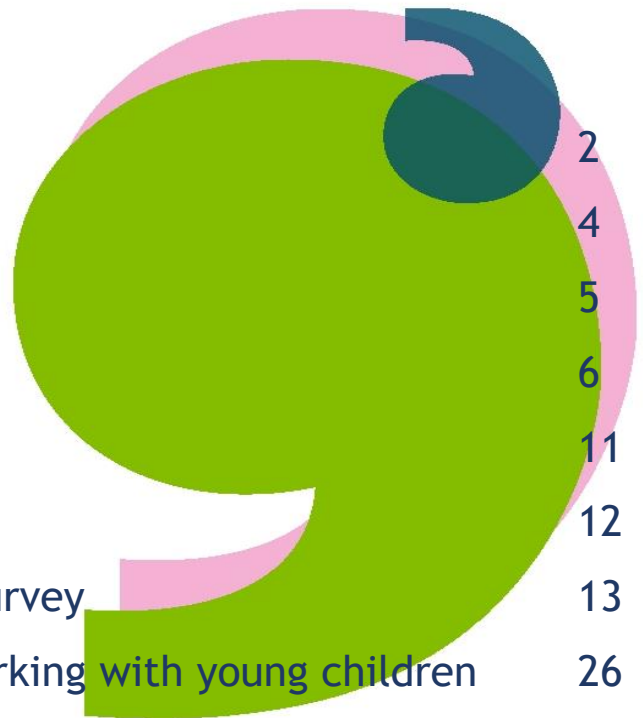


**Healthwatch Herefordshire**



**Children's Dental Health  
Report**

**April 2018**



**Contents**

Executive summary	2
Introduction	4
Engagement	5
Findings	6
Recommendations	11
Acknowledgements	12
Appendix 1 - Children's dental health survey	13
Appendix 2 - Survey of professionals working with young children	26
Appendix 3 - Website & social media polls	36
Appendix 4 - Subset of Healthwatch Public Health survey	37

## Executive summary

In June 2017 the public chose Public Health as one of six priorities for our years' work. Healthwatch decided to undertake some general public health work and also a separate focus on children's dental health which is the focus of this report.

Healthwatch collected data about the public experiences and views through three surveys, a social media poll and six engagement sessions in Children's Centres, which form the basis of this report, hearing from a total of 522 people.

We sought views on the following themes

- Registering with an NHS dentist
- What information people receive about good children's dental health care?
- What people's views are of water fluoridation?
- What could improve children's dental health?
- What factors are causing poor dental health in children?
- Are there good examples of initiatives that have positively impacted on children's dental health in Herefordshire?

Our findings have been summarised in the following sections:

- Fluoridation
- Fluoride treatment
- Registering with an NHS dentist
- Accessing a dentist
- Oral health information
- Oral health, sugar & diet
- Public views on why Herefordshire has poor children's dental health & Barriers to good dental health & low sugar diet
- Good examples of initiatives which are happening or have happened to improve children's dental health

We have made sixteen recommendations in this report based on the survey and engagement findings:

1. Public Health write to parents when their children are under 12 months to point out that they should register with a dentist, how to do it and when to start going. (Similar to the immunisation programme)

2. Increase NHS dental activity and dentists, particularly in market towns for adults so they can register and take their children.
3. Look at the contracts for dental activity across the county to ensure all have a target about offering fluoride varnish to children.
4. School leaflets to parents about Fluoride varnish.
5. Improve transport options for families in rural areas.
6. Feasibility study and consultation on Fluoride in water, which includes supporting information about the issue to help people make informed decisions.
7. Continue education at Children's Centre's.
8. Coordinate a bigger multiagency campaign about sugar smart and oral health between the early year's partners in Herefordshire to create impact and reach to parents.
9. Public Health to work more with the Early Years in nurseries and childminders to reach parents with information and guidance.
10. Offer training and education drop in sessions on how to brush teeth, how to eat well. Cooking and shopping lessons for families in need.
11. A dental bus in rural areas where people can register and have a basic check-up and receive fluoride varnish for children.
12. Dental outreach programme into communities and schools, involve dental practices.
13. National TV campaigns about the hard hitting facts of dental decay.
14. Nursery and school brushing schemes.
15. More time for Health Visitors or Early Help Family Support workers to prioritise talking about dental health to families in need, and also helping them to make an appointment to register with a dentist.

## Introduction

In June 2017 the public chose Public Health as one of six priorities for our years' work. Healthwatch decided to undertake some general public health work and also a separate focus on children's dental health. The proportion of Herefordshire 5 year olds with dental decay at 41% was higher than the figures for England and the West Midlands, while the mean number of decayed, missing or filled teeth in 5 year olds in Herefordshire was 1.43, a figure twice as high as in the West Midlands and 30% higher than that for England as a whole. <sup>1</sup>

The Herefordshire Health & Wellbeing board have made childhood dental health & obesity a priority for 2018, due to the prevalence of decay in the county coupled with the figures for childhood obesity, showing some correlation in the cohorts affected by both.

Healthwatch collected data about the public experiences and views in five ways to form the basis of this report:

1. A survey on children's dental health online completed by 179 participants from January - March 2018. Appendix 1
2. A survey on children's dental health for professionals working with children, completed by 45 participants, including Health Visitors, Nursery and Children's Centre workers, early help/family support workers, childminders and other allied professionals, from February-March 2018. Appendix 2
3. Social Media snap polls on fluoridation, completed by 160 people February-March 2018. Appendix 3.
4. A general public health survey, which included questions about dental access and views on fluoridation, from November 2017 - March 2018. Completed by 55 people. Appendix 4.
5. Six face to face engagement sessions with 83 parents attending children's centres at; Leominster, Ross, Kington, Greencroft (South Wye Hereford City), Hinton (South Wye Hereford City) and Kingstone.



The following are the topics we gathered information about:

- Registering with an NHS dentist
- What information people receive about good children's dental health care?
- What people's views are of water fluoridation?
- What could improve children's dental health?
- What factors are causing poor dental health in children?
- Are there good examples of initiatives that have positively impacted on children's dental health in Herefordshire?

The following report aims to identify themes and trends in the feedback and to identify recommendations to improve children's dental health in Herefordshire.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health England Survey 2014/15

## Engagement

The Engagement sessions were carried out by having conversations with parents at Children's Centres run by Herefordshire Council. These sessions have different educational themes each week, with information stands for parents and activities for babies & children. The topic at most sessions when Healthwatch visited was children's oral health & sugar smart. Many sessions ran alongside a Health Visitor drop in & weigh clinic.

### Number of conversations with parents: Total 83

Kington	3
Kingstone	10
Greencroft, South Wye Hereford City.	15
Hinton, South Wye Hereford City.	20
Leominster	20
Ross-on-Wye	15

### The following topics were discussed in one to one conversations with parents:

- Views on fluoridation of the water supply in Herefordshire
- Are you and your child registered with a dentist? What was the experience of registering yourself and your child?
- Do you plan to register your child with a dentist, if so when? If not why not?
- Did you know children's dental treatment on the NHS is free?
- What is your experience of accessing your dentist for you and your child?
- What information have you received about how to look after your child's dental health, when and where from?
- Why do you think the county has such poor children's dental health?
- What are the challenges to eating a healthy balanced diet with low sugar for you and your family?
- Are you aware of the link between sugar and poor dental health?
- Discussions about sugar in children's diet
- Is money a factor in eating a healthy balanced low sugar diet?
- What initiatives would improve the dental health of children in the county?
- What places or methods would you suggest when targeting oral health information for parents of babies & preschool children?

The engagement sessions allowed Healthwatch to delve deeper into some of the complexities of some issues and behaviours beyond the survey information. The engagement feedback provides context and patient experience narrative supporting the surveys.

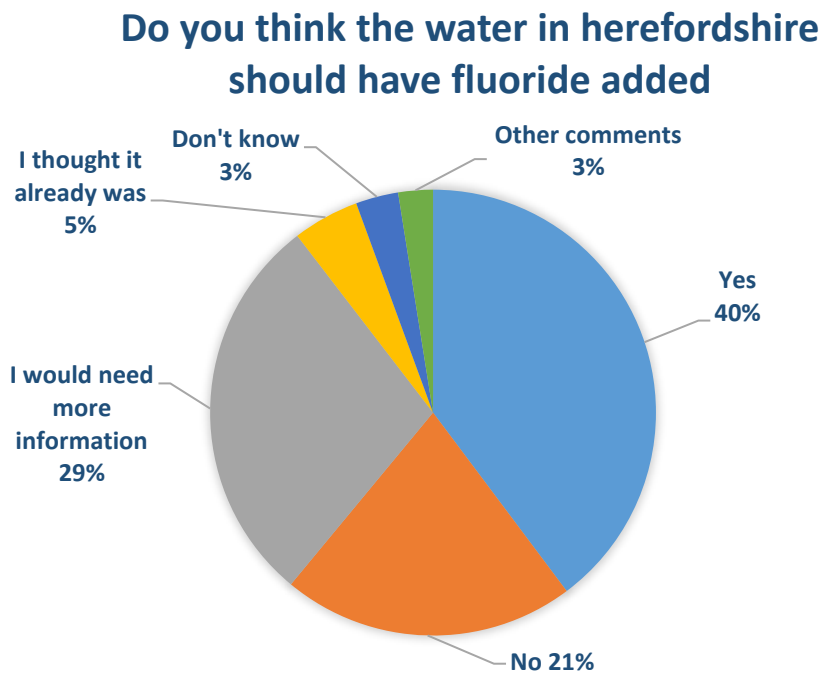
Whilst attending these sessions BBC Hereford & Worcester attended and interviewed parents and Healthwatch about the topic for radio.

## Findings

### Fluoridation

40% of all respondents thought the water in the county should have fluoride added to it to help prevent tooth decay.

Those people who disagreed with this question on social media expressed a strong view that it shouldn't be added to the water, with lots of comments stating their views that Fluoride is a toxin and that people should have a choice to use fluoride by using fluoride toothpaste.



Many people however were not informed enough to have a view either way and would like more information before forming an opinion.

Some people responded in the comments that they would be largely unaffected by Fluoride because they were on a private supply not on mains water supply.

