

Edinburgh dentists commit to protecting children's teeth

At risk youngsters in most deprived communities to get fluoride varnish treatment.

Dentists from five Edinburgh practices have pledged their time in the urgent fight to stem a growing oral health emergency affecting the country's children.

Between them, Bellastane Dental Care, Earl Grey Dental Practice, Gilmore Dental, Fairmilehead Dental Practice & Implant Centre and KF Dental are part of Clyde Munro Dental Group's target of treating at least 1000 children with a fluoride varnish (FV) application in dedicated out of hours clinics by the close of 2022 – one of the most effective treatments for preventing tooth decay in children from the age of two.

Typically offered up to twice a year, the pandemic-induced backlog means it is not currently as readily available to families under NHS services.

The pledge comes after worrying statistics showed that 850,000 fewer patients had been seen in the past two years compared to 2017-2019. In children's services just 55% of children in the most deprived areas have seen a dentist.

The latest data show that primary school children from the most deprived communities experience more than four times the level of tooth decay compared to children in the least deprived areas.

These stark and persistent inequalities have widened as a

result of the pandemic, with the collapse in access to routine services, the suspension of public health programmes and the impact of sugar-rich lockdown diets.

Tooth decay in children is a major health problem in the UK – and despite being entirely preventable is one of the most common reasons for hospital admission in children.

Jacqui Frederick is Group Clinical Director at Clyde Munro and one of the group's dentists to have helped more than 100 young patients access FV treatment in 2021, since Clyde Munro started the children's clinics in the last quarter of last year.

She said: "We're a predominantly NHS-based group and we take our responsibility as Scotland's biggest dental group seriously."

"As you might imagine, our dentists are deeply concerned at falling numbers of young patients accessing NHS dentistry services. The pandemic has set back the oral health of so many people and we want to be a part of the fightback.

"We wish we didn't have to volunteer time out of hours to get this done – but in doing so we can reach out to those in need, any concerned parents or guardians can contact their nearest Clyde Munro practice to enquire about FV clinics."

FV application is a dental treatment that takes around 10 minutes and Clyde Munro will prioritise its practices that are within reach of many of Scotland's more deprived communities. It will not require the parent or the child to be a registered patient. It will release dates and times of its clinics regularly on its website.

The group has 54 practices, from Orkney to the Borders and is represented in all of Scotland's cities and many of its towns, with 400 staff supporting 460,000 patients.

Clyde Munro provides quality, affordable, general and cosmetic dentistry in well equipped, modern practices. Locations are convenient and accessible making it easy to visit the dental facilities.

Find out more about Clyde Munro at <https://clydemunrodental.com/>



Jim Hall Chief Executive of Clyde Munro