

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

Report to: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 18/03/2026

Subject: Oral Health Update in Hammersmith and Fulham

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Summary

This paper provides an update on ongoing work to improve oral health in Hammersmith & Fulham, with a focus on children and young people. It outlines progress in delivering the borough’s Oral Health Plan, including training for frontline staff, community engagement, developing accessible oral health resources for residents and partnerships across health, education and the voluntary sector. The report also describes local implementation of the national Supervised Toothbrushing Programme, targeted at early years settings in areas of highest deprivation. Finally, it provides an update on the Targeted Dental Access for Children (TDAC) Pilot, which aims to improve access to dental care for children with greater need or facing barriers. These initiatives collectively support early intervention, healthier environments, and improved access to dental services across the borough.

Background to Oral Health Plan

1. A paper presented to the H&F Health & Wellbeing Board in March 2024¹ detailed the current state of oral health in the borough. It presented the strategic context, access to NHS dental services, and a profile of oral health amongst H&F residents. At that meeting, the Board agreed to development of an oral health plan.
2. The H&F Oral Health Plan (the Plan) is a working document that tracks projects and initiatives that aim to strengthen collaboration between services and implement positive, sustainable change in the community by supporting residents to adopt healthy behaviours related to oral health.

Strategic Context

3. Good oral health is an essential component of overall good health. Poor oral health may affect one’s ability to eat, speak and socialise, and can lead to pain and infection, which may affect diet and nutrition.
4. The Council has created an Oral Health Plan because:

¹ [Public Health Update on Oral Health in Hammersmith and Fulham.pdf \(lbhf.gov.uk\)](#)

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

- In 2013, the responsibility for public health, including oral health improvement, transferred to the Director of Public Health in local authorities, as set out in the Health and Social Care Act (2012)².
- The Local Government Association (2016) recommends that each local authority develops its own locally tailored oral health strategy³. This is further emphasised in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines⁴ and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)'s "Child oral health: applying All Our Health" published in 2022⁵.
- Northwest London ICB stated that Oral Health was one of their key clinical areas of focus for health inequalities in recent prioritisation work⁶ and H&F's Plan contributes to progressing oral health outcomes across the region.
- There are significant needs in the borough which require early intervention in relation to oral health. For example, Hammersmith and Fulham (H&F) has a higher percentage (28%) of children with visual dental decay compared to the London average (26%)⁷. H&F has a lower percentage (45%) of children (0-17) seen by an NHS dentist in the last year compared to the London average (48%). However, the rate of hospital tooth extraction rate in 0–19-year-olds per 100,000 is lower in Hammersmith and Fulham (279 Per 100,000) compared to the London average, (434 per 100,000) which is good⁸.

5. This paper describes three key workstreams: the delivery of the borough's oral health plan, local implementation of Supervised Tooth Brushing (STB) programme, and a Targeted Dental Access for Children (TDAC) Pilot

Oral Health Plan

6. The Plan was developed in collaboration with residents through our Family Hub feedback group "Family Voices", and through the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Ongoing consultation with Family Voices continues to guide delivery and ensure targeted actions.
7. The H&F oral health working group includes representatives from the ICB, Education, Children's and Adults' Services, OHID, the Voluntary Sector, and NHSE to develop the Plan. We also collaborated with CLCH, the commissioned provider for oral health promotion⁹.
8. After a comprehensive review of local data, including the NHS England Oral Health Strategy for NWL, the H&F Early Intervention Strategy, and initiatives led by Family Hubs, key priority areas were identified to guide future action with four key themes.
9. **Theme 1:** Ensuring every child gets the best start in life - key achievements to date include:

² [Oral health improvement programmes commissioned by local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

³ [Tackling poor oral health in children: local government's public health role | Local Government Association](#)

⁴ [Overview | Oral health: local authorities and partners | Guidance | NICE](#)

⁵ [Child oral health: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK](#)

⁶ [Pillar 1 - identifying and tackling inequalities :: North West London ICS \(nwlondonicb.nhs.uk\)](#)

⁷ [Oral health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ [H&F Oral Health Factsheet 2024](#)

⁹ [Oral health promotion \(ohp\) :: Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust](#)

