(Smile:Together)

2020/2021

Social and Environmental Impact Report

Going above and beyond in a pandemic year





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"Staff are friendly and compassionate. Very good instructions on phone and on arrival. Everything was excellent"

NHS England Dental Commissioning Team (South West)

Progress

2020/2021 will be remembered as difficult and unique for anyone involved in delivering patient care. At Smile Together we were no different, entering the new financial year with very little certainty about how to continue providing care for our patients and support and reassurance for our people. However, we remained stoically dedicated and proactive, seeking to deliver as much care as possible whilst being rightly focussed on patient and colleague safety.

We can't thank our teams, patients, commissioners and other partners enough as we continue to navigate our way through the ever-changing dental landscape and respond to the challenges presented by the pandemic, whilst finding new and innovative ways of making a difference to those who need us most. We're delivering if not exceeding the expectations of both our NHS and private patients, adapting to operational and clinical procedures and constantly thinking about ways in which we can further improve access to and delivery of patient care whilst tackling oral health inequality. Colleagues have adapted so quickly to new ways of working and the teamwork, flexibility, commitment and creativity has been profound.

We've adjusted our provision of patient care accordingly and were proudly chosen by NHS England to deliver emergency treatment through Urgent Dental Care Hubs across the county and we continue to coordinate county-wide delivery on behalf of patients and other dental providers. Alongside Hub delivery we are now resuming practice in all locations, with safety remaining our utmost priority, but demand for our emergency and referral services is at an all-time high.

Poor oral health frequently leads to and exacerbates other longterm health conditions so our commitment to tackling oral health inequality is critical.

We're certainly earning our reputation as an ambitious employeeowned social enterprise and it will come as no surprise that we're now striving to build back even stronger from the pandemic. We're really bringing our vision and mission to life for our people, our patients, our community and increasingly our planet, with opportunities for everyone to engage, making it real, achievable, exciting and sustainable.

We hope you enjoy reading our Social and Environmental Impact Report for 2020/2021 and are inspired by the difference we make. We've moved from our previous impact reporting framework to showcase how we prevent, reach, treat and engage across the four strategic cornerstones of our business, our people, our patients and our community.



Paul Critchley Managing Director



John BurchillChair of the Board



The challenge and how we tackled it



19m+ appointments delayed between end March and end November 2020 according to The British Dental Association



47,000 people registered on the waiting list for an NHS dentist in Cornwall (in 2019 it was 23,500)



Over 50% adults in Cornwall haven't seen an NHS dentist in the last 2 years



Over 40% Cornish children haven't had an appointment with an NHS dentist in the last year



Chosen by NHS England to deliver and coordinate emergency treatment through Urgent Dental Care Hubs



Great outcomes from our Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection across all five CQC domains



38,730 patients treated overall – a 10% increase in patient numbers from 2019/2020



28% increase in private patients registered with us for routine dental care



102 children every day have teeth removed in hospital due to decay



3 school days missed on average each year due to dental problems



4,500 children benefited from our Brighter Smiles oral health programme, despite the pandemic, in 85 school communities



Major contracts extended by NHS England and Cornwall Council Public Health Team



100% surpluses reinvested



£70k Smile Together investment into Brighter Smiles



126 total workforce with 100% opted-in employee-ownership of eligible employees



Committed real living wage employer

Our IT Services Team won "Rockstar of the Year" in the inaugural international IT Pro Day Awards 2020

The Dental Awards 2020 – shortlisted for National Smile Month Campaign of the Year

Won the **Employee Ownership Association** (EOA) live Twitter quiz

Featured in Welp Magazine's '75 Best & Fastest Growing Dental Companies and Start Ups in the UK' as one of the most popular players operating in the dental space

Included in #Dentistry24 Hall of Fame 2020

"I would like to extend my gratitude to all those in the team who are supporting the Urgent Dental Care service and no doubt facing some tough calls. Your commitment is really appreciated and we couldn't do this without you, the service to patients and the public is so valuable."