When engaging with the parents at children's centres, many thought this was a common sense option and stated that if it has no side effects then it could only help the situation for those people who are not sticking to a good oral hygiene routine.

When asking people about solutions to the dental decay issue in the county, over half were suggesting that this could be part of the solution.

### Fluoride treatment

Dentists should be offering children six monthly Fluoride varnish treatment, this is a topical application of fluoride paste onto the surface on the teeth to help protect the enamel from decay. During the engagement sessions Healthwatch asked parents if they had been offered this treatment. The response was varied, less than half of the people we spoke to who attended a regular dentist were being offered this treatment, with many not knowing about it at all. The dentist which was mentioned the most for offering this regularly was Pool farm dentist in Hereford.

When asking the general public if they knew about Fluoride varnish 65% of people said no. Appendix 4, Q5.

When talking to parents who haven't registered their children, we were pointing out the benefits of such preventative simple and free treatment which can help to avoid tooth decay when you see a regular dentist for a check-up.

### Registering with an NHS dentist

When talking to parents, those who were registered themselves had mostly routinely taken their child along from about a year old and the child was registered with the practice.

Other people we spoke to who weren't registered themselves but had taken their child to get registered had experiences no issues registering their child.

However Healthwatch have regularly heard that the experience of registering as an adult for a dentist was more difficult, particularly in the market towns. Hereford City availability is typically a lot better. Appendix 4, Q4 highlights some of the barriers or problems for adult accessing the dentist.

There was still a significant number of people who had to wait a long time to register, 18% (There was a long waiting list) and 11% (no space on the waiting list) who were told there was no space on the list. Appendix 1, Q3.

During the engagement sessions we spoke to a small number of Eastern European speaking parents who did not know how to find and register with a dentist.

Amongst parents of young children at the engagement sessions who hadn't registered with a dentist yet, about half were unsure at what age their child should start to go. A small number of parents thought that milk teeth weren't that important.

5% of people didn't know NHS dental care for children was free. Appendix 1, Q4.

### Accessing a dentist

Analysing the comments from professionals in Appendix 2 and also from the engagement sessions in Kington and Kingstone in particular one of the barriers for parents in rural areas outside of the city or towns with dentists, was transport. Many parents do not have access to a car and public transport is expensive and in places infrequent. Travelling to see a dentist in Hereford is a day trip and one that some people won't choose to make for preventative dental check up's.

Appendix 4, Q2 Highlights that of those registered 78% attend once or twice a year.

### Oral health information

An issue for parents to consider is the levels of Fluoride in their child's toothpaste. Many toothpaste's targeted at children have a very low level and Guidance has now increased the suggested level. This is a message that the children's centre are relaying to parents. When speaking to parents of young children they are often more concerned about getting the child to brush their teeth adequately whilst trying to keep any toothpaste on a brush rather than the type of toothpaste.

When talking to parents who are getting little ones brushing, they use a variety of tools and methods to get their child brushing teeth. There are mobile Apps, rewards charts, stickers, timers and brushing alongside mum or dad. Some people wanted more advice on how to brush properly.

Appendix 1, Q5 Have you received enough information about the following:

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total Responses
	Number	Number	Number	Number
<b>Registering you and your children with an NHS dentist?</b>	87	80	8	175
<b>When to start taking your child to a dentist?</b>	100	70	5	175
<b>How to look after your child's dental health?</b>	123	48	4	175
<b>When to start brushing your child's teeth?</b>	139	35	1	175
<b>Which food and drinks will promote good dental health?</b>	135	33	7	175

This data suggests that more information is needed for parents about registering with an NHS dentist and also, when a child should start going to the dentist.

Appendix 1, Q6 highlights the top source of information for parents about dental health which are the Dentist and the Health Visitor.

This also highlights that the most common age people are receiving information about children's dental health are 0-12 months and 2 years. From the engagement sessions this is supported with evidence that the health visitor and new mums and baby groups at children's centres are giving out these messages to parents as part of their remits, in particular the health visitors 9 months and 2 year checks.

Some parents recall information in bounty packs before birth but say there is so much information at that stage and dental health doesn't seem relevant at the time and leaflets get lost.

### Oral health, sugar & diet

At the engagement sessions there was awareness of the need to reduce sugar intake with the use of the new Sugar Smart campaign and mobile app. Parents were still left struggling with older children who put pressure on parents as a result of peer pressure and pester power. Even with babies and toddlers parents attending the sessions generally know what is good and bad for sugar. However there were hidden sugars in things that parents would



think were a healthy choice, such as raisins or too much fruit. Some parents said this is conflicting with messages about eating enough fruit and vegetables.

One of the observations we made, is despite the education given, parents are still allowing sweet things as treats and squash in toddler cups.

When talking to parents at engagement sessions about their views on sugary food and drink and convenience food, the conversations were very divided down the middle with one half of the parents saying money has a bearing on childhood dental health because eating a healthy balanced diet with fresh ingredients costs more than a diet of cereal bars and crisps and snacks etc. Many also said their child doesn't like water. When having a limited amount of money to spend on food they prefer to buy foods which will last longer and not go off and waste their money, e.g. fruit.

The opposing half of parents said that money had no bearing, it was people's priorities that were wrong. Suggesting people are making the wrong choices, if they cook more foods and meals from fresh basic ingredients the sugar and salt content would be lower and the cost would also be less.

### **Public views on why Herefordshire has poor children's dental health & Barriers to good dental health & low sugar diet**

The following were some of the most common answers to what prevents children having good dental health Appendix 1 Q9 (parents) & Appendix 2, Q4 (professionals);

- Poor diet, Sweets, fizzy drinks & sugar and impact on dental health.
- Lack of access to NHS dental care.
- Poor parental education & poor parenting.
- Lack of access to information on dental hygiene & care.
- Confusing messages from professionals about when to take children to see a dentist.
- Lack of support for parents.
- Not brushing teeth.
- No fluoride in the water.
- Socio-economic status.
- Transport.
- Parents having poor dental hygiene habits themselves.
- Lack of parenting skills to shop, cook and eat responsibly.

### **Good examples of initiatives which are happening or have happened to improve children's dental health**

1. One dental surgery has done regular visits to toddler and baby groups in the county with a fancy dress 'tooth fairy'. These have proved very popular and they have encouraged parents to register with an NHS dentist. Other dental surgeries have also done some outreach sessions.
2. Health Visitor checks.
3. Children's Centre sessions with themed educational activities.
4. Reception class daily tooth brushing sessions for children.
5. Dental visits to schools.

6. Pool farm dentists regularly talk to parents and children when they visit about the importance of low sugar drinks and food.

## Recommendations

1. Public Health write to parents when their children are under 12 months to point out that they should register with a dentist, how to do it and when to start going. (Similar to the immunisation programme)
2. Increase NHS dental activity and dentists, particularly in market towns for adults so they can register and take their children.
3. Look at the contracts for dental activity across the county to ensure all have a target about offering fluoride varnish to children.
4. School leaflets to parents about Fluoride varnish.
5. Improve transport options for families in rural areas.
6. Feasibility study and consultation on Fluoride in water, which includes supporting information about the issue to help people make informed decisions.
7. Continue education at Children's Centre's.
8. Coordinate a bigger multiagency campaign about sugar smart and oral health between the early year's partners in Herefordshire to create impact and reach to parents.
9. Public Health to work more with the Early Years in nurseries and childminders to reach parents with information and guidance.
10. Offer training and education drop in sessions on how to brush teeth, how to eat well. Cooking and shopping lessons for families in need.
11. A dental bus in rural areas where people can register and have a basic check-up and receive fluoride varnish for children.
12. Dental outreach programme into communities and schools, involve dental practices.
13. National TV campaigns about the hard hitting facts of dental decay.
14. Nursery and school brushing schemes.
15. More time for Health Visitors or Early Help Family Support workers to prioritise talking about dental health to families in need, and also helping them to make an appointment to register with a dentist.

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch would like to thank all of the people who took part in the surveys and engagement sessions that this report is based on.

We would also like to thank Herefordshire Council Children Centre staff for accommodating our engagement work with the parents and children.

