

Inquiry into Children's Oral Health

Evidence from Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service

Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service supports, promotes and develops the participation of voluntary organisations, community groups and individuals in the voluntary sector in Neath Port Talbot. The organisation is a key partner in the development and implementation of local strategies, including the Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan.

Neath Port Talbot CVS was a contributor to the Neath Port Talbot Health Needs Assessment which informed the Health and Well Being Strategy and identified the priorities. Priority 6 -Dental Health of Younger Children highlights the significant high percentage of decayed , missing and filled teeth in children under the age of 5 in Neath Port Talbot, which is higher than the Welsh average.

The Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy aims to reduce the percentage of children and young people with missing, decayed or filled teeth by 2014, by implementing the Designed to Smile (D2S) Programme.

Neath Port Talbot CVS supports the work of the D2S steering group that has been set up to take this Programme forward in Neath Port Talbot.

In relation to take up, the Health Needs Assessment informs us that Neath Port Talbot has a higher percentage than the Welsh average of DMFT in 5 year olds, according to the D2S steering group.

The target figure for take up of the supervised brushing scheme for 3 -5 year olds has been exceeded across a range of settings, with only a small number of schools declining to participate.

Neath Port Talbot CVS as an organisation that has a community focus is pleased to see that this programme is reaching organisations, services and community groups working with children, young people and families including those who are more vulnerable.

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It is important that the delivery of the Programme takes account that families who are disadvantaged do not necessarily live in a deprived area and therefore actions should be taken to ensure the D2S Programme is delivered throughout the whole of the Neath Port Talbot area.

We agree with and seek to promote early intervention and prevention as a model of good practice. This includes educating parents, carers and children about the benefits of tooth brushing and fluoride contact.

It is important to take into consideration other factors which impact children's oral health, such influences as diet and poor drink choices. These bad choices can have a detrimental affect on children's teeth when they are young and also contribute to bad eating habits as they get older, causing further health problems including obesity and diabetes which can also have an effect on an individual's oral health.

There appears to have been a concerted effort made by the steering group and key staff which has been effective in developing links with other appropriate initiatives, strengthening and consolidating the delivery of the Programme. Neath Port Talbot CVS welcomes and supports this cohesive approach and considers this as crucial to the ongoing work of the Programme.

In conclusion, with the evidence that Neath Port Talbot has a high prevalence of tooth decay we would ask that the Committee maintains the Designed to Smile Programme, and if possible considers an extension of the Programme, broadening the remit, to build on the work that has already been undertaken.

Neath Port Talbot CVS is well placed to promote and support the ongoing implementation and further development of this Programme in the future.