Sara Hurley, Chief Dental Officer for England and Deputy Strategic Commander COVID-19 NHS England and NHS Improvement

Our Business

Resilience, partnership & engagement

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

To generate profit for investment into our services and our communities, benefiting our patients and our people and furthering our impact

Prior to the pandemic we were meeting and in many cases exceeding our performance and impact targets, generating profit for investment in the way that we run our business as an employee-owned CIC. Everything then paused and our focus moved to keeping our people safe and our business sustainable.

Chosen by NHS England as Cornwall's first Urgent Dental Care Hub, with targets adjusted accordingly, we prepared as best we could for restarting emergency dental service delivery in line with rapidly-changing safety protocols and infection prevention and control measures, trying everything we could to source the necessary PPE which was in very short supply nationally. The urgency to be operationally prepared for reopening was fraught with difficulty but, thanks to the tenacity of our operational and clinical teams, we succeeded and for many weeks were the only dental provider open in the county tackling the backlog of patients.

It was a truly tough year but as you'll read in subsequent sections of this report we're bouncing back, innovatively finding new ways to deliver our patient care and wider impact.

Our private patients are loyally returning, recognising that alongside excellent patient care we are a very different ethical dental provider. We are planning to grow this provision even more as our capacity builds post-pandemic. Alongside this our Service Improvement Programmes are engaging our clinical and professional support colleagues to ensure we identify, embed and sustain positive change across our business to make us more resilient and sustainable, generating more margin for even more impact.

Our agile IT Services team sprang into action in March 2020 to better connect colleagues across clinical locations and enable us to productively work from home where required.

Partnership and engagement remain core to the way we work whether that's with our commissioners, funders, supporters or suppliers – an effective collective approach to tackling oral health inequality. We proactively support numerous national and local oral health campaigns and initiatives as well as those relating to employee-ownership and social enterprise – for example, we:

- Engaged in World Oral Health Day, Mouth Cancer Action Month, Fizz Free February and National Smile Month
- Celebrated **EO Day** on 26th June 2020 which coincided with National Cream Tea Day (jam first of course!)
- Proudly presented at the Employee Ownership Association (EOA)
 #EOBoost virtual conference in November 2020 eliciting comments on Twitter such as:

"Thank you @SmileTogetherUK for sharing your journey to create a culture of #employeeownership #reducinginequalities #prevention within Cornish communities

"Very inspiring from @SmileTogetherUK about how @EmployeeOwned empowers the dentists and dental nurses in their business. Love the idea of Smiles at Sea - dentistry on the harbour

"Enjoying listening to @SmileTogetherUK talking about good leadership and management in @EmployeeOwned businesses. Love their focus for internal comms - remind and re-assure #EOBoost"

- Supported Social Enterprise UK's #WhoKnew campaign in November 2020 to help raise awareness of the sector's significant contribution socially, economically and environmentally
- Committed to becoming a certified B Corporation and part of this global movement of people using business as a force for good and collaborating to make the world a better place. Achieving certification will enable us to further develop our business and have an even greater impact by independently verifying that together we meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability in balancing profit and purpose. It will also help us attract likeminded colleagues, patients and partners, as becoming a B Corp especially one that's employee-owned is a real honour

1st

Urgent Dental Care Hub for Cornwall

£90k

investment into patient facilities

100%

surpluses reinvested

Committed

real living wage employer

85

school communities regularly engaged in our Brighter Smiles oral health programme £110k

contributed by 20 Brighter Smiles supporters who've remained committed despite the pandemic

100%

100% opted-in employee-ownership of a total workforce of 126

Committed

to B Corp certification









Katie Rowe won **Dental Nurse of the Year** in the national Dental Awards 2021

Dental Nurse Apprentice and retained fire fighter Corey Wedlake featured in **Dental Nursing Journal** and shortlisted for the **Cornwall Apprenticeship Awards 2021**

"Absolutely Brilliant! Visited today with major problems, during lockdown it has been very difficult to obtain dental treatment, but eventually sorted. The dentist who dealt with me was fantastic, dental staff fantastic. Thank you so much, stay safe"

Patient review on NHS Friends & Family website



Our People

Great people, reaching and treating

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

To value, develop and reward our people, proudly working in motivated and productive teams

Everyone at Smile Together is encouraged to contribute so that together we develop the resilience, capability and capacity to respond flexibly to change and opportunity. It's testament to our people that we've been able to deliver such high levels of excellent patient care this last year and find new ways to improve the oral health of vulnerable and hard to reach communities across the county and beyond.