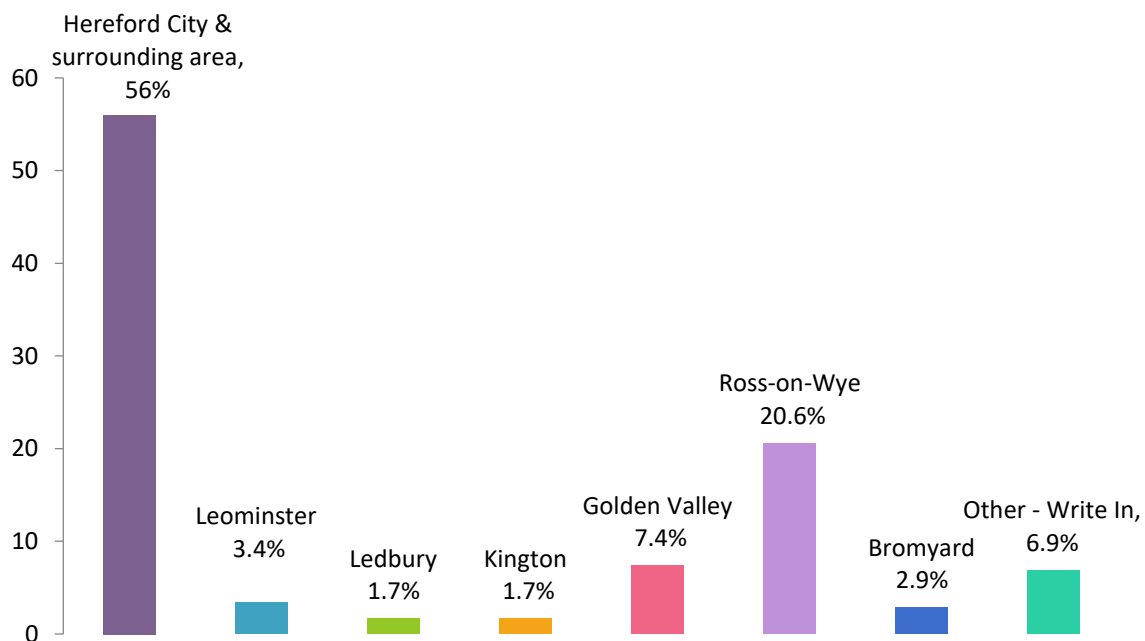
## Appendix 1

### Healthwatch Children's Dental Health Survey

January - March 2018

Response Statistics	Count	Percent
Complete	168	93.9
Partial	11	6.1
Totals	179	

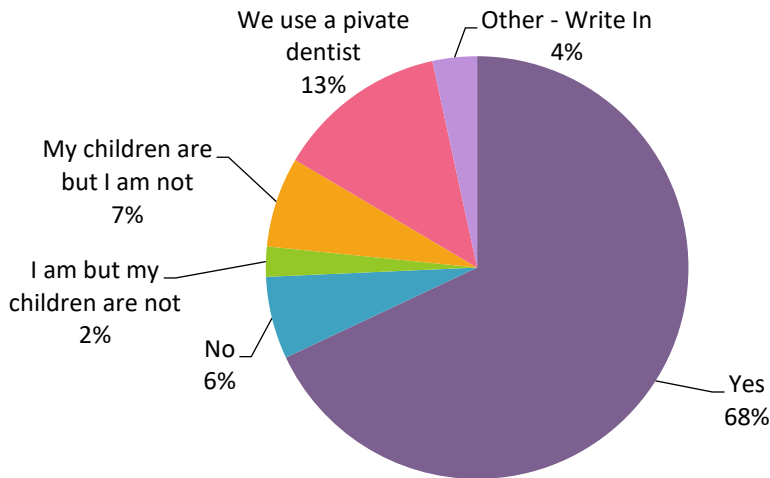
#### 1. In what area of the county do you live?



Location	Percent	Count
Hereford City & surrounding area	56.0%	98
Leominster	3.4%	6
Ledbury	1.7%	3
Kington	1.7%	3
Golden Valley	7.4%	13
Ross-on-Wye	20.6%	36
Bromyard	2.9%	5
Other - Write In	6.9%	12

<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>
Shobdon	2
Bishops Frome	1
Gorsley	1
Kinnersley	1
Leintwardine	3
Newent	1
Rowlestone	1
Sutton St Nicholas	1
Upper Sapey	1
Totals	12

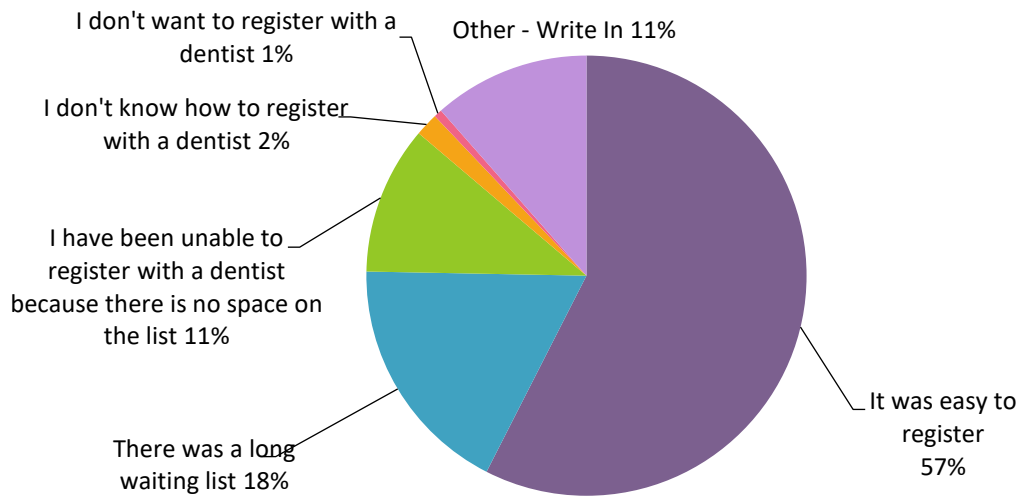
## 2. Are you and or your children registered with an NHS Dentist?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	68.0%	119
No	6.3%	11
I am but my children are not	2.3%	4
My children are but I am not	6.9%	12
We use a private dentist	13.1%	23
Other - Write In	3.4%	6
	Totals	175

Other - Write In	Count
I am, she will be within the next month	1
My son is seen on the NHS and I choose to be seen by the same dentist on Denplan	1
Myself and my daughter are but there's no space for my youngest daughter	1
Private dentist, child not yet registered	1
We are but in a different county as we cannot get NHS locally	1
Yes but we had to wait a good 2 years to get an NHS one after relocating here	1
Totals	6

**3. If you are registered or have tried to register, what is your experience of registering with an NHS dentist?**



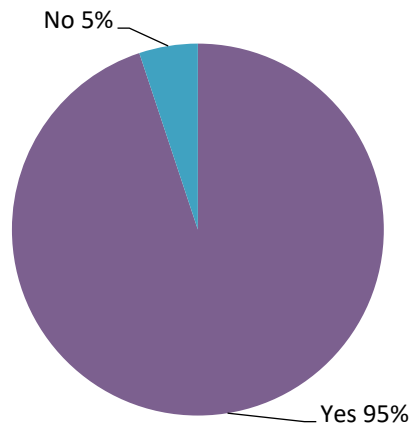
Value	Percent	Count
It was easy to register	57.5%	100
There was a long waiting list	17.8%	31
I have been unable to register with a dentist because there is no space on the list	10.9%	19
I don't know how to register with a dentist	1.7%	3
I don't want to register with a dentist	0.6%	1
Other - Write In	11.5%	20
	Totals	174

Other - Write In	Count
I've been with a dentist for many years	2
Easy to register but we are registered in Powys as unable to find a dentist in Herefordshire	1
I have a private dentist	5
I didn't try as I have heard the service is not very good.	1
Many dentists are not accepting NHS patients	2



I was only able to register when I got pregnant, otherwise nowhere had space	1
I was with the NHS dentist since moving to Hereford in 1995 when it was easy to register- when my children were born in 2006 and 2008 I registered them with my dentist easily	1
It was only easy because I was already registered with an NHS dentist. That said, I live in the golden valley and our dentist is in Leominster.	1
N/a	1
No problem	1
Not tried	1
The dentist I was with did not take on children on the NHS so I have to pay privately for them	1
Unable to register in ross as no NHS places	1
Was unable to register at my choice of dentist as their list was full. Had to register at my dentist whose staff I believe are inferior and level of care is far from comprehensive.	1
Automatically registered with own dentist	1
Totals	20

4. Do you know that NHS dental services are free for children?

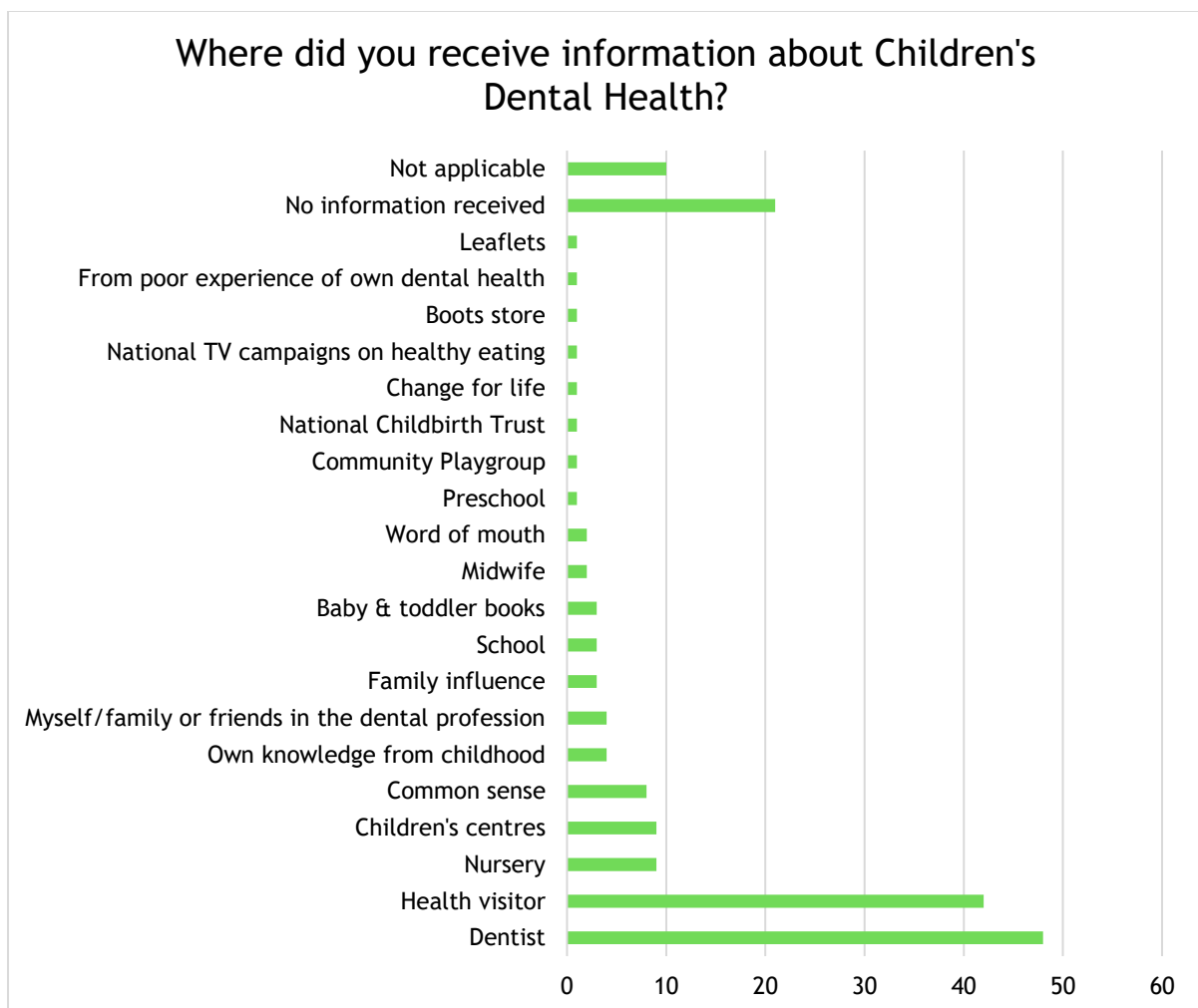
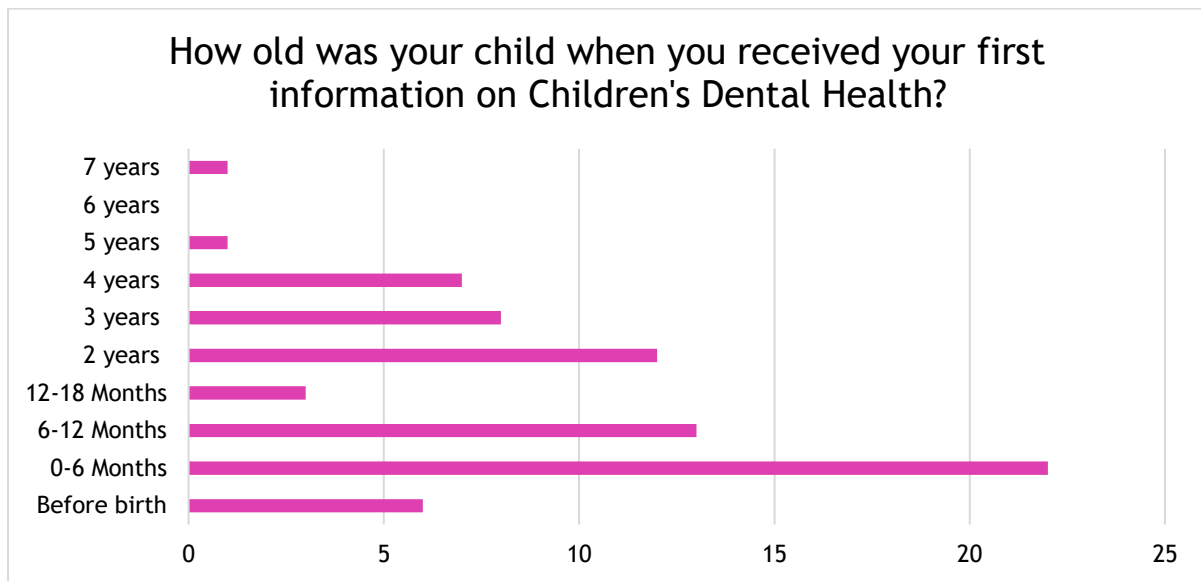


