



**Somerset  
Council**

# Oral Health Toolkit

Public Health  
Somerset Council





# About:

Oral Health refers to the condition of the mouth which includes teeth, tongue and cheeks. It is what enables us to eat, breathe and speak. Having good oral health can increase self-confidence, improve wellbeing and the ability to socialise and work without pain, discomfort or embarrassment. Oral health varies over the life course from early life to old age, it is integral to general health and supports individuals in participating in society and achieving their potential.

The new Oral Health toolkit includes e-learning, live webinar sessions and resources that have been developed in collaboration with the Somerset Oral Health Improvement Service. The Oral Health Improvement Service provides workforce development focusing on an all-age oral health improvement approach. This free training will equip you with the skills, tools and techniques to help support those you come into contact with, to spread the message on the importance of taking care of oral health to help prevent unnecessary medical intervention. Following this training, you will be better prepared to embed oral health improvement in your area of work, which is a responsibility shared by everyone across the system.

Oral health is highlighted in several guidance documents, including the Healthy Child Programme, Early Years Foundation Stage, OFSTED and all age safeguarding and CQC.

The most recent epidemiology survey, published in 2023, found 20.9% of 5 year old children in Somerset had experience of visually obvious tooth decay. The overall % of 5 year olds with visually obvious tooth decay in England is 24% of children in England. Regionally, in the same survey, it was found that 23.3% of 5 year old children in the South West were found to have enamel decay.

Children are at risk of adverse health and social impacts relating to wider socio-economic effects which negatively impact upon diet, home routine and behaviours. The related tooth extraction rate for children and young people living in the most deprived communities is nearly three and a half times that of those living in the most affluent communities.

Adults at increased risk of poor oral health include those who smoke, drink alcohol, or take drugs; supporting people to understand the impact of lifestyle behaviours on their oral health is an important part of promoting overall health and wellbeing.

Oral health for adults in care homes is a priority highlighted by Care Quality Commission (CQC). NICE guidance also outlines that training for the adult social care workforce is a priority.

The impacts of poor oral health can also particularly affect the most disadvantaged and socially excluded adult groups in society and the prevalence of tooth decay, tooth loss, oral cancer and gum disease can be extremely high.

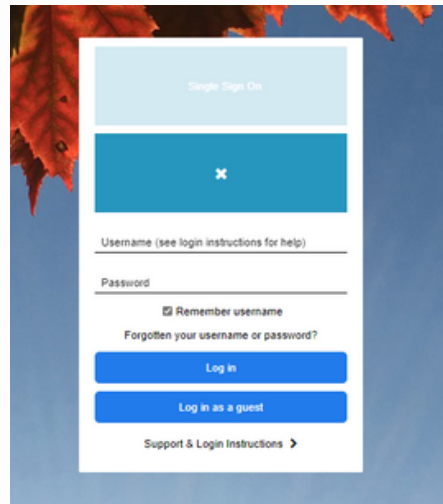
More often than not, tooth decay and associated oral health issues are preventable with the right education, support and behaviour change around oral health.

# Who are the resources for?

The e-learning modules, live webinar sessions and resources are for anyone who's role puts them in contact with children, young people and adults.

All these resources are available on The Learning Centre: For Somerset Council employees: [Click Here](#) - Select 'single sign in'

For non-council employees: [Click Here](#) - Select 'manual login' and then sign in as a guest.



The resources will equip people with the knowledge and information to be able to support children, young people and adults far and wide across Somerset to improve their oral health. You could be in one of the below roles.

## Occupations that can benefit from the training and resources:

- School staff
- Early Years workers
- SEND
- Public Health Nurses
- Health Visitors
- Midwives
- GP's and practice staff
- Children's Social Care teams
- Adults Social Care
- Safeguarding services
- Drugs and Alcohol services
- Smoking services

Tooth extraction is almost entirely preventable yet is one of the biggest causes of children aged 5-9 to be admitted to hospital for removal of multiple teeth. This can be prevented by simple actions that can make all the difference such as; access to fluoride, brushing teeth regularly, flossing, drinking water and making healthier food choices.

# Training and Development Offer:

Somerset Council's Public Health Team has worked with the Somerset Oral Health Improvement Service to produce free learning resources for anyone who might be in contact with, or supporting children, young people, families, adults and older adults.

The Oral Health resources available are:

- **Children and Young People (CYP) Oral Health Improvement Training:** Oral health improvement live webinar sessions for those working with or supporting CYP.
- **Adult Oral Health Improvement Training:** Oral health improvement live webinar sessions for those working with or supporting adults (all-age adults).
- **Mouth Care Matters:** Evidenced based programme for those working with and supporting people living in care homes in Somerset.
- **Supervised Toothbrushing:** Implementing supervised toothbrushing programmes in settings. This includes a regional and national push for uptake with NHSE/ICB funding as well as our LA offer/service.

The webinars are delivered via Microsoft Teams; the sessions are accessible to anyone (internal and external to Somerset Council). There is also a cascade element included in the training to enable the learning to be shared via attendees to others. All resources are evidenced based from the 'Delivering Better Oral Health Toolkit' which can be found on the Department of Health website, [click here](#).

The learning and resources are designed to be revisited as both locally and nationally, information will develop and increase over time.





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