

Question under Rule 9.3 - from Cllr A Kemp

The recent ICP "Short-Term Dental Plan" shows that West Norfolk and Great Yarmouth, have the highest prevalence of tooth decay in the East of England among 5 years olds, and that increasing numbers of 15-19 year-olds in Norfolk and Waveney are being referred to secondary care for extractions. The report shows the urgent need to improve dental outcomes for children and young people in West Norfolk, as well as access to NHS dentists and secondary care services for all residents. Poor access to dental care impacts on physical and mental health.

The NHS and Norfolk County Council need to work together to bring back the School Dental Service.

This had a key role in prevention. I have written to Public Health at the County Council, to ask them to bring back this important service, for the best start in life for every child.

Can the Cabinet Member commit to commissioning the School Dental Service?

Response on Question to Full Council from Cabinet Member For Public Health And Wellbeing – Bill Borrett

Although Norfolk County Council does not fund dentistry it is supporting NHS Norfolk and Waveney with both the short term and long term strategies on oral health. We remain concerned about rates of tooth decay in children and young people and are working with our partners in the NHS to promote good oral health.

Promoting oral health and the prevention of tooth decay in children and young people are important Public Health issues and it is established that good oral health contributes to ensuring every child has the best start in life. Most tooth decay is preventable, which is why a key part of our approach is to provide support and information in settings such as early years and schools to help children, parents and families put in place early routines which promote and protect oral health by improving diet and reducing consumption of sugary food and drinks and regular tooth brushing. In Norfolk County Council's Healthy Child Programme, Health visitors and School Nursing teams play an important role, providing access to clear and detailed nutrition and diet advice and support and information from pregnancy, through the early years when children's teeth are developing.

There is support and information available to parents via Just One Norfolk, Just One Number, the Start for Life programme and Family Hubs. Our Early Childhood and Family Service has also delivered targeted work in some areas, where there are high levels of decay.

"The NHS also commission Community Dental Services (CDS) which delivers the Healthy Smiles Programme. This provides free training to schools to help them support children to understand the importance of oral health. Schools can also work towards a Health Smiles + standard, which includes the provision of supervised tooth brushing.

Norfolk County Council continue to work with NHS Norfolk and Waveney to identify and maximise opportunities to enhance oral health promotion, as well as supporting its work to improve access to local dentistry."