Committee's review of 'Children's Dental Services'

HEADLINES

Summary	To receive the External Services Select Committee review into 'Children's Dental Services'. To give consideration to the recommendations of the review.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objective of: <i>Our People</i> .
Financial Cost	The recommendations proposed as a result of this review do not in themselves have a direct financial impact on Council finances.
Relevant Select Committee	External Services Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet welcomes the review by the External Services Select Committee and acknowledges, appreciates and recognises the work that is already being undertaken across the Borough to improve dental health outcomes for children in Hillingdon. Furthermore, Cabinet agrees the recommendations made by the Committee set out below:

1. That the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care write to the Department of Health and Social Care / Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, to request that a proportion of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) be ringfenced for dental health initiatives;
2. That the North West London Clinical Commissioning Group (NWL CCG) be asked to liaise with NHS England regarding the collection and carry forward of any unused Units of Dental Activity (UDAs) in Hillingdon within the year for redistribution to local dental

related action programmes / initiatives such as fluoride varnishing in schools;

3. That the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care liaise with pan London counterparts to encourage the fluoridation of water supplies across London;
4. That the Council's Early Years team liaise with private and local authority run nurseries (as well as school nurseries and Children's Centres) in Hillingdon to encourage routine supervised brushing after meals;
5. That the North West London Clinical Commissioning Group be asked to liaise with dentists locally to agree a way that children under the age of 11 can be guaranteed an appointment;
6. That the Corporate Director of Social Care & Health be asked to ensure that health visitors provide new mothers with information about free NHS dental services and brushing kits at their first contact and ask the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health to include oral health information in the Personal Child Health Record ('red book');
7. That Corporate Director of Social Care & Health ensure that training be made available for health professionals such as health visitors and school nurses on the promotion of good oral health;
8. That the Families, Health and Wellbeing Select Committee receives annual updates from Public Health on the performance of dental health services commissioned by the NHS in Hillingdon; and
9. That the Health and Wellbeing Board oversee a comprehensive communications and education plan on oral health coordinated by a Children & Young People's Dental Health task and finish group.

Reasons for the recommendations

To consider the report of the External Services Select Committee's review into 'Children's Dental Services'.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some, or all, of the Committee's recommendations or pursue alternative routes by which to progress the objectives of the review.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

On 21 May 2015, the Council's Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee presented a report to Cabinet on children's oral health. Given that children's oral health continues to be a matter of concern both nationally and at a local level, at its meeting on 9 October 2019, the External Services Select Committee received an information report and heard from witnesses in relation to this topic. In light of the evidence received, it was agreed that the

Committee would undertake a review of dental services in the Borough; specifically focussing on service provision for children and young people and the effectiveness of preventative measures taken by partners in relation to caries and other oral health issues. The Committee has now concluded its review and a report, supported by nine recommendations, was endorsed by the Committee at its meeting on 15 September 2021 for submission to Cabinet.

Members discovered that, in London, about 1 in 4 five year olds have tooth decay with an average of four teeth affected. In 2017/18, this resulted in about 7,000 children in London under 10 years old having one or more teeth extracted in hospital because of tooth decay. In that same year in Hillingdon, more than double the number of 5-9 year olds were admitted to hospital for dental decay than for tonsillitis.

The review heard from key witnesses and considered how partners could work together to help improve residents' oral health, in particular the oral health of children in the Borough.

The following Terms of Reference were agreed by the Committee from the outset of the review:

1. To gain a thorough understanding of the current dental service provision offered to children and young people within the Borough and to consider possible areas for improvement;
2. To explore the current situation in relation to the dental health of children and young people in the Borough and to consider how this can be improved on;
3. To identify barriers to attendance – reasons for current low attendance rates and what can be done to address this issue;
4. To review current and future plans by health partners to prevent incidences of caries and to improve oral health;
5. To examine best practice elsewhere through case studies, policy ideas and witness sessions;
6. To review the current policies, legislation, research and campaigning by Government to improve children's oral health and to explore best practice and advice that could be adopted by the NHS; and
7. After due consideration of the above, to bring forward recommendations to Cabinet for Council endorsement, before being sent to health partners to consider.

Because of the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, Members embraced new methods of investigation through virtual means. Through a range of informal information gathering sessions with and formal witness sessions (as outlined in the report), the Committee sought to gain an understanding of the nature and extent of action that was being taken in the Borough to address poor oral health in children. Considering all factors, the Committee has made recommendations to build on the positive work already being undertaken by partners and to ensure that there is oversight of the progress made.

Officer Comments on Recommendations

The recommendations have been reviewed by the relevant senior officers. Officers are supportive of the recommendations and have raised no issues regarding their feasibility.

Financial Implications

The recommendations resulting from this review will not require any additional resources.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

The recommendations will help to improve awareness of oral health and ensure that interventions continue to be in place to support this.

Consultation carried out or required

The Committee sought a wide range of external witness testimony as set out in its report.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report, noting that there would be no direct financial implications of the Select Committee's recommendations in respect of processes and joint working with partner organisations.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor has confirmed that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.