

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 10 MAY 2004**

**REPORT ON: ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE - SUPPORTED TOOTHBRUSHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**REPORT BY: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY PLANNING)**

**REPORT NO: 328-2004**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise the Council of an Oral Health Initiative proposed as a Quality of Life project, to improve opportunities for children and maximise health gain with local authority resources (Report No 352-2003). This report provides an update on one of the Health & Care objectives highlighted in the Dundee City Council Plan 2003-2007 (Report No 685-2003). This also provides an update on an area of joint health improvement with partner organisation.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- approves the Oral Health Initiative, reflecting Local Authority corporate priorities and an area of joint health improvement with partner organisations and health alliances
- notes the programme of supported toothbrushing in primary schools
- remits the Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) to produce an update report in June 2005 stating progress made in achieving agreed targets with partner organisations

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The additional cost of introducing this initiative will be £25,000 in each of the years 2004/05 and 2005/06. Revenue funding is available from Quality of Life monies which have been approved for joint health work with young people for the period 2004-2006.

## **4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

Addressing health inequalities and improving public health is consistent with the theme of protecting health and preventing illness.

The report is consistent with the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, in particular through delivering services that help reduce health inequalities.

## **5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The network of 'Eating for Health' assistants in all primary schools will help ensure equality of access to this project for primary one children.

## 6 BACKGROUND

### 6.1 **Oral Health Initiative - Supported Toothbrushing in Primary One**

6.1.1 In December 2002, the Scottish Executive allocated Quality of Life funding to Dundee City Council spread over three financial years for the period 2003 - 2006. The aim of this funding is to :

- Improve the local environment, and
- Increase opportunities for children and young people

In June 2003, a special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee pledged £200,000 of Quality of Life monies for joint health improvement work targeting young people. Within that context, this proposed Oral Health initiative meets the above aim of increasing opportunities for children and young people and the proposal seeks financial approval.

6.1.2 There has been a national drive to improve oral health with the Scottish Executive producing a national strategy, "Towards Better Oral Health in Children" in 2003. Poor dental health in children is recognised as having a close association with deprivation and social exclusion. Oral health in children has been recommended as a potential indicator of health inequalities by the national 'Measuring Inequalities in Health Working Group'.

6.1.3 Locally, the Tayside Health Inequalities Strategy highlighted that more than half the city's children live in areas of high deprivation. Given the recognised association of poor dental health with deprivation and the fact that dental decay is a preventable condition, the Dundee City Council Plan, 2003/07 has highlighted the promotion of oral and dental health targeting children as one of its partnership objectives. In addition, the NHS Tayside Health Improvement Committee has endorsed oral and dental health as a health improvement priority.

6.1.4 Discussions between Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside Community Dental Health to address oral health in children identified a preferred approach locally. It was agreed that a supported tooth brushing programme targeting primary one children in school and at home should be developed. This was supported by the findings of an earlier dental research pilot in Dundee schools which highlighted that such an approach significantly reduced the level of dental decay in children.

6.1.5 A key part of this project is the support provided by staff especially appointed under the auspices of the Education Department's national programme 'Hungry for Success'. The main purpose of these new posts is to ensure healthier eating regimes and the promotion of good eating habits among primary school children in Dundee. These posts have a central role in the Oral Health initiative by overseeing toothbrushing activity and maintaining toothbrushing materials and storage. Oral Health and Nutrition are recognised as having a close association.

6.1.6 Implementation of the Oral Health initiative is proposed during school full years 2004/05 and 2005/06. The intention is to target all children entering primary one in August 2004 and August 2005. This approach was considered to be appropriate as the cost of targeting all schools compared to areas of high risk was marginal. In addition this approach will also remove the element of stigma in highlighting specific children at high risk of dental decay.

NHS Tayside will provide oral health training for Education support staff and this will take place prior to the start of school year in August 2004. In addition, NHS Tayside will meet the cost of monitoring the first phase of the project through the provision of an additional school dental inspection when the first intake of children reach primary three or four.

- 6.1.7 Indicative costs of the project are ascertained to be £50,000 for two full school years. These costs are based on an estimated primary one intake of 1550 children for one year:-

Materials	£18,000
Storage Equipment	£ 4,000
Training/Materials	<u>£ 3,000</u>
Total	£25,000

This project will complement the Toothology Project which is currently underway in primary schools in Dundee and aims to improve oral health for children at home.

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

'Towards Better Oral Health in Children' - Scottish Executive 2003

'Inequalities in Health' - Measuring Inequalities in Health Working Group, Scottish Executive 2003

Tayside Health Inequalities Strategy - NHS Tayside 2003

Dundee City Council Plan 2003-2007

Chris Ward

Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning)..... 07/05/04