Value	Percent	Count
Yes	94.9%	166
No	5.1%	9
	Totals	175

5. Have you received enough information about the following?

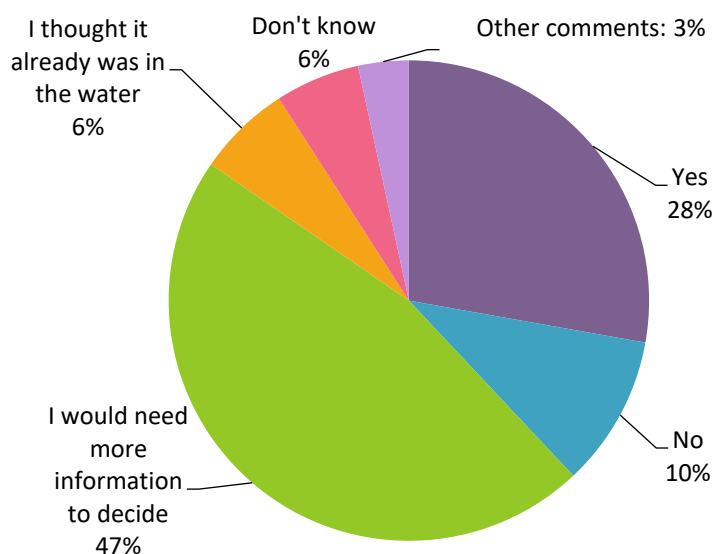
	Yes	No	Don't know	Total Responses
	Number	Number	Number	Number
Registering you and your children with an NHS dentist?	87	80	8	175
When to start taking your child to a dentist?	100	70	5	175
How to look after your child's dental health?	123	48	4	175
When to start brushing your child's teeth?	139	35	1	175
Which food and drinks will promote good dental health?	135	33	7	175

6. If you have received good information about children's dental health, where did you receive it? What age were your children at the time?



*Note - some people received information from multiple sources*

## 7. Do you think the water in Herefordshire should have fluoride added to it?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	27.8%	49
No	10.2%	18
I would need more information to decide	46.6%	82
I thought it already was in the water	6.3%	11
Don't know	5.7%	10
Other comments:	3.4%	7
	Totals	176

Other comments:	Count
Absolutely not. I would be very against having a known neurotoxin added to our water. Should people want fluoride they can use a fluoride toothpaste.	1
Fluoride is toxic for humans. Please do not consider this idea. Inform yourself deeply before we will suffer it. We are already having enough illnesses in this times.	1
I didn't know it didn't till I went to the dentist with my children where I was told they need to use fluoride toothpaste.	1
It has something in it as it has a nasty taste	1

Because there is no Fluoride in the water a 1400ppm fluoride toothpaste should be used in Herefordshire and people need to know this.	1
My oldest daughter was born in Sheffield and lived there until we moved to Hereford when she was 5- there was fluoride in the Sheffield water- she had no fillings throughout her childhood, my other daughter was born in Hereford and has had severe tooth decay and had to have 2 milk teeth removed- my parenting hasn't changed between my 2 daughters so I believe lack of Hereford fluoride is to blame.	1
We are on borehole water	1
Totals	6

## 8. What do you think would improve the dental health of children in Herefordshire?

Suggestion	Number
More NHS Dentists/reduce waiting lists & times/increase NHS access	21
Education and support for parents	19
Education on Healthy Eating and drinking e.g. cut out sweets and fizzy drinks	16
Education in schools	15
Fluoride delivery in water	14
Education from Health visitor	13
Education at Nursery	10
Brushing children's teeth	9
Information in bounty packs ante-natal and post-natal (baby information in pregnancy)	9
Education at Children's Centres	6
More information about children's dental health	6
Parental discipline on snacks, sweets and teeth brushing	6
Dental visits to schools	6
Don't know/not sure	5
Education for children	5
Education at Dentist, promotional days	5
Nursery visits from the dentist	5
Nursery, school teeth brushing scheme	5
Improve legislation of food and drinks industry and advertising (to reduce sugar levels)	5
Leaflets for children to take home from school	5
TV documentaries shown in school about tooth decay	5
Increase media campaigns & awareness to promote good dental health	5
Water fountains in schools, health settings and public places	5
Free toothbrushes & paste for children	5
Improve NHS dental access for parents so they will go with their child	5
Mobile dentists visiting schools and nurseries	5
School visits from the dentist	4
National TV advert campaigns on the effects of poor dental health	4
Inform parents about the need to use a high fluoride toothpaste	4
Regular health checks for diet and dental health	4
Better Dentists	3
More information about dental services when and how to access	3
Focus education & support in deprived areas	3
Supermarket offers on healthy food not sugary food & drinks	3
Education & information from Midwives - prenatal	2

Continuation of children's centre groups	2
Classes in how and what to buy and cook	2
Automatic registration with dentist when registering with GP or registering at birth	2
Ensure more Health visitor focus on dental health at 9 month check	2
Fluoride topical varnish application for children	2
Better food & drinks in secondary schools	2
Water only in schools	2
Trips from nursery and schools to visit a dentist for awareness & education	2
Consistency of service across dentists	1
Dentists acting quicker	1
Increase in treatments such as fissure seals	1
Child friendly dentists	1
Advice on how to get children to brush their teeth	1
Dental appointments at weekends	1
Compulsory dental appointments pre school	1
Compulsory education classes for parents	1
Cheaper dental care	1
Free fruit schemes	1
Face to face support for families	1
Health visitor information on when to register and how	1
Health visitor and education sessions at playgroups	1
GP campaign to promote dental care	1
Consistent messages from all professionals	1

*Note - some people made multiple suggestions*

9. In your opinion, what are the factors which are causing poor children's dental health in the county?

	Number
Too much sugar, sweets and sugary drinks	41
Lack of access to NHS dental care	21
Poor diet	18
Lack of Information on dental hygiene and care	17
Lack of education	16
Poor parenting	13
Confusing messages from the dentist/professionals about when to take children	11
No Fluoride in the water	10
Parents and/or children unaware of sugar content of food and drinks	8
Lack of regular tooth brushing	8
Parental control. E.g. allowing sugary snacks	7
Don't know	5
Poverty/Deprivation	4
Not having regular dental check-ups and preventative care	4
Poor brushing technique	4
Ignorance `	4
Perceived healthy foods high in sugar. Fruit juice, fruit and smoothies	4
Lack of family support	3
Cheap food has high sugar	3
School lunches	3
Lack of personal responsibility	3
Low or no fluoride toothpaste	3
Snacking	2
Correlation between poor parental dental health and children's dental health	2
Dentists not acting quickly with preventative treatments	2
Milk teeth are deemed not as important	2
Reductions in early support: midwife, health visitor and school health services	2
Laziness	2
Lack of common sense	2
Water quality	2
Cost of living	1
Being scared of the dentist	1
Child dieting	1
Fear of Fluoride in toothpaste	1



The responsibility is on the parent to proactively register and go	1
fast food culture	1
Immigration	1
spring water	1