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

- All Family Hub staff and Family Champions have been trained in oral health promotion. Family Hub Learn & Play sessions use oral health themes within activities in both centres.
 - We are developing an online e-learning oral health module to encourage uptake of training. The script has been coproduced with our Family Champions, and a first draft has been created internally with our Learning & Development colleagues.
 - Co-production sessions with the H&F Family Champions have taken place to design simple and easy-to-understand messaging for residents. This has been shared as best practice in the NWL network of oral health commissioners.
 - We have implemented the Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young (HENRY) programme in H&F which focuses on both 'message' and 'messenger' to create the conditions for change and to support families to adopt healthier lifestyles¹⁰. It includes information about a healthy start in life (nutrition, activity, etc) that is consistent with national guidance ¹¹. HENRY training has been completed by Family Hub staff and volunteers, and the HENRY programme commenced as an offer in H&F in April 2025, with a minimum of 3 programmes being delivered in the borough over an 18-month period. Furthermore, UPG are now being trained to deliver HENRY in their localities too.
 - To provide support for breast feeding continuation and removing barriers there is a lot of ongoing work including a complete review of comms on the Family Hub and LA website. Exploration and commissioning for a service that includes breastfeeding support is underway and we are hoping to award early 2026 with the new service starting 1st Jan 2027.
10. **Theme 2:** Creating healthy neighbourhoods, healthy schools, and healthy workplaces - key achievements since the plan was established include:
- Harrow Youth Club has been delivering healthy eating sessions in their groups, which includes cooking a healthy meal in the junior clubs with the children. An organisation called Foodcycle is running sessions at the Tudor Rose Family Hub building. The Nourish Hub has also been providing cooking sessions in Old Oak Family Hub.
 - Public Health have been working closely with Education to compile a list of schools working toward the different Healthy Schools awards and will be identifying the schools who have put oral health as one of their priorities and will be providing support to these schools in term 2 and 3 in 2026.
 - Public Health are utilising the redesign of the 0-19 Public Health Nursing service to prioritise oral health as a key part of the service specification.
 - To support the Supervised Toothbrushing Programme in schools and other oral health initiatives, efforts are underway to explore ways of recruiting and engaging more parents as part of the Family Champions programme. This is being done by utilising our School Nurses, Governors and Parent Associations to advertise volunteering positions.

Case Study – Creating Healthy Schools

¹⁰ [Homepage | HENRY](#)

¹¹ [Health, exercise, nutrition for the really young \(HENRY\) - Case study - GOV.UK](#)

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

ARK White City Primary School located in the north of the borough in White City Ward, an area of the borough where there was high prevalence of dental decay¹², limited number of dentists (see *Appendix 1*) and high levels of income deprivation affecting children (see *Appendix 2*).

Representatives from CLCH's Health Inequality team, school nurses, the local authority public health team, and the oral health promotion team collaborated with the school when it was selected in January 2025 for the project. The planning was coproduced with the school and has been delivered through their final summer term (Easter-Summer Holidays).

The pilot was developed to establish sustainable oral health practices within the school's pupil population and included the following components:

- **Supervised Toothbrushing:** Reception and nursery students began supervised toothbrushing sessions led by teachers, embedding the practice into their daily routine.
- **Teacher Training:** Staff received structured training in Supervised Toothbrushing to ensure effective implementation.
- **Focused Oral Health Lessons:** Year 4 students participated in a targeted oral health education programme, consisting of a series of structured lessons.
- **Peer Evaluation:** Year 4 students assessed the effectiveness of supervised toothbrushing sessions in reception and nursery, encouraging a sense of responsibility and engagement amongst pupils.
- **Oral Health Champions:** The initiative explored ways to empower students as oral health champions, fostering leadership and advocacy within the school community.

This project was carried out during the final term of the school year (2025), and evaluation is currently ongoing. Insights gained from this initiative will inform future approaches, with the potential for broader implementation across other schools in H&F and across North West London.

11. **Theme 3:** Increasing the availability of fluorides / Decreasing sugar intake, key achievements that have been delivered:

- We will be evaluating the healthy food and snack policies in early years settings and schools as part of the integrated H&F Food Plan. In collaboration with Education, we will be assessing current practices around healthy eating, school meals, and "water-only" policies. Improvements are underway through the voluntary Healthy Schools Award, which recognises schools' efforts in promoting health and wellbeing, with bronze, silver, or gold ratings based on self-assessment.
- To further support this initiative, a community dietitian is planned to be included as part of a new H&F healthy weight pathway to provide additional guidance and support for families.
- As part of "Targeted Fluoride Varnish Programme" the Council works closely with CLCH Oral Health Promotion team, Education team, schools and early years settings to ensure uptake of the programme. Learning from our intensive approach trialled at Ark White City we have learnt that by using a coordinated approach through NHS representatives, School

¹² [National Dental Epidemiology Programme for England: oral health survey of five-year-old children 2015 A report on the prevalence and severity of dental decay](#)

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

Nurses and Council staff there is more of a chance for a school, parents and young people to be willing to be involved.

