

08 June 2010

CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH 'NEVER BEEN BETTER'

Children's dental health has 'never been better', according to a report published today which reveals that in the Scottish Borders 71% of primary 7 children have no obvious sign of tooth decay – higher than the Scottish average of 64%.

The report, by the National Dental Inspection Programme, reveals dental data for primary 7 children collected from all Board areas during 2008/09.

The report reveals:

- In Borders, 402 11 year olds were examined out of 1,397 primary 7 children
- In Borders, 71% of primary 7 children had no obvious decay.
- Overall in Scotland 64% of 11 year old children had no obvious decay. This is the first time the national target of 60% with no obvious decay has been achieved.
- The average number of decayed missing and filled teeth in Borders was 0.61 teeth compared with 0.88 for Scotland as a whole. This is the lowest level of decay in this age group in the mainland health boards and is only bettered by Shetland.
- The care index across the whole of Scotland is improving, so more of the decay is being filled. Overall 50% of the decay is filled, rather than extracted or still presenting as untreated decay in Scotland as a whole. This has improved from 36.4% in 2005.
- Improvements in oral health have been achieved by preventive activity by dentists and hygienists in partnership with parents. It has also been supported by the Childsmile programme in all nurseries of toothbrushing with Fluoride toothpaste, Fluoride varnish applications, the extension of the brushing programme on a targeted basis to primary schools and the Childsmile Practice programme that encourages early registration.
- Other members of the healthcare team play an important role in achieving these results, such as health visitors, school nurses and the Borders Oral Health Team. They encourage a healthy diet high in fresh fruit and vegetables and limitation of the frequency of sugary snacks and drinks, plus brushing with fluoride toothpaste in the way recommended by the dental team.

Ralph Roberts, Chief Operating Officer for NHS Borders said: "NHS Borders is committed to improving the dental health of communities throughout the Scottish Borders. Feedback from both staff and patients has been very positive to the significant investment we have recently made into dental care and the opening of new dental centers at Hawick and Coldstream.

"This survey of P7 children shows that dental health in this age group has improved and that in Borders we are making real strides in improving the dental health of children.

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“However this work needs to continue as a priority to ensure young people learn good dental habits early on that they can take with them into adult life.”

Ends

Notes to Editors:

Scottish Government news releases: 8 June 2010

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2010/06/08093934>

National Dental Inspection Programme (NDIP) Report

2009 <http://www.scottishdental.org/index.aspx?o=1019&newsitem=1023>

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