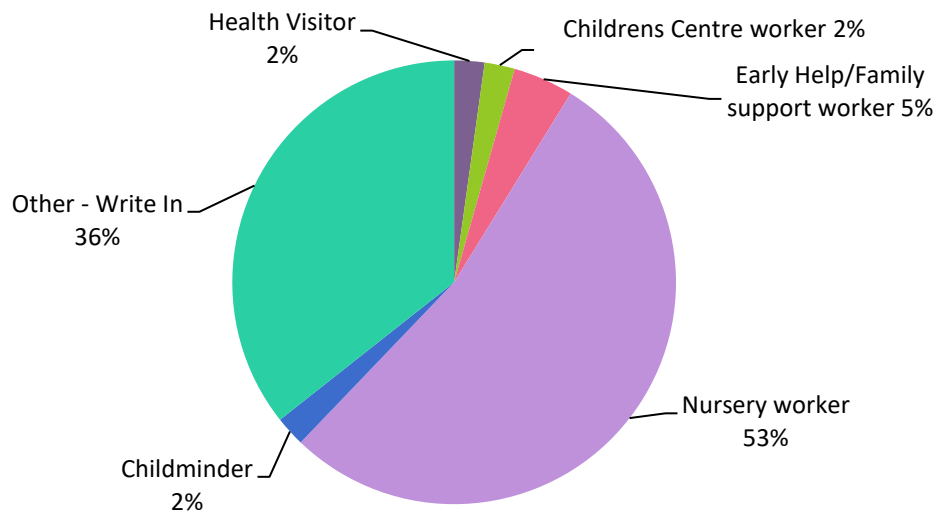
## Appendix 2

### Healthwatch Dental Health - Staff Survey of professionals working with young children in Herefordshire.

February - March 2018

Survey Response Statistics	Count	Percent
Complete	44	97.8
Partial	1	2.2
Totals	45	

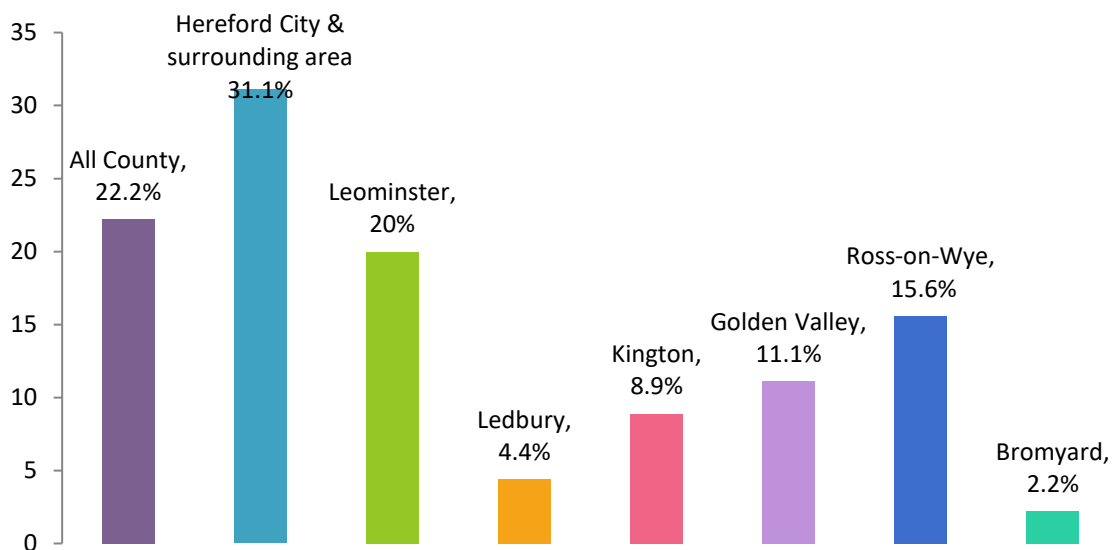
#### 1. What is your role?



Role	Percent	Count
Health Visitor	2.2%	1
Children's Centre worker	2.2%	1
Early Help/Family support worker	4.4%	2
Nursery worker	53.3%	24
Childminder	2.2%	1
Other - Write In	35.6%	16
	Totals	45

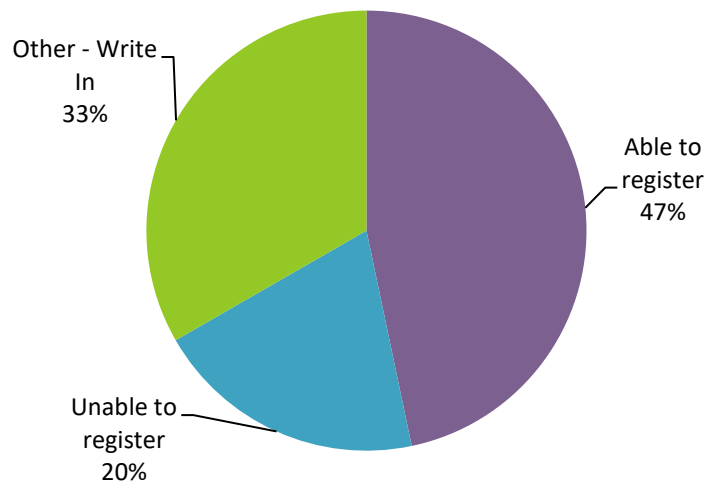
<b>Other - Write In</b>	<b>Count</b>
Nursery preschool Manager	4
Dental hygienist	1
Healthy Lifestyle trainer	1
Paediatric specialist nurse	1
Parenting tutor	1
Portage Worker	1
Primary School Head teacher	1
Primary Teacher	2
Community nursery nurse	1
Dentist	1
Pharmacist	1
Pre-school practitioner	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16</b>

2. What area of the county does your role cover? tick all that apply



Value	Percent	Count
All County	22.2%	10
Hereford City & surrounding area	31.1%	14
Leominster	20.0%	9
Ledbury	4.4%	2
Kington	8.9%	4
Golden Valley	11.1%	5
Ross-on-Wye	15.6%	7
Bromyard	2.2%	1

3. In your experience of working with families, what is access to NHS dental care like for the families your work with?



Value	Percent	Count
Able to register	46.7%	21
Unable to register	20.0%	9
Other - Write In	33.3%	15
	Totals	45

**Other - Write In**

Able to register but unable to get there from Leintwardine unless they have their own transport. This leaves the most needed families not able to easily assess dental care. We have a lot of EYPP children and most have only seen dentists for emergency treatment. This is despite information given about the access centre on Leominster.

Difficult but with persistence they managed to get registered

Emergency dentist in Leominster very good

Families are able to access but this is made difficult as it is in Hereford and those who don't drive this is a challenge and a day trip

I can't comment on accessibility for families I work with but personally I struggled to find a NHS dentist

I'm unsure but having two children myself I had no problem signing them up to a dentist.

Parent saying it is difficult accessing a NHS Dentist, particularly if you have moved to the area.

Some can, some can't

Some registered, some with problems registering

being able to register with a dentist is dependent on the area of the county you live

It varies depending on where in the county person lives

The importance of accessing dental care from a very young age does not appear to be a priority.

variable with some long waits

4. In your experience of working with families what are the barriers to families achieving good dental health?

Count	Response
8	Poor diet, Poor awareness of sugar in drink food and impact on dental health.
2	Distance
2	Choosing not to register with a dentist
5	Transport. Lack of public transport and cost of public transport
11	Poor Education
8	Lack of understanding on achieving good dental health. E.g. How to brush kid's teeth properly, what sort of toothpaste to use, diet and lifestyle children should be getting regarding dental health.
6	Giving children too many sweets and not ensuring brushing teeth in mornings
2	Not ensuring a good teeth brushing routine
12	Lack of access to NHS dentist, Long waiting lists, and access close to homes
2	Fear of dentists
1	Not willing to access information that is available
1	Our families don't seem to have any issues with achieving good dental health
1	Reluctant children
4	Socio-economic status
1	Rurality
1	Time
3	Poor parental engagement. Willingness to support their children to clean their teeth on a regular basis. This is probably due to oral hygiene being seen as a low priority.
1	Information and parenting skills being passed on.
1	Limited access to dental provision, lack of affordable transport to access the dentist. Poor understanding of the importance of young children babies' visiting the dentist, language & communication difficulties, poor parental experiences.
1	Misinformation

5. In your experience of working with families, what more could be done to improve good dental health for children in your area?

Response
Educating parents on the importance of seeing a dentist regularly for preventative care
A dental health program that we as practitioners could deliver in the setting. Free tooth brushes and toothpaste for children to use in the setting. Information to share with parents on improving dental health.
Add fluoride to the water.
Increase and improve access to NHS Dentists across the county
Continue with education of children as young as possible
Dentists or Dental nurses to visit settings. Nurseries, schools & children's centres to talk to children about healthy eating and dental health.
A peripatetic (monthly?) service in rural areas for preventative treatment like fluoride varnish and check-ups. Making use of other community buildings. Providing a free dental drop in centre on set days (for children). Free Dental sessions on how to clean your children's teeth and help with a balanced diet, not too much sugar. Link to the local schools nurseries and children's centres.
Free dental equipment for all children under 16 (toothbrush and paste)
Greater oral health information in the early years & parental understanding of the hidden sugars in foods, drinks and snacks.
Health visitors checking when they visit or at clinics. Put a higher emphasis on dental at the 8 month and 2 year reviews.
Information leaflets - competitions in schools and nurseries and information home on how to register
It was very good when the dental nurses had the time to visit nursery
More dental education in nurseries and schools but also talking to parents
No mixed messages
Social Media - Raising awareness of the importance of good dental hygiene and diet
Regular outreach to parents on a face-to-face basis.
better education and understanding on how important it is to see a dentist regularly
Interactive parent & child workshops getting them involved with clear information on diet and dental care



Giving out toothbrushes and dental advice to every child at their 9 months review with the health visiting team.

harder push on educating, perhaps even dental advisors within nursery and schools who offer free advice, and free dental equipment

longer opening hours for NHS dentist

Increase information to new parents on diet and dental health

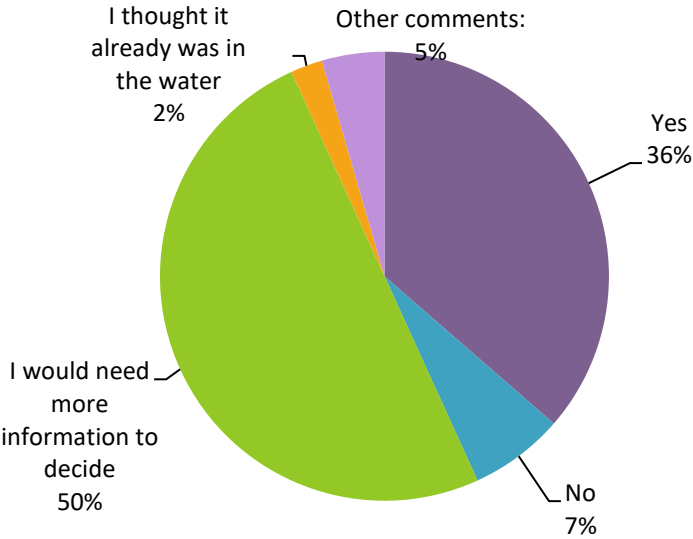
Ability to register all family with NHS dentist