During the peak of the pandemic our intranet and internal communications channels came into their own and we introduced (and have continued with) virtual updates for our leaders and influencers to address the questions uppermost in colleagues' minds using subtitled videos alongside written bulletins.

We relaunched our employee-ownership (EO) body as our Shareholder Impact Board with elected representatives attending Smile Together Board and other formal committee meetings. They already had a focus on colleagues' health and wellbeing, particularly mental health, and significantly boosted those resources during Covid whilst supporting engagement in our Employee Engagement Survey, issued in January 2021. The results of this demonstrated that overall our colleagues have felt safe, secure, appreciated, well-consulted and informed with a good understanding of our business performance against NHS England and other targets as well as our strategy going forwards.

With Standard Operating Procedures changing on a regular basis our teams were trained in these alongside new national protocols, guidance and other safety measures, all whilst other dental practices were closed due to the pandemic. Our bespoke Training Academy enables our colleagues to more than achieve their compulsory training requirements and continuing professional development aspirations, and their safety and security has remained of paramount importance throughout. Our recognition of their outstanding collective performance elicited super responses such as:

"A lovely way to recognise and celebrate the work all our teams do, especially in these difficult times"

"I just want to say thank you to the company for the generosity and the sense of security during these troubling times"

Alongside our values-based recruitment process we launched a 'Make Cornwall Your Career Destination' campaign to encourage clinicians especially to choose to work here and generated 64 excellent applications for our Island Dentist role on the Isles of Scilly. As in all UK coastal and rural locations, dentist recruitment remains a challenge but we are approaching it in our usual creative, innovative way and having pretty good success.

We generated 44 great applications for our two dental nurse apprentice opportunities and are a committed real living wage employer.

Generosity amongst and towards our colleagues has been very much appreciated, for example:

- Our clinical teams received hand creams from The Body Shop, organised by our Shareholder Impact Board Health and Wellbeing Committee
- One of our Out of Hours team members used her sewing skills to make
 25 fabulous funky headbands for our team
- A shielding dental nurse arranged some lovely hand-made laundry bags for our clinical colleagues
- Tavistock Round Table sent us some mask tension relief straps
- We introduced our Laptops for Children Programme with more colleagues working remotely and requiring robust access to virtual platforms we upgraded our company laptops and, in return for a donation to our Charity of the Year Penhaligon's Friends, offered the redundant ones to colleagues with children needing to learn/study at home

£46k

invested in individual learning and development

3**x**

as much verifiable CPD as clinicians require

2,687

courses completed on our bespoke Training Academy

29

colleagues trained in Makaton, British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCD) and Mental Health Awareness

63%

response to our Employee Engagement Survey with 96% of colleagues feeling well supported

64

applications generated for our Island Dentist opportunity and 44 for our dental nurse apprentice roles

£1.4k

raised for our Charity of the Year Penhaligon's Friends

Boosted

our online health and wellbeing resources







Top 5 finalist in **the national Dental Awards 2021** for Practice of the Year and Practice Decontamination, impressive given that in February 2021 there were estimated to be 13,055 dental practices in the UK!

Runner-up 'Outstanding Team During Covid-19' on National Dental Nurses Day 2020

"Kind, caring and friendly service.
I am absolutely terrified of dentists
and yet the service I received in
Truro was amazing. The two ladies
were very gentle and reassuring.
If all dentists were this good I
wouldn't have the phobia I
have now."

5* Google review



Our Patients

Prevent, reach and treat

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

To deliver high quality care based on continuous improvement

Our Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection in March 2021 generated great outcomes across the five CQC domains of 'Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well Led' with CQC especially acknowledging our systems, procedures and protocols, safety measures and contingency plans, tailored patient care, patient and colleague communication and feedback opportunities, as well as our training and development. They also noted colleagues' provision of oral health selfcare advice to patients. We're committed to the evidence-based Making Every Contact Count approach endorsed by Public Health England, NHS England and Health Education England to ensure services are provided in an integrated way, particularly where this might reduce health inequalities.

