



# HWW Warwick District Dental Report

July 2024

# Introduction

National data from NHS England Midlands shows a high level of dental decay in children living in areas of Warwick District. We conducted engagement and outreach to explore and understand in greater detail people's experience of dentists and dental care for their children.

- Between May and June 2023, we promoted a children's dental survey to residents of Warwick district.

**We received 158 responses from individuals who told us about the experience of 259 children.**

**110 of these children are under 5 years old with less than half attending nursery or childminder.**

**Share your experience of children's dental services in Leamington, Warwick and Whitnash**



-Can your child see a dentist when they need to?  
-Do you worry about travel, cost or anxiety, when taking your child to the dentist?

Share your experience and help shape local dental services

**healthwatch**  
Warwickshire

Scan the QR code to fill in our online survey

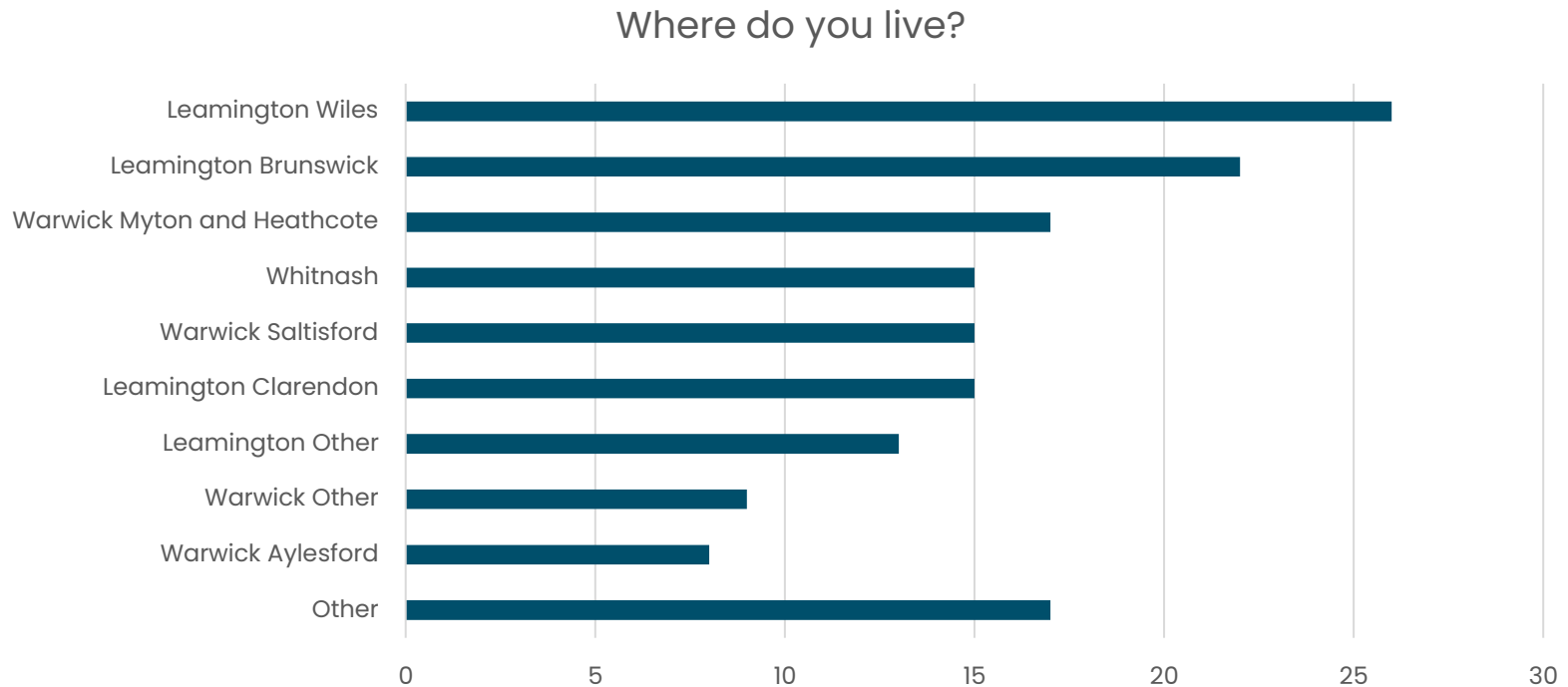


Call: 01926 422 823 to complete the survey by phone or request a paper copy

Speak to our Engagement and Outreach Officers in the community

For more information go to:  
[www.HealthwatchWarwickshire.co.uk](http://www.HealthwatchWarwickshire.co.uk)