**6. In your experience of working with families, are there any specific examples of things which have helped to improve dental health for children or improve access to dental health services?**

<b>Response</b>
After visiting dentist with children on nursery visit and getting information to give to parents.
Children's centre visits
Dental nurses coming in to school and running workshops and assemblies with the children
Dental nurses visits to schools to promote good dental hygiene habits. Educate the children.
Educating nursery key workers and teachers
Having toothbrushes for each pupil in school and brushing teeth regularly. Also, giving away toothbrushes and toothpaste to children as part of welcome to school pack.
Introduction of a tooth brushing scheme in nurseries
Our courses have a whole section on the importance of dental hygiene
Parents were unaware of the access centre in Leominster. This has helped some families to get dental care but also treated children with emergency care when needed.
Parents who cannot register with a dentist being able to access the local Ewyas Harold Dental access centre.
Posters and leaflets
Staff communication and free dental equipment for children
Supporting vulnerable families to make contact with the dentist and support them to attend. Delivering healthy eating workshops introducing low sugar snack alternatives & drop in sessions from Health Visitors promoting good dental health has been helpful.
Visit from local children's centre with big teeth. Brushing our teeth week at nursery and sharing a brushing song on newsletter
We try and educate as much as possible, last week I did a session on dental health and invited the tooth fairies from Collins house Dentist. That really helped because it made it interactive and fun, lots of discussion between parents and professionals. Within my baby group I make sure that they are registered with a dentist.
When we bring in dental nurses and dental hygienists, or take trips to the Dentist with our children.

changing diet with less sugar
fluoride wash, lists of dentists that are accepting families so parents don't have to keep ringing round
free toothbrush and info sheet
getting children registered with a dentist and introducing dental care early in life

**7. Do you think the water in Herefordshire should have fluoride added to it?**



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	36.4%	16
No	6.8%	3
I would need more information to decide	50.0%	22
I thought it already was in the water	2.3%	1
Other comments:	4.5%	2
	Totals	44

<b>Other comments:</b>
I think Hereford families need to know we have no Fluoride in our water so children need different toothpaste.
Yes, but this is highly controversial subject and not a vote winner so I can't see this happening.

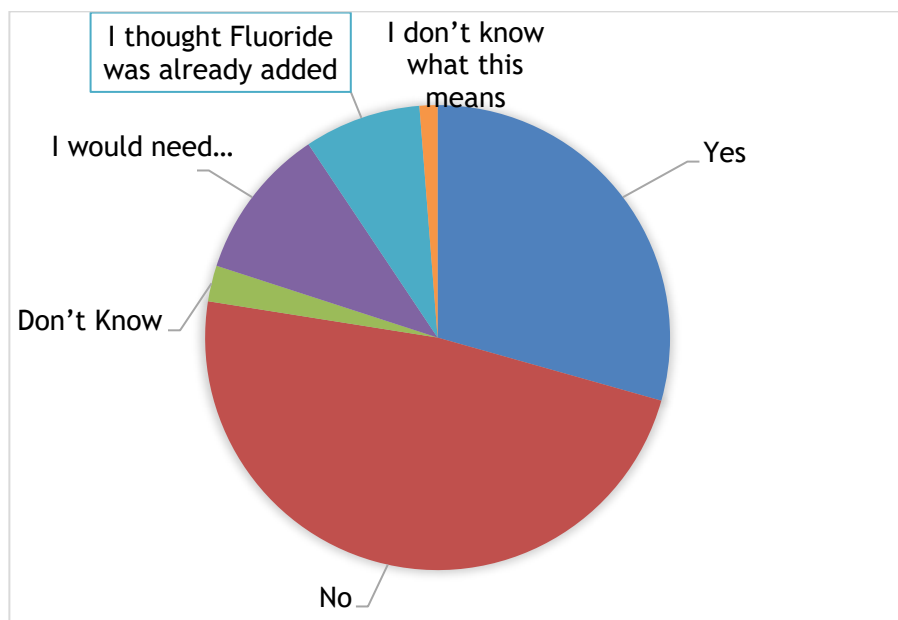
### Appendix 3

## Fluoride snap poll on Healthwatch Website and social Media - Results.

February-March 2018

Do you think fluoride should be added to the drinking water in Herefordshire?

Answer	Number
Yes	47
No	77
Don't Know	4
I would need more information to answer the question	17
I thought Fluoride was already added to the water in Herefordshire	13
I don't know what this means	2



## Appendix 4

### Source data:

#### Healthwatch Living Well: public health, healthy lifestyle and prevention services in Herefordshire' Survey

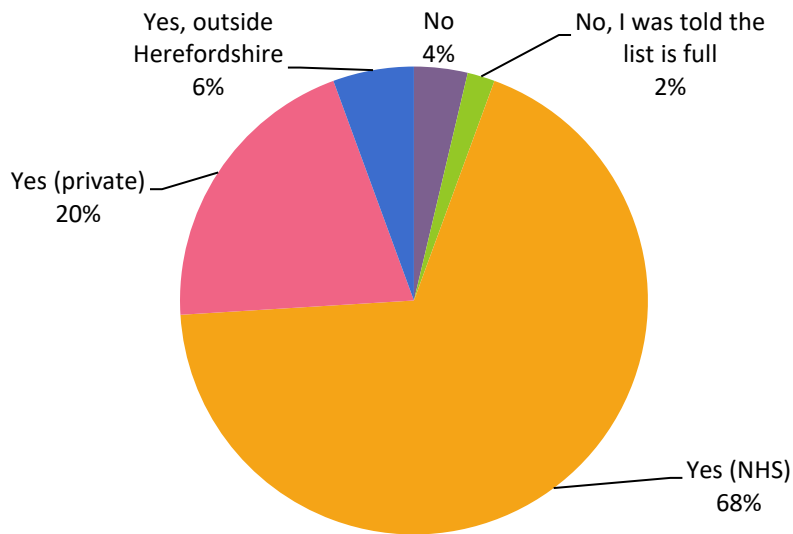
November 2017-March 2018

The following questions were part of a larger survey on public health, healthy lifestyles and prevention services. This was undertaken by Healthwatch Herefordshire from November 2017- March 2018.

The Questions relating to dental health have been separated out and included in this analysis alongside the engagement work and survey on children's dental health and the staff survey of professionals working with young children.

Survey Response Statistics	Count	Percent
Complete	29	52.7
Partial	26	47.3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. Are you and your family registered with a dentist? \*Tell us how easy it was to register in the comments box.



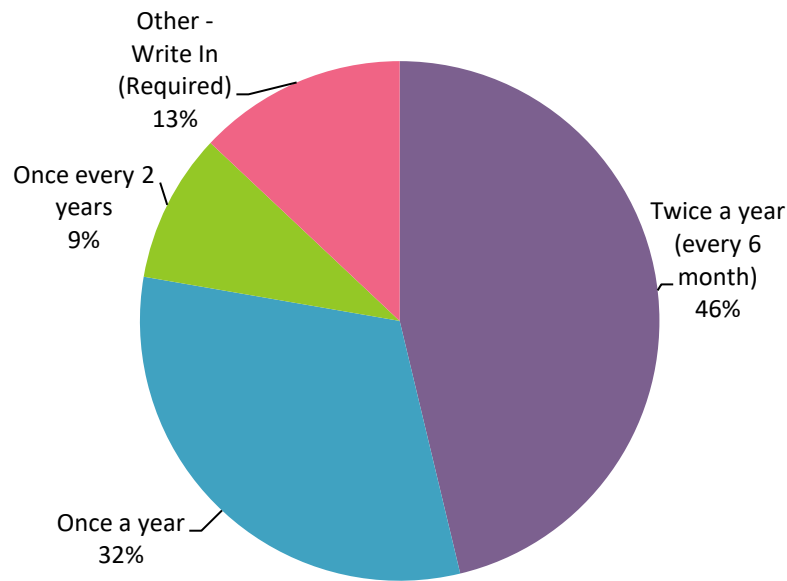
Value	Percent	Count
No	3.7%	2
No, I was told the list is full	1.9%	1
Yes (NHS)	68.5%	37
Yes (private)	20.4%	11
Yes, outside Herefordshire	5.6%	3
	Totals	54

**Comments**

Count	Response
2	I had to wait a while to get registered. Maybe 2/3 months.
1	Always been registered there - easy.
1	Changed when Kington went private but my husband can't get in on NHS
1	Couldn't get on an NHS one
1	I have tried for nearly 3 years to get a NHS dentist - but have been unsuccessful
1	I rang them and asked if they were taking on NHS customers. It was easy

1	I'm not, my family are
1	Just added the children as they arrived.
1	NHS dental access centre register
1	Still go to other side of Birmingham (60 miles)
1	Teeth in good health, no plaque, no cavities, no fillings
2	Very easy
1	Was NHS; practice changed to 'private'!
1	We would welcome the opportunity to register with an NHS dentist but there are none available in our area as far as we know. (HR9)
1	Not in Herefordshire

