

25th June 2019

Margaret Reilly
Healthwatch Worcestershire
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
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Dear Margaret,

Healthwatch Worcestershire - Going to the Dentist– Worcestershire County Council Public Health response

Many thanks for your report and for the opportunity to respond to recommendations made within the report for Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

As you detail in your report WCC has a duty to improve the health of the population which includes oral health as an important factor of overall health. In recognition of this duty we set up and continue to chair a multi-agency steering group on oral health improvement. This group has been considering the current position in Worcestershire relative to recommendations contained within the NICE Public Health guidelines (PH55) on Oral Health for Local Authorities and partners. The primary recommendation of this guidance was to complete and publish an Oral Health Needs Assessment (OHNA) which was completed in May 2017 and is available at; http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20122/joint_strategic_needs_assessment

To enable a continued focus on the oral health of the population in Worcestershire it was recommended in the OHNA that oral health should be included in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This has been actioned and ensures that trends on oral health indicators, can be monitored at Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) on an annual basis.

The steering group are now working on a detailed action plan with the aim to publish this at the Health and Wellbeing Board on **24th September 2019**. This plan will give further detail to how we plan to as a health and care economy encourage a preventative approach to oral health. This plan will detail strategies on how to raise awareness of the health implications of poor oral health amongst the general population. Specifically detailing how we plan to address at-risk groups, including older people, under 5's and those who are at more risk of poor oral health for example people with disabilities, those who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation and those who live or work in areas where fluoridation is not available.

I look forward to Healthwatch presenting the Going to the Dentist report alongside the OHNA and action plan at the board in September. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance or provide further clarifications.

Yours sincerely

Dr Frances Howie
Director of Public Health
Worcestershire County Council

cc Dr Kathryn Cobain Public Health Consultant lead for Oral health improvement