

Scottish Borders Health & Social Care Partnership



# ORAL HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2024-2036



Scottish Borders  
Health and Social Care  
PARTNERSHIP

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# INTRODUCTION

Between 2018-2020 an Oral Health Needs Assessment was conducted to better understand the oral health of the population of NHS Borders, dental and oral health services in place and how well these met the needs of the population. The needs assessment would be the first step towards developing a Strategic Plan for Oral Health and Dental Services.

The needs assessment report was completed in early 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic began to take hold. The strategic plan was placed on hold while we focussed on the pandemic response, a safe return to delivering dental care and further challenges which arose as we emerged from the pandemic. Dental services remain under significant pressure; however, we feel the time is now right to revisit the findings of the needs assessment. Developing our strategic plan will help guide us through current challenges, enable us to support people to take care of their oral health and work with dental services to continue to deliver high quality care for people of the Borders.

## WHY IS ORAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?

Oral health is an important aspect of general health and wellbeing. While oral diseases are mostly preventable, they remain common and share risk factors with a number of general health problems. Promoting good oral health is closely linked to wider public health priorities and can help reduce the need for treatment and demands on dental services.

Oral health is key to overall general health and wellbeing.

Oral health has been linked to a number of other health conditions - good oral health can help prevent or improve management of general health.

Poor oral health can result in pain, infection and can affect appearance and ability to eat or speak comfortably.

A healthy mouth can boost confidence and mental health.

# ORAL HEALTH AND DENTAL SERVICES

*“Improvements in oral health cannot be achieved solely by providing dental services. It is important that we tackle the broader issues which impact on poor oral health”.*

## Oral Health Improvement Plan, Scottish Government 2018

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*High quality dental services are an important factor in maximising oral health, ensuring any dental problems can be effectively treated and providing opportunities for preventive advice and care. It is important to note that dental services cannot work alone to deliver oral health and the most important influences on oral health are factors in day-to-day life outwith the clinical setting*

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The measures we take on a daily basis to look after our mouths: brushing twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and eating a healthy diet which is low in sugar are essential for oral health.

Some individuals may face greater challenges maintaining a healthy mouth, for example those who require support with personal care or who may face challenges accessing healthy food options. Through this strategy we hope to create environments that support oral health and increase awareness across local systems to enable everyone to enjoy the best possible standard of oral health.

General Dental Services	Public Dental Services	Hospital Dental Services
Provide more than 90% of all dental care	NHS managed service	Specialist secondary care service
Independent contractor model (not NHS employees)	ONLY provide NHS treatment	Patients seen on referral
Provide a mix of NHS and private treatments	Remit for patients who cannot be treated in GDS (special care, medical complexity, extreme anxiety)	Specialists in NHS Borders: oral surgery, orthodontics
No geographic ‘catchment’	Emergency dental care for unregistered patients	



# Oral Health in the Scottish Borders

## ORAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT



[Click here to view full report - Oral Health Needs Assessment](#)

### Key Findings

#### Population

The Borders has a higher proportion of older people than the national average and this is projected to increase.

Much of the population live in rural areas and require to travel to access services.

Two areas in the Borders are within the 10% most deprived in Scotland. Area based measures may be less sensitive in rural areas and we must be aware of "hidden deprivation".



#### Oral Health

Oral health in children improved significantly since 2000. The Borders are above the national average.

People are retaining natural teeth into older age, with an ongoing requirement for dental treatment and increasing complexity of care.

Some population groups are at greater risk of poor oral health e.g. people experiencing social exclusion, those dependant on others for support.



#### Dental Services

Patients gave positive feedback about dental services.

There is an ongoing need for public dental services to support access to routine dental care.

Some patients reported challenges to accessing NHS dental care if they were not already registered.

Many dental services were working at or near capacity, with several reporting difficulties recruiting staff.



#### Conclusions

The report highlighted a significant demand from those wishing to register for NHS dental care.

Access to NHS dentistry, particularly in the more remote areas was a concern both to members of the public and dental professionals.

Challenges in recruiting dentists and Dental Care Professionals was noted as a pressure likely to impact on availability of dental services.



#### Further Information

To view the full Oral Health Needs Assessment report scan the QR code or click on the link below:



[NHSB Oral Health Needs Assessment](#)

*The needs assessment concluded that ongoing work is required to ensure all members of the population in the Borders benefit from the best possible standard of oral health. The high and growing proportion of older adults is expected to introduce new challenges for oral health, both through meeting daily oral care needs and managing additional complexities of providing dental treatment.*

<p>The 2020 Needs Assessment identified 10 priorities for action:</p>	1	Raising the profile of oral health	2	Maintaining and improving oral health
	3	Maintaining access	4	Encouraging recruitment and retention
	5	Meeting the needs of ageing patients	6	Meeting the needs of dental priority groups
	7	Developing the role of the Public Dental Service	8	Developing the Public Dental Service workforce
	9	Developing patient pathways to dental services	10	Networking and engagement with dental teams and wider partners

## Current Situation

Since 2020 when the needs assessment was completed these initial indications of a dental access challenge have become more pronounced. Prior to developing this plan the findings of the needs assessment were reviewed to ensure they remained relevant following the disruption of the COVID19 pandemic and in light of ongoing pressures. The review confirmed that the recommendations continue to be valid and, in many cases, have become an even greater priority.