## 2. How often do you and your family go to your dentist?

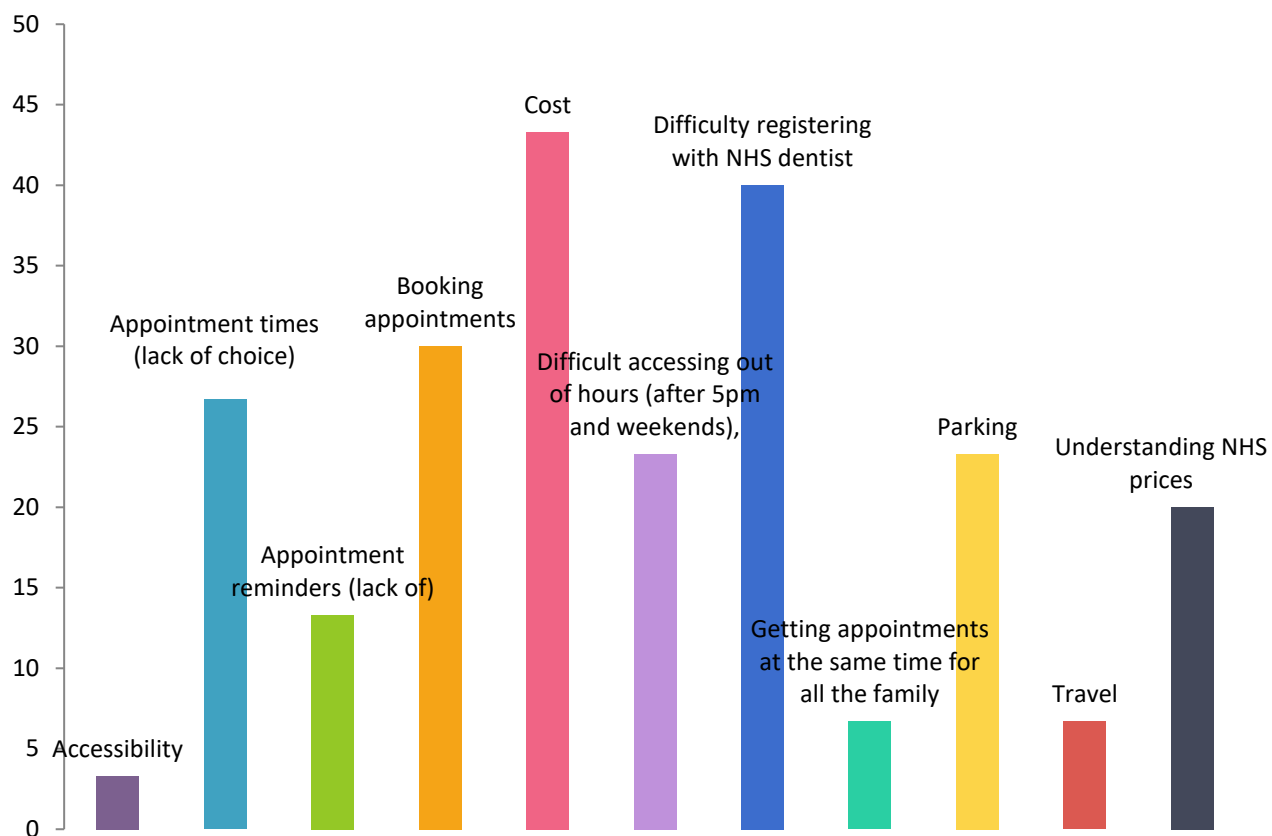


Value	Percent	Count
Twice a year (every 6 month)	46.3%	25
Once a year	31.5%	17
Once every 2 years	9.3%	5
Other - Write In (Required)	13.0%	7
	Totals	54

Other - Write In (Required)	Count
Would be once a year for a check-up. Obviously more often when treatment required.	2
Used to go but having to make an appointment in a year's time forgot and lost place. Signed up again but same happened and I have not been for two years or more. Suspect have been taken off list but will go at some point.	1
When needed	3
only when I have a problem with my teeth as I do not have one	1



### 3. What are the barriers or problems you or your family have experienced when accessing dental services?



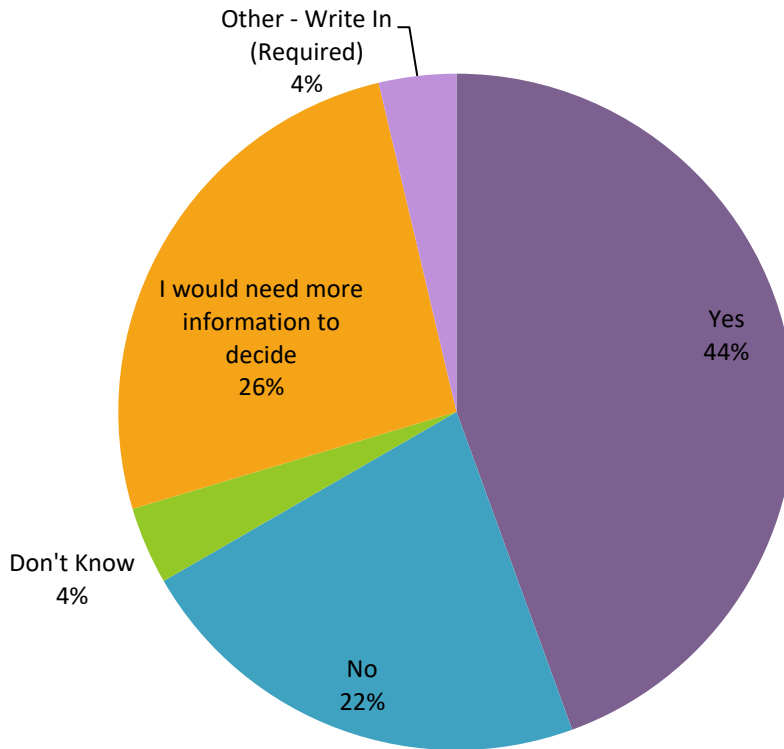
Value	Percent	Count
Accessibility e.g. hearing loop, disabled friendly entrance	3.3%	1
Appointment times (lack of choice)	26.7%	8
Appointment reminders (lack of)	13.3%	4
Booking appointments	30.0%	9
Cost	43.3%	13
Difficult accessing out of hours (after 5pm and weekends)	23.3%	7
Difficulty registering with NHS dentist	40.0%	12
Getting appointments at the same time for all the family	6.7%	2
Parking	23.3%	7
Travel (driving)	6.7%	2
Understanding NHS prices	20.0%	6

## Comments

Count	Response
2	None
2	When I needed treatment (post check-up) it was not straightforward to get a timely appointment.
1	Dental access centres are very good though - I have used a lot for family recently as they can see you on the day (and schedule treatment plans if needed). But have had problem, where they booked us in for urgent appt in Ross - we had to drive quickly from Hereford and they initially said 3.50, but it was 3.40, someone called us back but we might not have said yes if we knew. We got there at 3.44 but they wouldn't see us because we were late - this was technically their fault and the dentist was sat there having a cup of tea and biscuit. His next booking didn't go in until 4pm! We just needed a prescription and painkillers (urgently). In the end we had to go to GP and persuade them to give stronger painkillers - what a waste of an appointment!!! It's also not consistent - in Hereford, you arrive early and have to wait a lot - it should be two-way respect. If you scold me/send me away for being late then expect to be scolded/leave before seen when you run late!
3	I have not experienced any problems.
1	I live in Ross on Wye and the only NHS dentist is in Symonds Yat so it's quite a drive, if you don't have a car it's impossible to get there.
1	None of the above - when an appointment is cancelled (probably for a good and acceptable reason) no alternative dates are provided and the onus is on the individual to reschedule the appointment which sometimes means it isn't done in a timely manner and therefore the time period between appointments becomes very lengthy
1	Our dentist has been very good, initially the children were seen with me but when my husband went part time he was able to take them. We have now changed back and always get appointments out of school hours, the reminders are good they come via text and email. Our last appointment there was Christmas elf treasure hunt and the children won a goody pack with toothbrush and fun dental activities.
1	Our practice has always been very helpful
1	We moved to Herefordshire and had to spend some time calling dentists looking for NHS placements, eventually agreeing as a family to join private plan so we could attend the preferred dental surgery close to our home. We both work unsociable hours. Cost had been a barrier for us in the past, but Bromyard surgery was helpful open and honest when it came to understanding price plans.
1	finding dentists for the disabled is hard

4. Some counties in the UK add fluoride to their local tap water (as primary prevention) to help protect people's teeth and enamel. Fluoride is a natural mineral found in water in varying amounts, depending on where you live. The Government and Public Health say it can help prevent tooth decay, which is why it's added to many brands of toothpaste and, in some areas, to the water supply.

Do you agree with adding fluoride to Herefordshire's tap water?

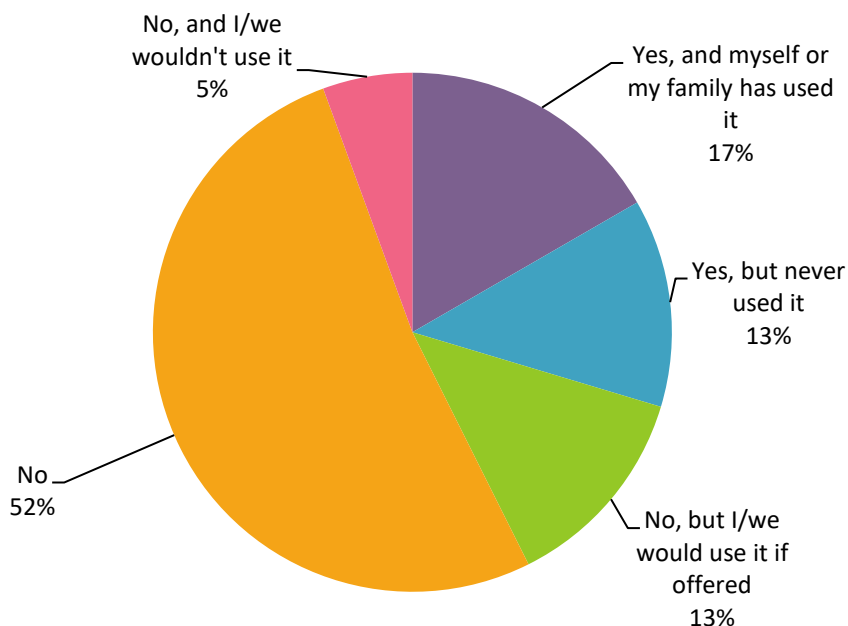


Value	Percent	Count
Yes	44.4%	24
No	22.2%	12
Don't Know	3.7%	2
I would need more information to decide	25.9%	14
Other - Write In (Required)	3.7%	2
	Totals	54