12. **Theme 4:** Promoting access to dental services - key achievements:
- We have developed an online map enabling residents to find healthcare providers accepting new NHS patients near them¹³. We have advertised this through resident E-newsletter.
 - Training for professionals working with CYP on how to find and sign up to an NHS Dentist but specific work has underway with our Health Visitor's on signposting young families at the 2.5 Year check.
 - 90.8% of our children looked after had an up-to-date dental check completed on time in the year 24/25.
 - Further there is now the extended Free NHS Services (Up to 25): Care leavers in England are eligible for free NHS prescriptions, dental care, and eye care (sight tests) up to their 25th birthday¹⁴. This is being advertised widely through the Local Authority.

Implementation of the Supervised Toothbrushing Programme

13. Supervised toothbrushing (STB) is a classroom-based daily activity where children brush their teeth with fluoride toothpaste under the supervision of a trained adult. It usually takes 10 minutes per session including preparation, brushing, cleaning up and storage. Using fluoride toothpaste reduces the risk of tooth decay in children. STB is supplementary to at-home brushing.
14. On 7 March 2025, the Government announced the implementation of a national targeted supervised toothbrushing programme for children aged 3, 4, and 5 in the most deprived communities¹⁵. This initiative aims to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health outcomes. Funding eligibility and allocations were based on the number of 3- to 5-year-old children living in the 20% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
15. The Public Health team has commissioned Central London Community Healthcare Trist (CLCH) to deliver the scheme in H&F under the Provider Selector Regime (PSR)¹⁶. As our current Oral Health Promotion provider their existing links and ability to deliver effectively in short time scales has meant that we have been successful in implementing this programme. Implementation started in the new school year in September 2025. The Public Health team gathered data on schools with nursery and early years settings in areas classified as IMD levels 1 and 2. For schools not yet implementing supervised toothbrushing (STB), we are aiming to introduce the programme to ensure broader access to oral health support. Where STB is already in place, we may look to extend the initiative to schools in IMD levels 3 and 4, further expanding its reach. The rollout will be closely monitored, evaluated using the NHSE framework and findings will be reported back to OHID to assess impact and inform future developments.
16. Furthermore, following a national DHSC-Colgate initiative¹⁷, H&F has received toothbrushes and toothpastes which will be distributed over the next five years locally by our Oral Health Promotion team.

¹³ [Hospitals, GPs and dentists | London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham](#)

¹⁴ [Government extends free NHS services for care leavers - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ [Supervised toothbrushing for children to prevent tooth decay - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁶ [The Health Care Services \(Provider Selection Regime\) Regulations 2023](#)

¹⁷ [Hundreds of thousands of children benefit from major dental health drive - GOV.UK](#)

Targeted Dental Access for Children (TDAC) Pilot

17. The Targeted Dental Access for Children (TDAC) Pilot is a targeted offer for children and young people (CYP), designed to build a clear pathway for CYP who are facing barriers, have additional needs and/or are from our Core20Plus (20% most deprived) population.
18. This initiative promotes effective joint working between local dental services, primary care, community early years health and education services, including family hubs, specialised dental care, and other community assets.
19. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) have commissioned selected dental practices to:
 - Provide tailored dental care for children and young people, including longer appointments and oral health advice.
 - Collaborate with communities and stakeholders to tackle access barriers via a practice champion.
 - Serve as a local dental service for children new to care, working with family hubs to promote oral health and manage referrals.
20. In H&F two dental practices are included in this pilot;
 - Ghauri Dental Centre (W12 0LU)
 - The Bush Dental Clinic (W12 7JA)
21. The Public Health team are leading on coordinating the approach for this pilot in H&F. We have developed a referral pathway for professionals working with families and CYP to follow and ensure the right residents are accessing care through this route.
22. The Family Hubs are championing this work as the main referrers and are actively engaging families. We have also been engaging other professionals to utilise this pilot such as our Health Visitors, School Nurses, Oral Health Promotion Team, Youth Clubs, Libraries and many more. Engagement and training for professionals is ongoing.
23. Due to our extensive work that has gone on previously in the year on raising the awareness of oral health and encouraging/advertising NHS dental practices we are currently finding that uptake of this pilot are low. We will be expanding the referral pathways to GP's and targeting certain schools to try to engage residents who may not already be engaging with services but are part of the Core20PLUS population.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Distribution of dentists.

Appendix 2: The income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families in different local areas (called 'lower-layer super output areas', or LSOAs) across England.

Appendix 3: The Referral Pathway for TDAC.