## Local data

Local and national data help to outline the oral health status of the population and allow monitoring of changes over time. These data were recently collated in a report which can be found [here](#).

# DELIVERING THE STRATEGIC PLAN



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**The vision was developed collaboratively by members of the Oral Health and Dental Services Strategy Steering Group, including representatives from all branches of dental services and a public member.**

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Views were sought from all members of the group following the 2023 review of relevance and validity of the needs assessment findings. Wording was collated from members' suggestions and the proposed vision shared more widely for comment before the final version was adopted.

**Over the next twelve years we will aim to realise this vision by taking a person-centred approach to:**

- Create environments that support oral health
- Work with partners to maximise oral health and prevent dental disease
- Strive for high quality dental services which are available and accessible to all
- Promote excellence in dental care through continual improvement

Delivering this local Oral Health Strategic Plan aligns to the objectives and ways of working outlined in the [Health and Social Care Strategic Framework 2023-26](#) and the findings and recommendations from the [Oral Health Needs Assessment](#).

We will use national and local strategies and policies to influence this work and will ensure the necessary activity occurs to deliver the best outcomes for the people of the Borders with a focus on reducing inequalities. Achieving our objectives will require action to be taken within and beyond dentistry, working with partners across the whole system to create conditions which will support and improve oral health in the Borders. We will develop an appropriate framework to measure the delivery of these outcomes.

## Themes for delivery

**The needs assessment’s ten priorities for action** sit under the oral health strategy vision and have been streamlined into 4 themes which form the basis for this strategic plan. These themes will guide formation of the action plans which will be developed in 3 year periods over the next twelve years.

# OUR VISION

Everyone in the Borders will enjoy excellent oral health as a key part of their overall health and wellbeing.

THEMES	Maximising oral health	Access to dental care	Developing pathways	Partnership working
PRIORITY ACTIONS	Raising the profile of oral health	Maintaining and improving access	Meeting the needs of ageing patients	Raising the profile of oral health
	Maintaining and improving oral health	Encouraging recruitment and retention	Meeting the needs of dental priority groups	Maintaining and improving oral health
	Meeting the needs of ageing patients	Developing the role of the Public Dental Service	Developing the Public Dental Service workforce	Meeting the needs of ageing patients
	Meeting the needs of dental priority groups		Developing patient pathways to dental services	Meeting the needs of dental priority groups
	Networking and engagement with dental teams and wider partners			Networking and engagement with dental teams and wider partners



# Local Oral Health Plan Commitments

This strategic plan is ambitious in scope and depth and is intended to explore and/or deliver on aims which are based on the agreed vision and relate to the four themes detailed below.

## Oral Health Strategic Plan 2024-2036



### Vision Statement

Everyone in the Borders will enjoy excellent oral health as a key part of their overall health and wellbeing

#### Key Themes

#### Aims

##### Maximising oral health

- Raise awareness of the importance of oral health across patients, public & partners
- Increase recognition of oral health as everyone's responsibility
- Focus our work on the wider determinants of oral health, taking a common risk factor approach, and developing supportive environments
- Deliver for the whole population but with focus on greatest need
- Continue delivery and local development of the 5 Oral Health Improvement programmes for priority groups
- Extend the reach and external awareness of Oral Health Improvement Team

##### Access to dental care

- Increase the availability of routine NHS dental care
- Maintain Emergency Dental Services in & out of hours to meet needs
- Facilitate "priority group" patients to be seen in the most appropriate settings
- Further develop access to specialist and enhanced services
- Attract dentists and members of the wider dental team to work in the Borders
- Retain the dental workforce through providing opportunities for development, career progression and in parallel with ongoing service development

##### Developing Pathways

- Improve awareness of roles of different branches of dental services to facilitate appropriate referrals
- Transition the Public Dental Services to a specialised service for patients with more complex needs
- Establish closer working between clinical dental services and Oral Health Improvement
- Ongoing development of pathways and referral criteria across primary care, secondary care and Oral Health Improvement

##### Partnership working

- Increase recognition that oral health is dependent on factors outwith dental care and raise awareness of the role of our wider partners
- Strengthen and develop interprofessional relationships within and beyond dentistry
- Build two way relationships with partners across Health and Social Care and beyond
- Improve understanding of services and support available to maximise oral health across the system
- Bring together dental colleagues and services to strengthen collaborative working and shared care arrangements
- Strengthen communication within and outwith the dental profession

