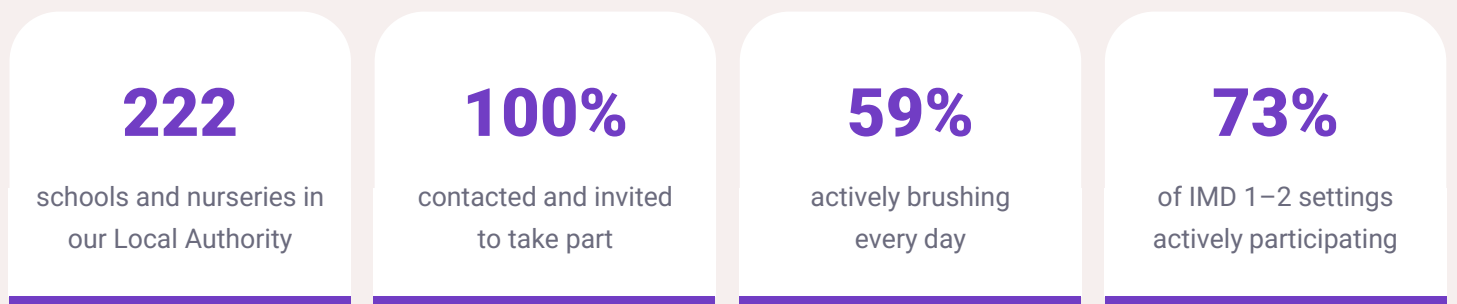


# 130 schools and nurseries brushing every day. One programme manager. Five months.

How Oldham Council's supervised toothbrushing programme moved from zero to 130 schools actively brushing every day, between late November and end of April. Here is what the team changed, and what other councils can learn from it.



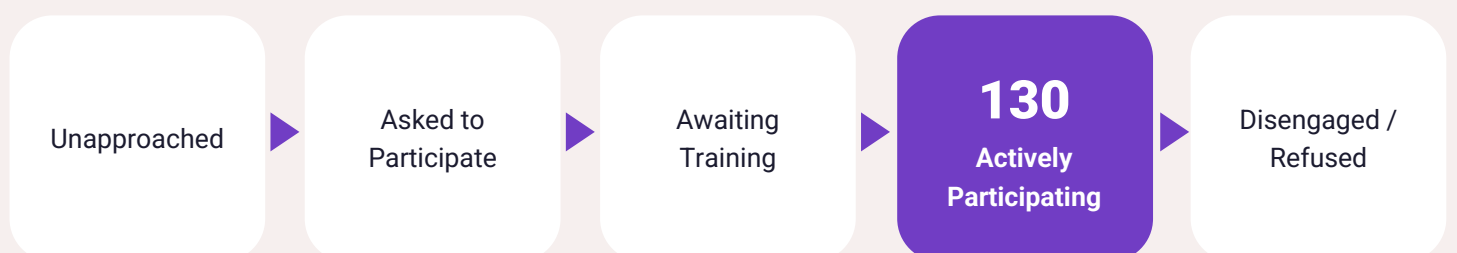
## Where it started

Before this programme period, the supervised brushing programme in Oldham had been dormant for several years. The contact list sat in a spreadsheet. Stock requests sporadically came in via emails or call. Teachers needed chasing up, or late-cancelled for training. Emails and calls got missed. The programme manager spent most of her week counting toothbrushes and getting past reception desks, not in classrooms with children.

This is not an Oldham problem. There is no agreed national standard for how supervised brushing programmes are delivered operationally, so every council runs its version from first principles, using the same spreadsheets and hitting the same points of friction. Oldham's team decided to stop patching the gaps and build the system they had needed from the start.

*At current pace, the programme is on track to reach 70%+ participation by the end of the 2025/26 academic year (July 2026).*

## How schools progress through the programme



*These are the stage names councils already use when reporting to DHSC each quarter. When the team logs each school's progress, the quarterly report writes itself. My Dental Buddy Hub data, end of April 2026, Oldham programme. Deprivation measured using IMD 1 and 2.*

# Finding the right person is the work. Holding the conversation is the rest of it.

The hardest part of running a supervised brushing programme is rarely the brushing itself. It is finding the right person in each school, getting them to agree, and keeping the conversation alive long enough for the school to actually start. In Oldham, the programme manager could see every school in one place and, more importantly, every conversation she had ever had with anyone in that school: who she spoke to, what they said, who they referred her on to, and what was meant to happen next. She was not starting from scratch on every call.

My Dental Buddy Hub holds that record for every school in the programme. Every call, email and visit is logged against the school it relates to, alongside who was spoken to, what was said, any follow-up the school asked for, and what needs to happen next. The team can re-contact a school weeks later and pick up where the last conversation stopped, rather than start over. That consistency is what helps build rapport and takes a school from “we are too busy” or “we already do enough” to actively brushing.

The Hub also shows every school in the programme on one board, arranged by where each one has reached: Unapproached, Asked to Participate, Awaiting Training,

*“I can see exactly where each setting is. Instead of working through a list, I’m building relationships based on context.”*

**Lauren**, Oldham Oral Health Programme Manager

Actively Participating, or Disengaged or Refused. These are the same stage names councils use when reporting to DHSC. The programme manager opens the Hub and sees exactly what is happening with every school, without having to dig through spreadsheets or her inbox.

The board defaults to IMD ascending, so the most deprived settings sit at the top, and within each IMD band the school the team has not contacted longest is first. Logging a contact drops that school down its band. The work queue refills itself, and the most deprived areas stay prioritised without anyone having to filter manually.

That is what got Oldham’s schools moving. A programme manager who can hold the conversation history of every school, and who can see at a glance which one needs her next, can spend her time building relationships rather than chasing information. Schools that stall get spotted early enough to bring them back in.

*The Hub changes what staff time is spent on, not how much staff time a programme needs.*

*“We have very much welcomed the approach that has meant quarterly reporting to DHSC has been streamlined and can now be completed in a matter of minutes.”*

**Oldham Council**, Public Health Team

## What this means for other councils

*“In Oldham we have high levels of dental decay. It is therefore essential that our supervised toothbrushing programme is as effective and efficient as possible. In September 2025, My Dental Buddy were commissioned to provide this service and have made impressive progress to date. The system developed and used by the team, My Dental Buddy Hub, has been a major contributor to this progress and an asset to us as commissioners, by improving and streamlining our data reporting capabilities.”* **Oldham Council**, Public Health Team

**Find out how My Dental Buddy Hub supports councils delivering supervised toothbrushing.**

To find out how it could work for your team, visit [mydentalbuddy.com/hub](https://mydentalbuddy.com/hub) or contact us at [hub@mydentalbuddy.com](mailto:hub@mydentalbuddy.com).

Oldham programme data, end of April 2026. My Dental Buddy Hub is developed by MDBuddy UK Ltd.