We've marked the second anniversary of our purpose–designed, accessible dental centre opening at Harleigh Road in Bodmin which has made such a difference to our patients, especially those with complex health conditions. With specialist facilities previously unavailable in the county, an additional surgery has already been added there and we've also refurbished our facilities in the Lescudjack Centre, Penzance with three brand new surgeries and installed a new dental chair at our Saltash practice.

Our Service Improvement Programme is seeing us embed the best practice from our Covid response and we're making every contact count at every opportunity, enhancing skill mix and making optimum use of colleagues' qualifications, skills and experience. From clinic planning and patient referral through to care pathways, we're serving those patients with the greatest need whilst capacity remains limited due to rigorous Covid safety measures. We've enhanced patient communications and use of technology – for example, digitising orthodontic treatment plans, introducing telephone retainer reviews and enabling parents to send photos of their child's teeth in advance of appointments. Our web-based 'Patient Information Zone' has become a well-visited patient resource, clinical colleagues have produced informative news blogs for patients and, thanks to Accessibility Cornwall, we've added the 'ReciteMe' accessibility tool on our patient-facing websites.

We've built even more partnerships to enhance patient care and pathways, including a ground breaking collaboration with local pharmacies to facilitate antibiotic prescribing in urgent dental care which had never been done before. Early on in the pandemic national PPE supply chain issues presented a significant challenge but our partners helpfully shared PPE provision including fit testing solution and it was this, combined with the tenacity of our operational and clinical teams, which saw us open Cornwall's first Urgent Dental Care Hub on Easter Saturday 2020, days ahead of schedule.

Colleagues' generosity knew no bounds:

- One of our Out of Hours dentists shaved off his beard so that he could
 pass fit testing that same day and another telephone-triaged patients
 even on some rest days as he wanted to help
- On the Isles of Scilly, our retiring dentist Gill and her husband were concerned about a lack of face shields there, ordered a hundred and paid for them with their own money, distributing them to other healthcare workers across the islands as a way of saying thank you for the time that they'd lived there

"I have great fear for dentists usually. But today at Lescudjack centre my treatment was amazing! No pain and a renewed appreciation for dentists. [The team] were brilliant and restored my trust in NHS [commissioned] dentistry. Big thank you"

Patient email

>22.5k

urgent and emergency appointments, keeping patients out of pain and A&E

675

out of hours sessions, 117% over target

645

children seen for free through Brighter Dental

1,953

orthodontic patients seen

2,809

under 18's triaged or seen

159

Patient Plan registrations, a 145% increase from last year

105k

inbound calls to our Call Centre (daytime, evening and weekend)

65%

increase in visits to our Patient Information Zone since 2019







Smiles at Sea shortlisted for the national Business Charity Awards 2020 'Project of the Year' with SeaFit, Fishermen's Mission and Seafarers Hospital Society

Joy Callender won the Long Service and Dental Nurse Contribution to Charity Work Awards for Brighter Smiles and Smiles at Sea on National Dental Nurses Day 2020

Our Brighter Smiles and marketing teams won the National Smile Month 2020 poetry competition 'What a smile means to you'

Dental Nursing Journal featured Brighter Smiles dental nurse Jo Trevelyan and her passion for oral health care

Featured in The Telegraph for how we and other organisations are supporting local communities during the pandemic

"An incredible amount of work has been done by all colleagues to continue to provide services in the local communities Smile Together is working in through the Urgent Dental Care Hubs, and the additional activities being delivered to food banks and homelessness charities is really inspiring to see."

Big Issue Invest

Our Community

Prevent, reach and engage

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

To make a sustainable difference within our local communities

Prior to the pandemic, during a debate on health inequalities in the UK, Derek Thomas MP stated that: "In Cornwall over half of adults have not been to an NHS dentist in the past two years and over 40% of children have not had an appointment with an NHS dentist in the past year". There is recognised difficulty in accessing NHS dental care in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and very often parents themselves haven't visited the dentist for many years so have lost the incentive to take their children.