***These aims will be at the forefront in developing the underlying 3 year action plans.***



# MONITORING PROGRESS AND PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE

Delivery of the plan will be overseen by the Dental Services and Oral Health Strategy Group. Collaboration with stakeholders including service users and colleagues in Health and Social Care services will ensure each delivery plan remains relevant and is appropriately prioritised in response to emerging issues throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

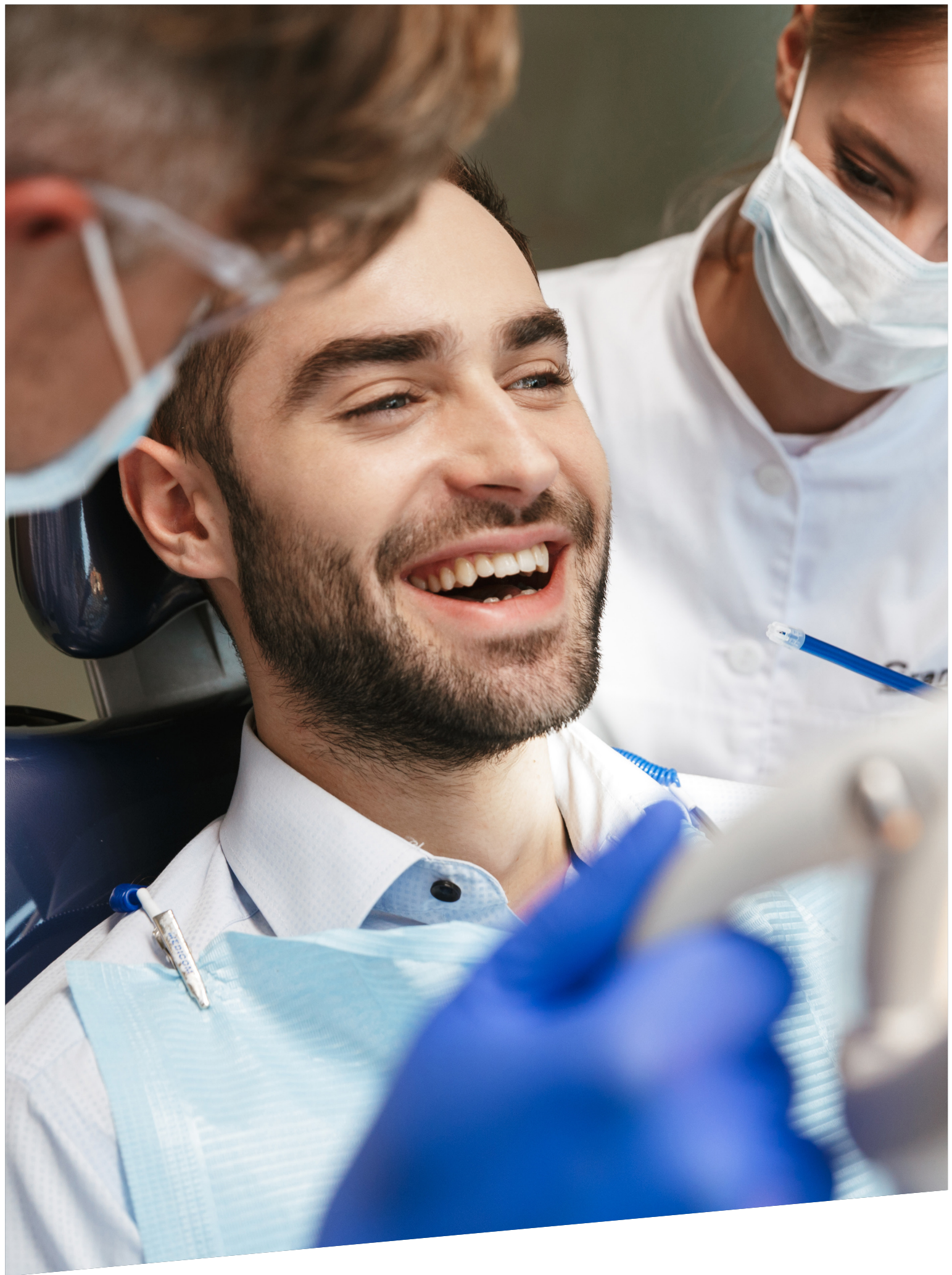
The governance and progress of this plan will be reported annually to the HSCP Joint Executive, Integration Joint Board Strategic Planning Group, and Integration Joint Board and through NHS Borders to the Quality and Sustainability Board. Subsequent action plans will be reported to the same governance groups tri-annually.

## WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK

We have produced the Oral Health Strategic Plan to set out our long-term goals for oral health and dental services and provide a structure to guide us towards these goals over the coming years. We would appreciate your feedback on the plan by visiting <https://forms.office.com/e/fQweiP1yZj>. Thank you.







### Alternative format/language

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