



# Improving Oral Health

## Parent Voice Turned Parent Obsession

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### The "context"

#### Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC)

- £45m National Lottery Community Fund 'A Better Start' Programme project
- Based in four wards within Nottingham city
- Partnership rooted in co-production between parents and professionals
- Formal participation structures exist to enable parents voice to be represented

#### SSBC principle:

'Children at the heart, parents leading the way, supported and guided by experts'

### The "problem"

Childhood dental decay remains high

In Nottingham it affects **17%** of three-year-olds with three of SSBC wards having the city's highest percentage of childhood decay.

### The "solution" =

**Parent Obsession Group (POG):** Parent Champions within SSBC represent the community voice. Their mission, to raise awareness of issues in their local communities.

#### The overarching POG objective

Utilise and empower local parent volunteers as an integral element in the system improving childhood development outcomes.

#### POG's objectives for Oral Health



- Support increased dental attendance for pregnant women and children aged 0-4
- Increase knowledge and confidence around oral health amongst children and parents / carers
- Distribute 1,500 toothbrushes across wards by March 2020

#### Promoting good communication

- A POG member attends the Oral Health Advisory Group, a local operational group made up of representatives from the children's workforce
- SSBC staff member attends POG meetings

#### Strengthening community assets

The POG have received training from

- Public Health Consultant
- Specialist Oral Health Promotion Team

### Next steps

- Now ready to start their awareness raising mission, with visits to local nurseries planned
- Evaluation is planned

### Conclusion

Working '**with**' people and not doing things '**to**' them, has enabled:

- Shared power, trust and strong relationships between parent representatives and professionals
- Meaningful engagement between parents and workforce that formed the backdrop to POG

#### Reference

Public Health England (2020) Community-centred public health. Taking a whole system approach. Crown copyright