In 2021 Public Health England published a report which, for the first time, described the current picture of oral health inequalities nationally and service inequalities in England by socio-economic position, geographic area, protected characteristics and vulnerable (disadvantaged) groups. In 2018 - 2019 there were 37,406 hospital procedures for extraction of carious teeth in children age 0 to 19 years old which means that around 102 children a day, some just a year old, are having teeth removed in hospital. An average of 3 days are missed from school due to dental problems with further economic impact of days lost from work whilst caring for these children. Extraction of teeth with general anaesthetic is often a child's first introduction to dental care and can lead to anxiety with lifetime consequences.

It's never been a more important time to promote oral health care and the adopting of good oral hygiene practices.

Pre-Covid a total of 4,454 Cornish children were regularly engaging with our Brighter Smiles team's toothbrushing clubs, fluoride varnish application and oral health education each year. With face-to-face delivery necessarily paused the team created self-help virtual resources including four oral health education films and worked with a University of Plymouth Media Arts student to produce an animation of Dylan the Dragon, all of which proved very popular. Since the last lockdown our Brighter Smiles team engaged with 3,117 children in readiness for the new academic year starting September 2021.

In June 2020 our Brighter Smiles team donated over 3,000 toothbrushes, toothpaste and information to St Petrocs homelessness charity and also Foodbanks in Camborne/Pool/Redruth, Penzance, Hayle, St Austell and Launceston. This stimulated a collective desire amongst colleagues to donate thousands more oral health packs to vulnerable communities across Cornwall for which we needed a temporary storage solution – Pirate FM ran our story, Willbox generously responded and their 20 foot container is now home to pallets of oral health items for our teams to distribute to those in their local communities who most need our support. To date we've donated over 1,400 oral health packs with lots more to go!

Whilst Covid meant we couldn't provide treatment from a Smiles at Sea mobile dental unit in September 2020 our Brighter Smiles dental nurses visited harboursides across Cornwall and Devon to help improve the oral health of fishermen and their families who so rarely get to see a dentist due to the demands of their work.

We joined other #xmaspartyheroes in December, repurposing our Christmas party funding and making two significant donations to support homeless young people via the national charity Centrepoint and more locally via St Petrocs.

We raised over £1,400 for our Charity of the Year, Penhaligon's Friends, who support bereaved children, young people, parents and carers. It was inspiring to see Cornwall Air Ambulance's new helicopter fly its first missions in April 2020 knowing that, as our previous charity beneficiary, we'd supported their New Heli Appeal.

And there was more – colleagues purchased hand–crocheted bears and rainbows for NHS Charities Together, donated 6 Cornwall Christmas Boxes, raised funds on Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children and shared ideas for a more environmentally friendly Christmas with links to buy local and/or ethical gifts and decorations.

4,158

children and families engaged with Brighter Smiles oral health activities

64

Family Hub workers virtually trained

85

school communities supported by Cornwall Council Public Health Team and 19 other Brighter Smiles supporters 667

YouTube views of our Dylan the Dragon animation and virtual oral health education sessions

39

fishermen engaged in our Smiles at Sea oral health tour, 15 encouraged to contact our Hubs for emergency care 26%

of those fishermen hadn't visited a dentist for 5 years or more

>3K

oral health items donated to Foodbanks and St Petrocs

1,400

oral health packs donated to date by Smile Together teams in their local communities









Patient plaudits

"Thanks for being there this morning to repair my damaged tooth, appreciate your dedication and just want to say you are an amazing team"

Patient email

"You made my son feel very safe and comfortable with your friendly caring nature towards him. Once again thank you so much"

Patient email

"Very friendly and accommodating. They were constantly checking to make sure I was ok but were always real friendly and down to earth. Very professional yet friendly"

Patient email

"I think you're all doing an amazing job and I am so pleased to be associated with Smile Together."

Environmental champion Chris Hines MBE

Our Community cont.

Prevent, reach and engage

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

To make a sustainable difference within our local communities

It's not easy being green in dentistry but our commitment to becoming a certified B Corporation, recognising business as a force for good, has inspired us to better balance our social and environmental impact and consider 'people, planet, profit' in all that we do.