## Who did we hear from?



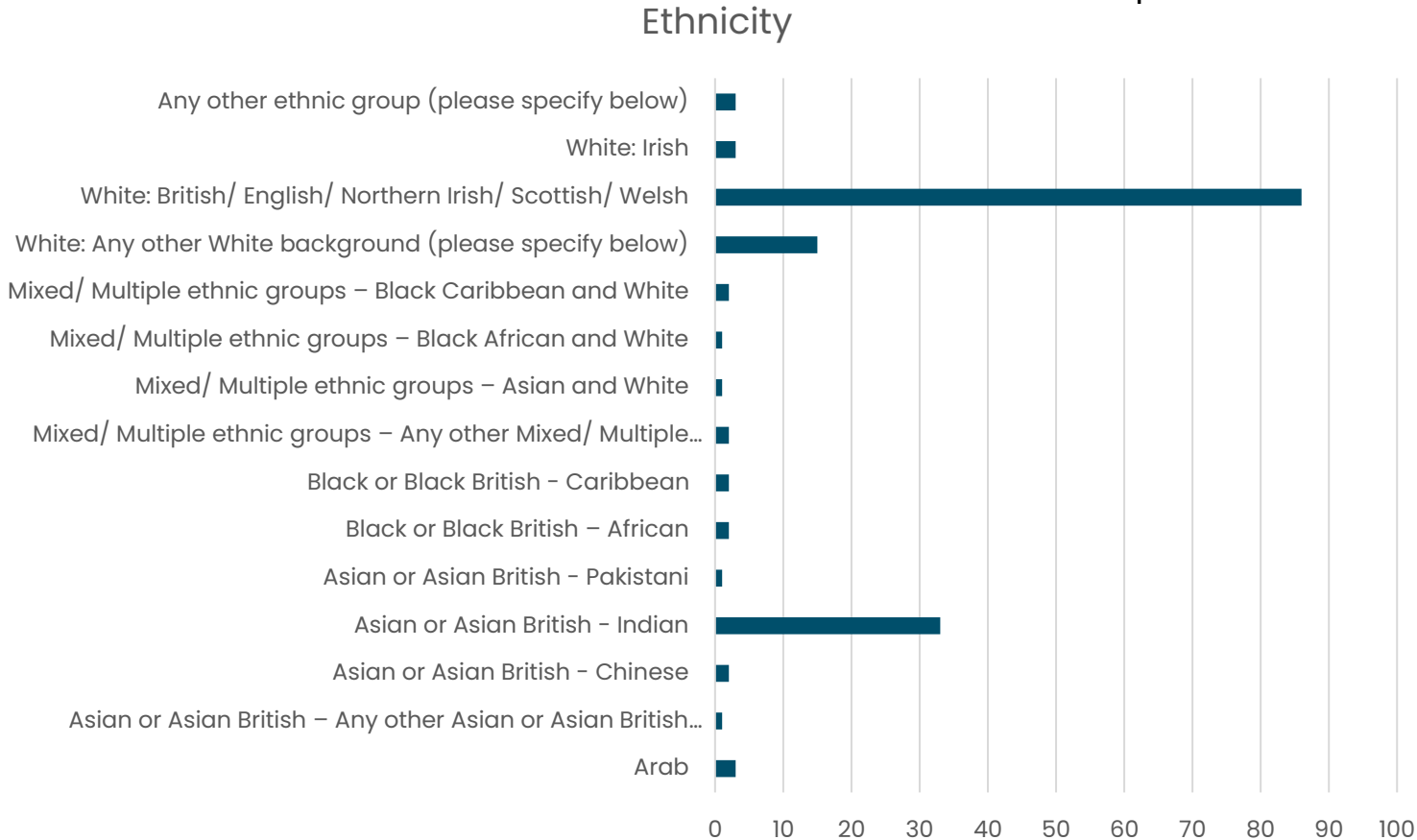
- 6 people told us they had a disability
- 16 people told us they have a long-term condition
- 15 people told us they are a carer
- 45 people told us that English is not their first language

“We do not have a dentist.”

