



Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026

Treatment to Prevention Award

Community Dental Services (CDS) CIC, Norfolk & Waveney Team

Community Dental Services CIC

CDS is recognised for its strong commitment to prevention and early intervention, improving oral health and reducing inequalities among vulnerable communities across Norfolk and Waveney. By combining clinical care, education, outreach, and partnership working, the service delivers innovative programmes that support children, families, older people, and homeless adults to access care before problems escalate. Working across schools, Family Hubs, care homes, food hubs, and community settings, CDS reaches those least likely to access traditional dental services. Key initiatives, such as Supervised Toothbrushing and Healthy Smiles, engage over 1,000 children in Early Years and SEND settings, while equipping parents and professionals with skills to maintain good oral health. This preventative focus is vital, given high rates of tooth extractions under general anaesthetic in children.

The team consistently goes above and beyond, targeting groups such as children affected by the pandemic who have never seen a dentist. Initiatives like the "Give Kids A Smile" programme enabled rapid screening and treatment for dozens of children in a single day, while mobile dental units have extended care to vulnerable adults through partnerships with community organisations. By embedding oral health support within everyday settings, CDS has transformed how prevention is delivered locally.

The impact is significant and sustained. Children benefit from improved oral hygiene habits, reduced sugar intake, and increased confidence, with families reporting positive behaviour changes at home. Workforce development has also been strengthened through training for over 250 professionals, all reporting increased confidence in delivering oral health advice. Overall, CDS is reducing preventable dental disease, hospital admissions, and long-term health inequalities.