

# Core brief

Wednesday, 03 August 2016

## Introduction

This issue details an NHSGGC press release on a dramatic drop in child tooth extractions.

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## Dramatic drop in child tooth extractions

Children in Greater Glasgow and Clyde have even more reasons to smile today as figures reveal that tooth extractions have dropped more than 52% since the millennium.

In 2000-2001, there were 26,355 teeth removed from the mouths of children in the NHSGGC area, dropping to 12,516 by 2015-2016 – the biggest percentage drop of any health board area in Scotland.

While children have teeth pulled out for a number of reasons including trauma to the mouth or for orthodontic reasons, the figures undoubtedly show the success of initiatives aimed at reducing levels of tooth decay.

Karen Murray, NHSGGC's lead for Oral Health said: "These figures are hugely encouraging and great news for children throughout Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Teeth extractions can be very traumatic for children so any reduction – and this is a dramatic one – needs to be applauded."

Back in 2005 the Scottish Dental National Action Plan identified high levels of tooth decay and inequalities in child oral health. The main aim was to reduce tooth decay in children and led to the introduction of the Childsmile Programme in 2011.

The principles of Childsmile are embedded in schools, nurseries and primary care dental services, meaning every child has access to free, daily, supervised toothbrushing in nursery and dental packs to support toothbrushing at home. In areas of highest need there is also a fluoride varnish programme, which gives teeth added protection against decay.

Throughout NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area toothbrushing is part of the normal school day for primary school children.

National Dental Inspection Programme results in 2005 showed the proportion of P1 and P7 children in Greater Glasgow & Clyde who had no tooth decay was 47%.

Following the implementation of the Childsmile Programme and partnership working, the 2014-15 results showed the proportion of P1 children in Greater Glasgow and Clyde who had no tooth decay increased to 65% and for P7 children increased to 72%.

Karen added: "There still remain high levels of disease and inequalities but by working in partnership with Health and Social Care Partnerships, Primary Care Dental Services, schools and nurseries we have made tremendous progress in the area of child dental health.

"We will continue to work towards addressing known issues of oral health inequalities and improving child dental health for all children throughout our area."

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