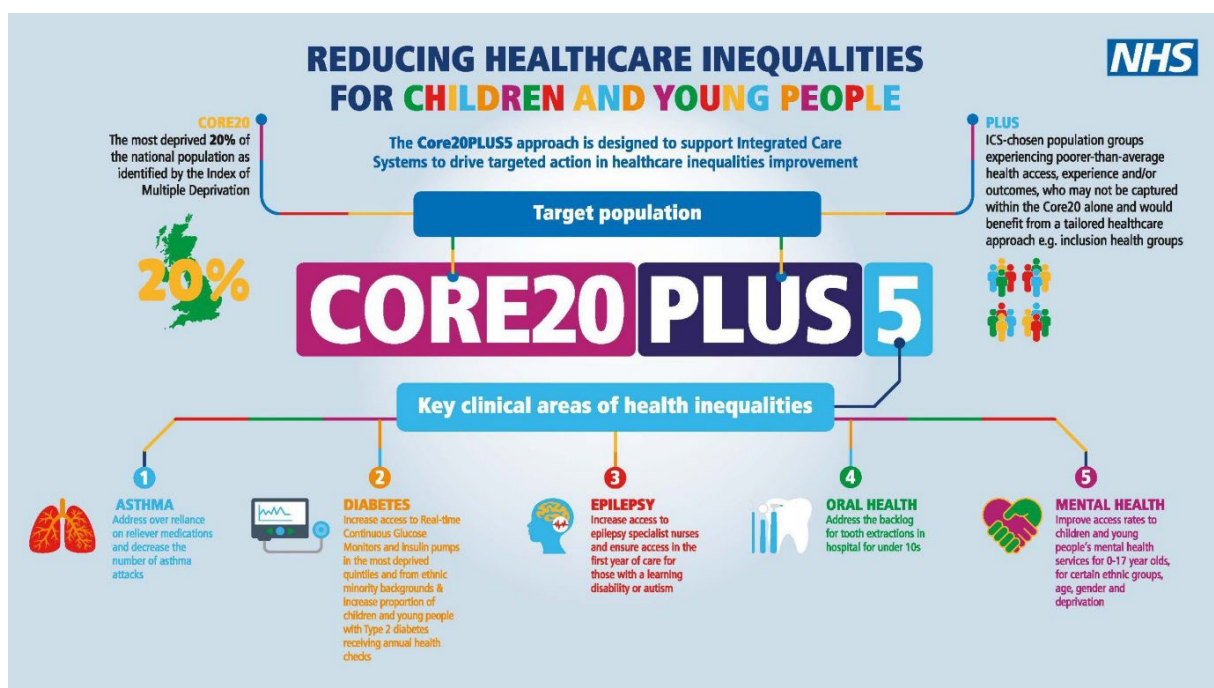


Exploring the oral health of under 10s in Norcot, Church and Southcote

Overview and project rationale

In Reading 31.6% of 5 year olds had one or more obvious untreated dentally decayed teeth (national prevalence 29.3%) and 2.5% had had one or more teeth extracted due to dental decay (2022 National Dental Epidemiology Programme Survey). Reading Borough Council does not currently have an oral health strategy.

As part of Core20PLUS5 targeted action, Healthwatch Reading, in partnership with BOB ICB, Healthwatch Bucks and Healthwatch Oxfordshire. are undertaking a project to find out more about the oral health of children in areas of Reading. This is part of the Community Connectors programme funded by NHS England.



Project Aims and outcomes

To identify issues, including barriers and 'what works', for parents, carers and children when: accessing oral health information; helping children with good dental hygiene and to develop good habits early; and experience of accessing regular dental checks.

To understand what is/should be happening at Place and ICB-wide, mapping against NICE recommendations provided to NHSE on oral health promotion and disease prevention.

To connect communities with decision-makers and make recommendations that will lead to change, for example in the way oral health advice and information is provided.

To empower a group of Community Connectors to feel more able to speak up for themselves and others.

We will meet our aims through:

- Recruiting people from our communities to train as Community Connectors who will speak to local people about their children's oral health.
- Facilitating conversations between decision-makers and the Connectors.
- Preparing reports based on our findings in Reading and a combined report with Healthwatch Bucks and Healthwatch Oxfordshire that include recommendations for change.
- Speaking to the Community Connectors to evaluate the project and understand the impact it has had on them personally.
- Following up to find out what changes have been made as a result of the project.

Methodology

- Recruit, train and support at least 5 Community Connectors who will in turn each speak to at least 5 parents/carers about their experiences and seek their views.
- Research local oral health initiatives and national policy.
- Work with the Connectors to develop recommendations for change.
- Bring together key decision makers, providers and Connectors to discuss the report and recommendations and request formal responses to be included in the final reports.
- Publish the final reports in full and in summary.

Working in partnership

As well as BOB ICB, Healthwatch Bucks and Healthwatch Oxfordshire, we will work closely with Reading Borough Council and local VCSE organisations.

Timescales (tbc)

August 2023	Planning and networking.
September 2023	Recruit Community Connectors.
October 2023	Train Community Connectors; start speaking to local people; research local and national oral health initiatives and policies.
November 2023	Continue speaking to local people.
December 2023	Collate responses; develop recommendations.
January 2024	Issue draft reports; conduct discussions between decision makers, providers and Community Connectors; seek formal responses.
February 2024	Publish final reports.
August 2024	Seek updates on changes made following the report.