Colleagues are encouraged to consider any sustainable changes we can make in each of our locations and, as expected in an employee-owned CIC, their engagement is fantastic with ideas positively flowing in! Recognising that we can't do everything at once we have initially prioritised:

- Sustainable procurement we recruited a Purchasing Specialist to help us partner with those in our supply chain and, where possible, source and procure more sustainably. So we now have compostable bags and biodegradable stickers for the children engaging in our Brighter Smiles oral health programme and much more to follow!
- General waste and recycling dentistry is already tightly regulated in terms
 of clinical waste and we have always had recycling facilities in our workplaces.
 However, we undertook a non-clinical waste audit right through to contractor
 collection, successfully piloted centralised waste units to replace small plastic
 'desk bins' and now have a more uniform system to increase recycling levels whilst
 generating a thoughtful reduction in general waste
- Recycling of oral health items our Harleigh Road Dental Centre in Bodmin is a registered Colgate TerraCycle location for patients and members of the public to deposit their old toothbrushes, empty toothpaste tubes and other oral care product packaging for recycling. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we've been expanding this initiative with smaller collection points at all Smile Together locations and in some of our Brighter Smiles school communities (where of course all the used items from their Toothbrushing Clubs are collected for recycling too) and we have a collection bin during our annual Smiles at Sea tour. Whenever our collection bins are full, contents are packaged up and sent to TerraCycle for processing into new, recycled products. Every kilogram earns TerraCycle points which are redeemed into financial donations for Smile Together to ultimately reinvest back into our communities a fantastic 'win: win' initiative!

And whilst it's early days and there's much, much more for us to do, we can already report:

- We locked in to a 3-year green electricity deal for our Harleigh Road Dental Centre which was surprisingly cheaper than most of the brown options we were considering, allowing us to invest even more in our mission!
- The green gas option was much less attractive so we supported Woodland Recovery 2020, West Cornwall tree planting project aiming to plant 20,000 trees within 2020/21 - our donation funding 3,358 trees representing 537.2 tonnes of CO2
- Purchasing **recycled paper**, not bleached, for use in our in-house printers
- Minimising print with any commissioned print, including this report, utilising environmentally-friendly stock
- Where possible **prioritising digital solutions**, from marketing and communications through to virtual meetings
- Using **compostable potato starch bags** for Brighter Smiles and our Oral Health donations project packs, not single use plastic bags
- Significantly **reduced the use of single use plastic** cups, cling film and plastic sheeting in surgeries
- Where possible rehoming unwanted items, from dental and IT equipment to uniforms

100%

Committed to becoming a certified B Corporation

1x

Purchasing Specialist recruited to help us procure more sustainably

76,835

items of dental equipment decontaminated in-house

10kg

oral health items collected for recycling

3,358

trees planted representing 537.2 tonnes of CO2

10k

compostable bags used, negating single-use plastic

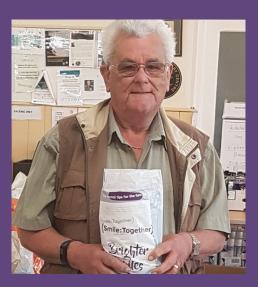
>86k

audience reached from our social media accounts

17%

increase in visitors to Smile Together websites since 2019









Patient plaudits



"In these extremely stressful and difficult coronavirus pandemic times, I think that you all deserve medals for the way in which you cheerfully carry out your duties in those (what appear to me) PPE astronaut clothes... As far as I am concerned you did a grand job on me... My heartfelt thanks to you all for coping so well in these difficult times"



"I had to visit the dentist for emergency extraction. I was so nervous but was put completely at ease from being collected from the carpark to being reassured and talked through the procedure. Thank you all so much"



"I came to your practice today to get a tooth extraction. This tooth has been causing me problems for a couple of years now and I was extremely anxious about having the procedure done. Your dentist was fantastic and her assistant was just as fantastic! They made me feel at ease from start to finish. 5 out of 5 from me"



Two of my childminding families visited you today with children aged between 4 and 6 years and you were the subject of discussion after school when they were with me... the new Dentist is really nice... he's got magic hands and when he waves them up you go up in the big chair... he's got really good Marvel and Star Wars stickers ... Basically you got rave reviews and I thought I should let you know"

Smile:Together



Follow us:









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