## Who did we hear from?

We asked people to share their ethnicity.

18 people chose ‘any other white background’ or ‘any other ethnic group’ and 15 specified their ethnicity.



# Attending Dental Appointments

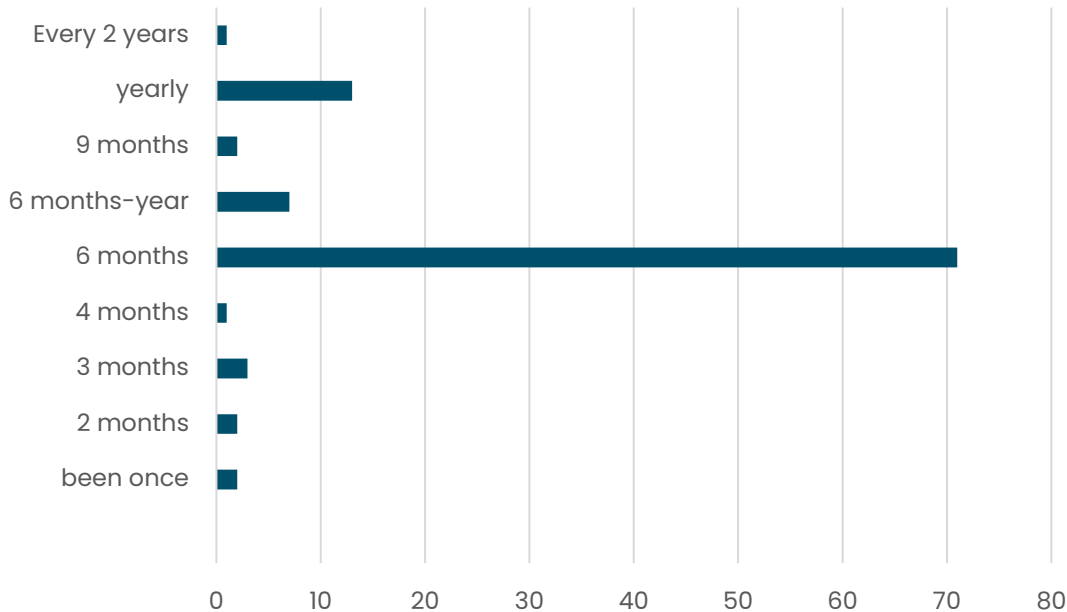
156 people responded to the questions – ‘Does your child regularly or occasionally visit the dentist?’

- 106 people told us that their child or children regularly visit the dentist.
- 23 out of the 50 people who answered no to this question said that their child or children occasionally visited the dentist.
- 27 responses indicated that a child or children neither go regularly, nor occasionally, to the dentist. 14 of these responses came from individuals who had identified as ‘Asian or Asian British – Indian’ and 16 from those who stated, ‘English is not my first language.’

“I am new to the UK and new to the area, I hadn't registered but I have started to look for a dentist a month ago. There are not sufficient NHS dentists. I have to wait a long time for children's appointments.”

# Attending Dental Appointments

Frequency of regular visits to the Dentist



“The dentist asked us to bring the children in, when they were babies, to our appointments so they could get used to being there. Now they have their own appointments.”

“Our dentist has never asked to see our child or suggested it.”

**120 people told us that their children’s dental appointment was through the NHS. 9 people told us it was private.**

## Reasons given for not visiting a dentist

“My child's dentist is no longer taking NHS patients.”

“I know I have to take my children to the dentist, but I don't know the procedure to get a dentist.”

“I have not got a dentist for me or my child. I didn't know you could go to the dentist if it was not needed.”

“My 5-year-old fell and banged her teeth and the doctor said she needed a dentist. She had emergency care at a dental practice, but when I called them again the dentist said she didn't need another appointment. This was 1 year ago but I can't find anywhere that will take on our family. I need dental care too. I have called all dentists in Leamington, Warwick and Whitnash all are full for NHS.”

