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24 December 2021

Dear colleagues

### **Additional Funding to Support Children's Oral Health in Scotland**

The Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP) describes toothbrushing as one of the most effective methods for preventing caries and recommends all children should brush their teeth, or have their teeth brushed for them, with appropriate strength fluoride toothpaste at least twice per day.

The aim of the Childsmile programme is to improve oral health, support the reduction in inequalities in children's oral health and ensure access to toothbrushing and wider dental services for every child across Scotland.

Since Childsmile began in 2006 we have seen the percentage of primary 1 children, free from obvious caries experience, rise from around 40% in the early 2000s to 74% in 2020. We have also seen a reduction in the number of decayed, missing and filled teeth in this age group over the same period of time (from 2.76 to 1.04).

Childsmile has worked closely with health visiting and family nurse partnership teams during this period and together we have established a service which ensures all children are offered a toothbrushing pack and free flow drinking cup in their first year of life.

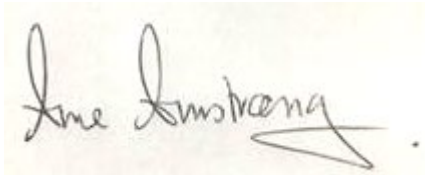
As a result of the continuing capacity restrictions relating to aerosol generating procedures in dentistry, available appointments are being clinically prioritised, leaving a backlog of care, and treatment for children still waiting to be seen. In this event, a funding package to safeguard longer term oral health considerations and to strengthen Childsmile prevention and education has been made available by Scottish Government, and will see the distribution of over 400,000 additional toothbrushing packs. The Winter Preparedness and Recovery of Children's Oral Health letter was sent to Chief Executives on the 17 November and can be seen in appendix 1.

This presents us with an opportunity to increase the number of toothbrushing packs available to health visiting and family nurse partnership teams to distribute to support all families and particular those families who are recognised as having the greatest needs as part of their usual input to these families. The funding allows us to offer the equivalent of a pack to all children at their 8 month, 13-15 month and 27-30 month universal visits. These packs will complement the oral health messages already outlined in the Public Health Resources Toolkit of the Health Visiting Pathway at these life stages. We understand this may not always be possible and we also acknowledge that primary and community care teams will know of other routes for distribution of these packs to ensure we achieve as wide a reach as possible. Exploring and utilising additional approaches to distribution is encouraged.

Local NHS Childsmile teams are in receipt of the new toothbrushing packs and we encourage you to build on your existing relationships with your Childsmile colleagues (<http://www.child-smile.org.uk/contacts/coordinators.aspx> ) to agree local processes and logistics for distribution of the packs to families at, or around, the suggested time points to enhance service delivery in 2022 and in line with service provision in place during these current times whilst they respond to Covid 19.

We will keep this new development under review and will welcome feedback on delivery so we can fine tune future work in this area.

Yours sincerely



**ANNE ARMSTRONG**  
Deputy Chief Nursing Officer

## Appendix 1



Adobe Acrobat  
Document