



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Health and Wellbeing Board

Thursday 27 November 2025

Oral Health Promotion for Children

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Kelly Middleton - Cabinet Member: Public Health and Healthier Communities
Lead Director:	Helen Onions - Director of Public Health
Service Area:	Health & Wellbeing
Report Author:	Clare Williams – Public Health Commissioner
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Health & Wellbeing Board – 27 November 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision

1.1 The HWB is requested to note the contents of the report.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 On 7th March 2025 Ministers announced plans to implement a national targeted supervised toothbrushing programme for children aged 3, 4 and 5 years in the most deprived communities. Telford and Wrekin Council received a grant of £50,984 to support supervised toothbrushing expansion. The purpose of this report is to update the HWB on current supervised toothbrushing delivery across the Borough and the planned expansion with the new grant allocation. The report also provides an update on the 5 year old dental survey 204/2025.

3. Background

3.1 5 year old dental survey findings

Oral Health Promotion for Children

The national 2023/2024 oral health survey of 5 year old school children, indicated that 27% of Telford and Wrekin children examined had dental decay. This compares with the England average of 22.4% and West Midlands region of 21.9%. The local oral health survey is undertaken by the dental services team at Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust. The oral health examination involves a visual inspection of a child's mouth to detect any dental decay.

The oral health survey is based on a minimum sample size and during the 2023/24 school year, 261 5 year old children were examined, a participation rate of 53.7%. This participation rate is much improved since the 2021/2022 oral health survey, when participation rate was 34.2%. The community dental service team have worked with the local authority to improve the participation rate of the most recent oral health survey.

The oral health survey of 5 year old schoolchildren is bi-annual and will be next undertaken during in the 2025/2026 school year.

3.1.1 Brilliant Brushers Supervised Toothbrushing

There is strong evidence that daily supervised toothbrushing in early years settings significantly reduces tooth decay, especially in more deprived communities. It is one of the most cost effective public health interventions in early childhood.

In Telford and Wrekin, the Brilliant Brusher's supervised toothbrushing scheme has run since 2022, funded regionally by the NHS, and delivered by the Healthy Smiles team at Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust. Brilliant Brushers was developed using the NICE guideline on oral health improvement in early years settings, Public Health England (now the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) national supervised toothbrushing toolkit, and Department for Education and NHS guidance on hygiene and infection control in nurseries and schools and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which requires providers to support children's oral health as part of promoting overall good health.

Brilliant Brushers supervised toothbrushing programme is designed for children aged 3 to 5 years in targeted early years settings, including day nurseries and mainstream schools. It is also available for ages 3 and above in SEND schools. The programme aims to reduce the risk of tooth decay by offering to settings located in the most disadvantaged communities, specifically those within Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles 1 and 2 (i.e. the most deprived 20% of areas).

To ensure supervised toothbrushing initiatives are directed where they are most needed, data is used to identify communities with the greatest oral health challenges among children. In addition to the proportion of children living in areas ranked in the bottom two deciles of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 1 & 2),

the percentage of children receiving funded early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds and those eligible for free school meals (FSM) are also considered.

This targeted approach enables the prioritisation of day nurseries and schools where children are statistically more likely to experience significant oral health inequalities, ensuring the programme is aligned to national public health priorities.

The scheme provides comprehensive staff training, regular monitoring and support and essential toothbrushing resources, enabling staff to supervise daily toothbrushing in a safe, effective, and fun way. It also promotes positive oral health behaviours by encouraging children to continue brushing their teeth at home.

To date, 33 out of 54 Telford & Wrekin settings are participating in Brilliant Brushers. This includes 13 day nurseries, 19 mainstream schools and 1 SEND school, and overall nearly 2,000 children now brushing daily. The Healthy Smile Team is currently working at full capacity and will benefit from the grant funding to extend Brilliant Brushers in Telford and Wrekin.

4 Summary of main proposals

4.1 Supervised toothbrushing grant

Following the grant of £50,984, Telford and Wrekin Council plans to enhance the existing Brilliant Brushers supervised toothbrushing scheme delivered by the Healthy Smiles Team at Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust. The funding is initially for one year, but expected to be recurrent.

The supervised toothbrushing grant will allow the Brilliant Brushers supervised toothbrushing scheme to be offered to year 1 children in existing day nurseries and mainstream schools and to re-offer expansion in all Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) areas 1 and 2, and if capacity allows to extend to IMD 3 and 4, and SEND reaching more children in Telford.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Government provides funding specifically for the activities set out in the report on the basis of a national targeted approach.

6 Key Risks

6.1 There are no risk associated with the activities set out in this report.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The Council is using the additional Government grant of £50,984 to fund enhancements to the existing Brilliant Brushers supervised toothbrushing scheme which is being delivered by Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust. The funding being utilised is additional Government grant of £50,984, delivered as part of the ring fenced 2025/26 Public Health Grant. The scheme also included additional resources such as toothbrushes and toothpaste to implement and expand targeted supervised toothbrushing scheme for children aged 3,4 and 5 in the most deprived communities.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The Council has legal responsibilities to undertake public health activities within the Borough. The activities set out in this report are one way in which the Council can demonstrate it is complying with its statutory duties, whilst also promoting good oral health at an early age.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 Borough-wide impact, but particularly wards with highest levels socio-economic deprivation.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 None

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 Brilliant Brushers supervised toothbrushing programme aims to reduce the risk of tooth decay by offering to settings located in the most disadvantaged communities, specifically those within Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles 1 and 2.

13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 None

14.0 Background Papers

None

15.0 Appendices

A None

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by

Date sent

Date signed off

Initials

Oral Health Promotion for Children

Director	17/11/2025	19/11/2025	HO
Legal	17/11/2025	19/11/2025	RP
Finance	17/11/2025	18/11/2025	RP