## Comments

Count	Response
2	I would agree with adding it - if I was sure that there are no harmful side effects.
1	As long as steps taken to fully educate and inform public, proper legal consultation and something done to address all the pockets of non-mains water. Needs to go alongside a behaviour/education programme - or you're just prolonging the issue to adulthood when they don't brush!
1	Fluoride is an identified neurotoxin with an ability to bio accumulate, it's not fit for human consumption
1	I am Welsh Water - is it already with fluoride?
1	I had no idea that it was not. How did we get left out?
1	I had read it was bad for teeth. I think parents need to cleaner their children's teeth to start then make young children clean their own teeth And this then becomes a lifelong habit
1	I would like to know more about the impact of having fluoride in the water. I have 2 children their teeth are both good from brushing twice a day with adult help and being careful with sugary drinks.
1	It's clearly beneficial.
1	This is not the answer. It is an unsafe neurotoxin
1	Thought it was already
1	Too much fluoride can cause serious problems and care will be needed if it is still in commercial dental products. Not everyone has mains water though I suspect the k=majority do
1	I don't have a preference but don't object
1	With proper brushing and education it is not needed

5. Did you know that your dentist offers fluoride varnish treatment to strengthen and protect enamel? (Free for children)

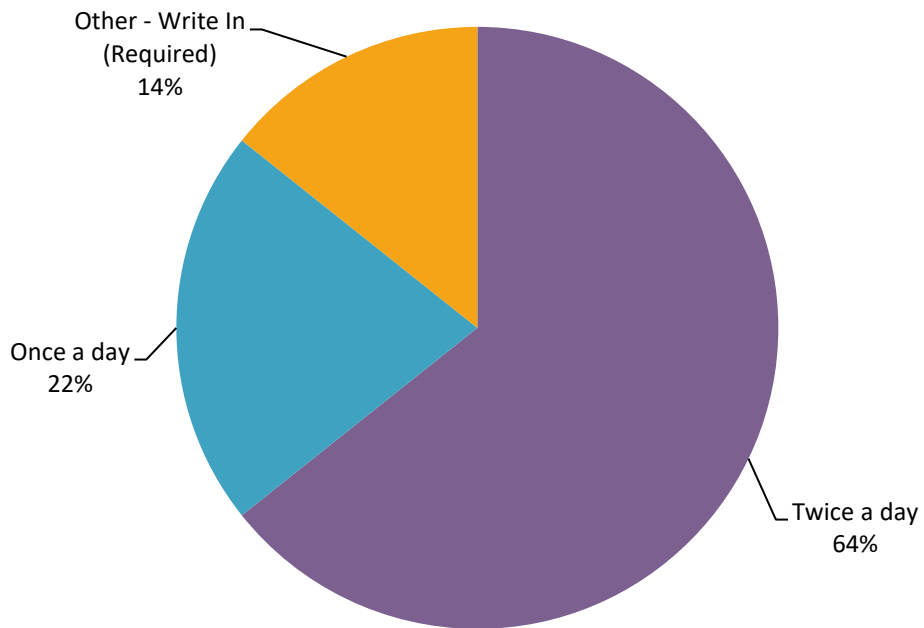


Value	Percent	Count
Yes, and myself or my family has used it	16.7%	9
Yes, but never used it	13.0%	7
No, but I/we would use it if offered	13.0%	7
No	51.9%	28
No, and I/we wouldn't use it	5.6%	3
	Totals	54

Comments

Count	Response
2	I was not aware of this. And I would use it - but only if I knew there are no side effects associated with fluoride use.
1	Don't have children.
1	Why haven't we been offered it
1	My daughter had fluoride varnish when we lived in Hampshire
1	Never been offered it.

6. How often do you and your family brush your teeth?

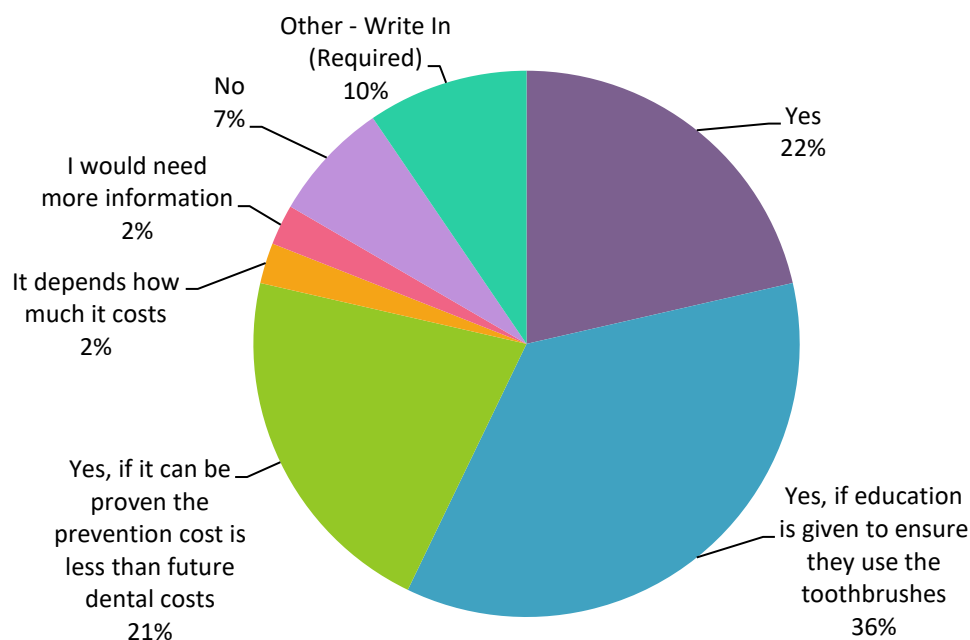


Value	Percent	Count
Twice a day	64.3%	27
Once a day	21.4%	9
Other - Write In (Required)	14.3%	6
	Totals	42

Other - Write In (Required)	Count
Twice a day if I'm trying to be healthy, otherwise once a day.	3
I only have dentures	1
Usually three times a day, morning, coming home from work and before bed	1
I take care of my teeth even though I do not have a dentist	1
Totals	6

7. Some counties in the UK give families free toothbrushes and a dental hygiene guide for children under 12. They say this helps people to look after their teeth from a young age and prevents tooth decay.

Do you think this is a good idea for Herefordshire?

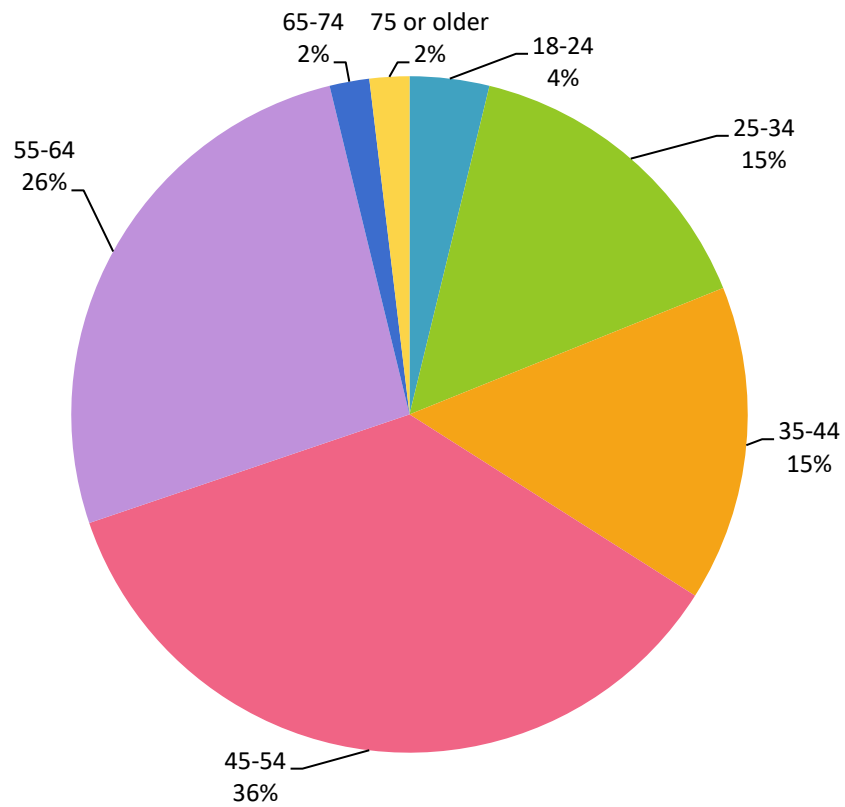


Value	Percent	Count
Yes	21.4%	9
Yes, if education is given to ensure they use the toothbrushes	35.7%	15
Yes, if it can be proven the prevention cost is less than future dental costs	21.4%	9
It depends how much it costs	2.4%	1
I would need more information	2.4%	1
No	7.1%	3
Other - Write In (Required)	9.5%	4
	Totals	42

- I would probably say yes, but I'd like to see evidence of benefit before making a firm decision.
- You can educate people in school, and they can buy their own brushes - use NHS resources in a better way than this. People who don't want to brush their teeth/can't be bothered won't be bothered even if you do offer free resources.

## Demographic Information

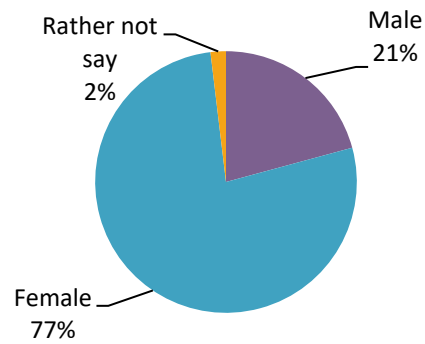
### A. What is your age?



Value	Percent	Count
18-24	3.8%	2
25-34	15.1%	8
35-44	15.1%	8
45-54	35.8%	19
55-64	26.4%	14
65-74	1.9%	1
75 or older	1.9%	1
	Totals	53



**B. What is your gender?**



Value	Percent	Count
Male	20.8%	11
Female	77.4%	41
Rather not say	1.9%	1
	Totals	53

**C. Where do you live?**

Location	Count
Bromyard (and North East)	14
Golden Valley (and South West)	5
Hereford (and Central)	30
Kington (and West)	7
Ledbury (and East)	7
Leintwardine (and North West)	4
Leominster (and North)	8
Ross-on-Wye (and South East)	9
Much Birch, Orcop (South)	5
Other	8
Outside Herefordshire (England)	3
Outside Herefordshire (Wales)	4