# ORAL HEALTH

**Caretakers Southwest**

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**Policy Statement**

As an organisation we recognise the importance of good oral health including dental health and daily mouth care. Our aim is to encourage our service users to maintain and improve their oral hygiene and encourage timely access to dental treatment.

We have a nominated “Oral Health Care Champion”/ member of staff Gail Lane who liaises with dental and oral professionals to ensure all service users are receiving the correct support and care and also support staff in this area.

As an organisation we follow NICE Guidelines NG48 and access resources such as the “Oral Health Toolkit” <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng48/resources>and use the CQC latest report on oral health, carrying out an oral health assessment using the tool available from the above mentioned website. This acts as a risk assessment flagging up any issues regarding oral health

**The Policy**

We assess the [oral care](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG48/chapter/terms-used-in-this-guideline#mouth-care) needs of all [service users](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG48/chapter/terms-used-in-this-guideline#residents) as soon as they start receiving our service. Service users, relevant persons and where consented to by the service user, family and friends are involved in the initial assessment. This informs the plan of care for continued oral hygiene support as consented to by the service user. The assessment includes;

* how the service user usually manages their daily mouth care (for example, tooth brushing and type of toothbrush, removing and caring for dentures including partial dentures and identifying any support required
* taking regard to any cultural or ethnic preferences in regard to oral hygiene
* If they have dentures, including partial dentures, whether they are marked or unmarked If unmarked, we can arrange for marking if they wish
* obtaining the name and address of their dentist or any dental service they have had contact with, and where and how long ago they saw a dentist or received dental treatment
* recording if there has been no contact or they do not have a dentist, and help them find one and support the service user to make an appointment
* this is recorded in the care plan and the date and time of any forthcoming appointments documented
* results of any dental assessments and appointments are recorded in the care plan along with any mouth or dental care requirements
* reviews are carried out with the care plan reviews or if oral health needs change

# Daily Mouth Care

We ensure care staff provide [service users](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG48/chapter/terms-used-in-this-guideline#residents) with daily support to meet their [mouth care](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG48/chapter/terms-used-in-this-guideline#mouth-care) needs and preferences, as set out in their care plan after their assessment. This includes encouraging and supporting service users to:

* brush their natural teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
* providing daily oral care for full or partial dentures (such as brushing, removing food debris and removing dentures overnight)
* use their choice of cleaning products for dentures if possible
* using their choice of toothbrush, either manual or electric/battery powered
* daily use of mouth care products prescribed by dental clinicians (for example, this may include a high fluoride toothpaste or a prescribed mouth rinse as per their MAR
* daily use of any over-the-counter products preferred by service users if possible, such as particular mouth rinses or toothpastes; or sugar-free gum, (gum containing xylitol helps promote dental health)
* Observing and reporting any soreness, bleeding, pain or marks while carrying out oral hygiene
* If using a nebuliser/inhaler to receive mouth care before and after to reduce risk of ulceration.

**Administering Mouth Care**

* Using a soft small toothbrush or foam stick if the gingiva is damaged or likely to bleed, brush the teeth, gums and tongue to remove any debris; brushing stimulates circulation and the gingival tissue to maintain tone
* Encourage the individual to rinse their own mouth vigorously and spit out the contents into a small bowl or receiver; offer tissues to dry any spillages or dribbling
* If the individual is unable to rinse their own mouth, use a rinsed toothbrush to clean the teeth and a moistened foam stick to wipe the inside of the mouth and gums; foam sticks should be used with a rotating action to ensure most of their surface is used
* Teeth should be flossed once every 24 hours unless there are contraindications.

**Post Procedure**

* Discard any remaining mouthwash, clean the toothbrush and leave to air dry
* Remove gloves, wash hands in soap and water, and dry
* Check that the individual is comfortable
* Record as necessary.

**Equipment required for mouth care:**

* Dishes (with water)
* Foam sticks, cotton buds, gauze swabs, tissues
* Non-sterile, disposable gloves
* Fluoride toothpaste, denture paste
* Mouthwash or prescribed cleaning solution
* Lip balm (not glycerine)
* Denture pot and appropriate soft toothbrush or denture brush
* Small torch.

**Examples of products:**

**Dry mouth**

* Mouthwash solution (e.g., Bocason 0.2%)
* Crushed ice cubes
* Ice pops
* Vitamin C tablets (as prescribed)
* Pineapple juice (be aware that this can increase teeth sensitivity)
* Artificial saliva (as prescribed).

**Lips**

* KY jelly or white soft paraffin.

**Coated tongue**

* Effervescent vitamin C ½ tablet, yoghurt.

**Painful, inflamed mouth and fungal infections**

* Prescribed treatments.

# Supporting Staff Knowledge

Information on specific oral health needs are given by an appropriate health professional and recorded in individual care plans.

Prescribed mouth care products are as per MAR

Training on general oral health is given to all staff, this includes;

* understanding the importance of service users' oral health and the potential effect on their general health, wellbeing and dignity
* understanding the potential impact of untreated dental pain or mouth infection on the behaviour, and general health and wellbeing of people who cannot articulate their pain or distress or ask for help (this includes, for example, service users with dementia or communication difficulties)
* knowing how and when to reassess service users' oral health
* knowing how to deliver daily [mouth care](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG48/chapter/terms-used-in-this-guideline#mouth-care)
* how to support people who are lacking capacity with oral health care tasks e.g. the brushing of their teeth
* understanding the role of diet, alcohol and tobacco in promoting good oral health
* understanding the impact of medication or oral health
* knowing how and when to report any oral health concerns for service users, and how to respond to a service user's changing needs and circumstances (for example, some service users, may over time lose their manual dexterity)
* understanding the importance of denture marking and how to arrange this for service users, with their permission (there are many advantages to denture marking most importantly the ability to identify and the return of lost or misplaced dentures, which is essential for our service users)
* ensuring care staff know how to respond if a service user does not want daily mouth care or to have their dentures removed
* recognising and reporting adverse symptoms

As an organisation we work with and access information from local Health Watch Teams and Dental Public Health information to support us to meet the oral health needs of all [service users](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG48/chapter/terms-used-in-this-guideline#residents), especially those with [complex needs](http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Browse/Informationandadvice/CareandSupportJargonBuster/). We have also created local partnerships or links with general dental practice and community dental services including special care dentistry. This enables the sharing of good practice and the identification of any gaps in the service to our service users. It also enables us to provide routine or specialist preventive care and arrange their treatment as necessary, in line with local arrangements on

**Contact Details** **[INSERT CONTACT DETAILS]**

* The contact details of the individual service users’ Dentist or NHS Dentist are documented in their care plan
* Out of Hours Dental Treatment….
* Local Health Watch……

**Related Policies**

Assessment of Need and Eligibility

Care and Support Planning

Consent

Co-operating with other Providers

Dignity and Respect

Equality and Diversity

Mental Capacity Act 2005

**Related Guidance**

* NICE Quality Statement (QS151) Oral health in care homes published June 2017 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs151>
* NICE Guidelines (NG48) Oral health for adults in care homes published July 2016 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng48>

**Training Statement**

All staff, during induction are made aware of the organisations policies and procedures, all of which are used for training updates. All policies and procedures are reviewed and amended where necessary and staff are made aware of any changes. Observations are undertaken to check skills and competencies. Various methods of training are used including one to one, on-line, workbook, group meetings, individual supervisions and external courses are sourced as required.