

We asked

We asked for comments on the proposed 'Oral health Promotion Strategy' for the populations served by four local authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. We wanted to know whether the strategy would be a useful guide for partner organisations working collaboratively. We also wanted to know if the key priorities set out reflected the current needs of all people in relation to oral health promotion.

You said

There were 77 respondents to the consultation. 90% were from individuals and 10% from organisations representing groups of people with specific needs.

The vast majority (97%) of respondents agreed with the strategic vision of improving oral health of all people. Of the five strategic priorities, promoting healthier food and drink choices that are lower in sugar received the strongest support (96% strongly agreed) whilst the strategic priority on supervised tooth brushing and free tooth brushes received the lowest support – though still very supportive – with 91% of the respondents strongly agreeing to the priority.

Of the comments received, key themes raised by people include:

- Access to NHS dentists and the cost of dental treatment
- Provision of dental care for those with disability
- questions about fluoridation of water (this is not within the remit of this strategy)
- Quality of oral health care provision

Supportive suggestions were made about

- Including oral health promotion within primary care contacts, such as GPs, Midwives, health visitors and family support workers
- Working with dentists and dental practitioners to raise awareness on oral health promotion
- Teaching of oral health promotion to people working in the wider community and voluntary sector; care, social and education staff, in particular for young children, people dependent on care and carers.

We did

The high level priorities and objectives set out in the strategy were largely supported by the public consultation. However, a number of points were raised that relate to the delivery of the strategy. This feedback has been taken in to account in the development of the Oral Health Promotion Delivery Plan, which sets out a life course approach to improving oral health. It includes evidence based interventions that relate specifically to young children, vulnerable groups (the homeless, drug and alcohol users, those with disability), carers, older people and people living with dementia as well as ensuring oral health promoting activities also reach the working population. Teaching and training of community staff are core components of this plan.

Some issues raised by the consultation are beyond the scope of this strategy, such as water fluoridation and patient experience of dental services. The four local authorities work closely with Public Health England, NHS England as well as local dental professionals to ensure we support the promotion of good oral health among our communities and encourage equitable access to dental services. Specific issues raised have been communicated to the relevant organisation.

If you would like to hear more about, or get involved in, promoting oral health within our communities across Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset, please contact Paul Harwood, Dental Public Health Consultant at Public Health England at paul.harwood@phe.gov.uk or contact Jon Roberts, Chair of the Oral Health Promotion Steering group, at Jonathan.Roberts@n-somerset.gov.uk.

