

Prevention and Management of Dental Caries in Children

Guidance Implementation Summary

For Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP) guidance, information about potential barriers and facilitators for implementation is sought at various stages during the development process, such as during scoping, external consultation and peer review, and at other times pre-publication. This may include financial and organisational barriers that operate at the policy-level in addition to practice-, practitioner- and patient-level barriers. The impact of these potential barriers is considered during the development of the guidance, and the guidance recommendations, content and format may be influenced or changed as a result.

Much of this work is carried out in collaboration with SDCEP's partner programme TRiADS (Translation Research in a Dental Setting), a multidisciplinary research collaboration which aims to develop and evaluate guidance implementation strategies to improve the knowledge-to-practice gap in primary care dentistry in Scotland. Reports of the results of TRiADS research are provided on its website (www.triads.org.uk).

This document provides an ongoing summary of the potential barriers and facilitators to implementation of the *Prevention and Management of Dental Caries in Children* guidance recommendations, information on how these influenced the second and third editions of the guidance and updates on any developments since publication of the guidance that may affect implementation.

Potential barriers/facilitators	Pre- and post-publication activities/developments – 2nd edition (2018) <i>(e.g. changes made to the guidance, provision of implementation tools, educational activities)</i>	Pre- and post-publication activities/developments – 3rd edition (2025) <i>(e.g. changes made to the guidance, provision of implementation tools, educational activities)</i>
Format of the guidance		
<p>Concerns were raised at consultation for the 2nd edition about the wide scope of the guidance and, with a lot of detail included, the resulting lengthy document.</p> <p>Feedback from a scoping exercise prior to updating for the 3rd edition again included some comments about the length of the guidance document.</p>	<p>Given the popularity of the first edition of this guidance, and its use in undergraduate education, the Guidance Development Group was keen to maintain the level of detail provided.</p> <p>A summary of the key recommendations was included at the front of the main guidance to make them easily accessed.</p> <p>A separate short version of the guidance (Guidance in Brief) was also supplied that included the key recommendations, related clinical practice advice and some of the decision support illustrations from the main guidance.</p> <p>In 2019, the Guidance in Brief was included as a toolkit within SDCEP's Dental Companion smartphone and desktop app. This presented information in a layered format, allowing the user to decide how much depth to explore a particular topic of interest. The content was also searchable, facilitating rapid access to information of interest.</p>	<p>The 3rd edition is presented within a dedicated website to aid accessibility, navigation and updating. The website presentation allows users to more easily focus on the sections relevant to their needs, without having to view all of the guidance content.</p> <p>Guides to navigation and how to use the website are included. A summary Guidance in Brief is again provided, both as a web-based version and a downloadable pdf version suitable for printing.</p>
Service provision		
<p>Concerns were raised at consultation for the 2nd edition about insufficient remuneration within NHS Scotland to deliver the care recommended in the draft guidance e.g. no</p>	<p>Remuneration is beyond the scope of the guidance. However, a report of pre- and post-publication questionnaires found some reductions in the percentage of participants who felt that there was</p>	<p>The SDR was revised in 2023 and this included changes to aspects of care related to children's oral health, such as Enhanced preventive advice and treatment.</p>

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<p>fees for toothbrushing instruction, radiographs, fissure sealant top up; Childsmile fees only for children who are <6 years of age; there is a need for prior approval for several of the recommended strategies.</p> <p>Insufficient time and remuneration for caries prevention and management were reported in a scoping study carried out in 2023 to be potential barriers to implementation of the the 3rd edition of the guidance. NHS pressures and difficulties accessing dental services were also reported as barriers.</p>	<p>insufficient remuneration for aspects of care including fluoride varnish and fissure sealant application, bitewing radiographs, delivering personalised oral health promotion and dietary advice, and caries risk assessment.</p> <p>The Scottish Government’s Oral Health Improvement plan (2018) aims to support a preventive approach to oral health care and to modernise dental healthcare services, including revision of the payment system. Consequently, the guidance may inform the process of updating how dental care for children is remunerated in Scotland.</p>	
Training		
<p>Several consultees for the 2nd edition identified a need to develop knowledge and skills on several aspects of the guidance (e.g. in certain caries management techniques, motivational interviewing, behaviour management, providing additional support).</p> <p>In interviews prior to publication of the 3rd edition, practitioners identified knowledge and training needs to facilitate implementation of the updated recommendations and advice, including for practical aspects of silver diamine fluoride</p>	<p>Since 2018, NHS Education for Scotland has offered numerous courses that address several of the knowledge and skills gaps identified. Courses include: Child Protection and Welfare; Dental Caries in Young Children - Diagnosis and Management; Paediatric Dentistry into practice; Motivational Interviewing; Health & Nutritional Guidance; Food and Health; Health inequalities, Child Poverty and Children Rights. Several of these are provided to support Childsmile, the national caries prevention initiative.</p>	<p>The updated guidance includes detailed descriptions of the practical aspects of the techniques for SDF and pulpotomy in permanent teeth, in addition to information about the evidence base, case selection, contraindications and consent.</p> <p>An NHS Education for Scotland (NES) CPD webinar focusing on the main changes in the 3rd edition of the guidance, including SDF and pulpotomy, took place in March 2025, with the recording made available. NES Dental Workforce</p>

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(SDF) application and pulpotomy in permanent teeth.		Development are considering providing further training resources relating to these techniques.
Awareness of the guidance		
The importance of raising awareness of the updated guidance and making it easily accessed was identified as a potential facilitator to implementation.	<p>SDCEP undertook various dissemination approaches at the launch of the guidance to raise awareness. A variety of networks and communication routes were used to notify dental professionals about the 2nd edition of the guidance. Press releases, newsletter and magazine articles and social media were also used.</p> <p>SDCEP sought and received endorsement by the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry, which both demonstrated their support and enabled dissemination via its network.</p> <p>Just prior to its launch in 2018, NHS Education for Scotland held a CPD event which was focussed on the guidance and changes in the 2nd edition. Speakers included members of the Guidance Development Group, and the event was attended by over 100 delegates.</p>	<p>The 3rd edition was widely disseminated within the dental profession in the UK at publication. Press releases, news items and magazine articles were also used to raise awareness of the updated guidance.</p> <p>National and international endorsers of this edition, including the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry, College of General Dentistry, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, International Association of Paediatric Dentistry and Organisation for Caries Research shared notification of the guidance publication widely with their members and publicised the information in newsletters, social media and society publications.</p> <p>The GDG co-chairs promoted the guidance through a free NHS Education for Scotland (NES) CPD webinar in March 2025 which focused on the main changes in the 3rd edition.</p>
	In 2018, a Quality Improvement (Research) activity that focussed on certain aspects of the updated guidance was made available to dentists in Scotland. This comprised completion of pre- and post-publication	

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	questionnaires that aimed to assess changes in practitioners' beliefs, attitudes and working practices before and after the publication of the updated guidance. Dentists were also required to complete an action plan and a reflective report to gain Quality Improvement (Research) credit. Further information on the outcomes of this activity are provided in a summary report available on the TRiaDS website.	
Patient/carers engagement		
Patient and parent/carers behaviours, in relation to cooperation, engagement with treatment options and gaining consent for treatment, were reported as a barrier in a scoping study prior to updating of the guidance for the 3 rd edition, and in practitioner interviews and a pre-publication survey.	Not applicable.	The 3 rd edition of the guidance continues to include dedicated sections on assessing the child and family; helping the family manage dental care; and developing a care plan. These provide advice relating to building rapport, communication, behaviour management, shared decision making, consent, and referral if required. In addition, the guidance acknowledges that not all techniques are suitable for non-cooperative children and alternative management options are included where appropriate.