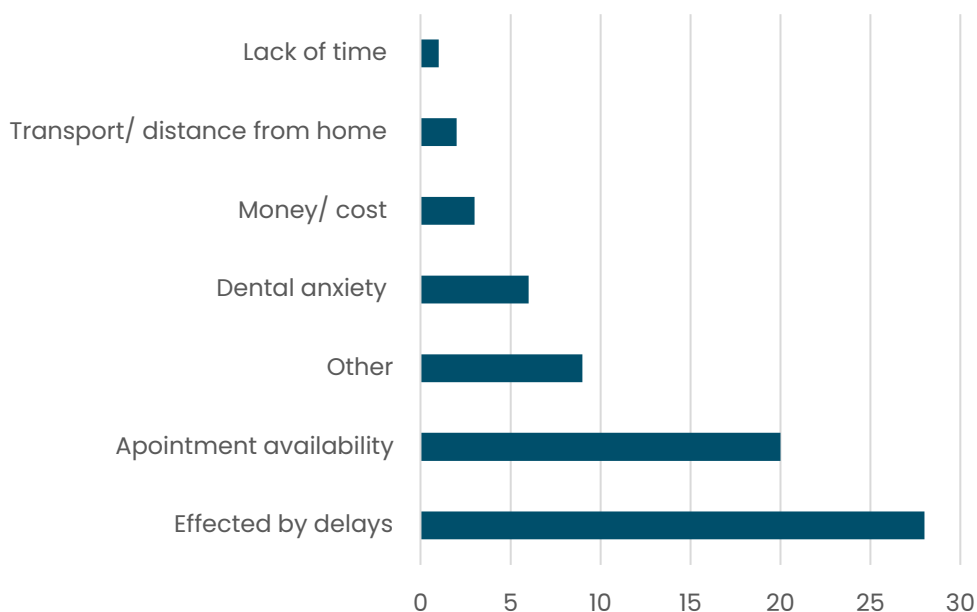
“I need to get an appointment for my 5yr old and 1yr old at the dentist. They have never seen the dentist. I am registered with the NHS already with my doctor.”

“We have registered for NHS - do we need to register for a dentist separately too? “

## Barriers to seeing a Dentist

- 28 people told us that their child has been unable to see a dentist when they have needed to.

What were the barriers to not seeing a Dentist?



“The child's teeth were breaking, and it took a couple of weeks to get an appointment. It has been difficult to get one in the last few weeks.”

“I phoned a few dentists near where I live and couldn't find any.”

“It can take 3 months to get an appointment.”

“It is costly when you have to pay.”



## Challenges facing those with additional needs

“My child has autism so doesn't want to go to the dentist. They had teeth out when they were little and so are scared of the dentist.”

“A teenager had a mental health crisis and refused to go to the dentist for routine treatment, I think they will lose their NHS place now.”

“My daughter is autistic so having continuity of staff is very important and when they did see her, the dentist made comments ... We had no choice but to change to a private dentist.”

“I was told my practice would no longer take NHS patients and so I needed to sign up to a private plan. This was the best option for me because I am partially sighted so can't drive to another dentist, it could cost me £10 there and back to get to the other side of town. There are no other local NHS dentists and if I stayed signed up as a private patient, they will still treat my two children for free. I would, however, prefer to stay NHS.”



## Positive feedback

“They are amazing. We went as a family, and I was in one room and my partner in another. They were brilliant with my two-year-old and put the TV on for her and entertained her.”

“The dentist is lovely. I gave them a letter which explained how my child is affected by autism and what is needed to reduce their anxiety. My child needs explanations and to know what is happening. The dentist read the letter and did exactly what I had asked - he was wonderful.”

“My dentist is really lovely and so child friendly. I phoned them because I noticed my child's front teeth were changing shape and they moved the appointment, due next month, to get us in that day. They advised us it was probably due to him drinking from a sports bottle, so we have taken that away now.”

“My child doesn't like a clinical environment due to his many experiences in hospital and the dentist has been amazing with him. They give us a time for the appointment but don't push us to keep to it because they know it is difficult.”

“Really good and attentive to the kids. They tell me when I'm doing something wrong and if we need to cut down on things.”





## Integration between dental services

“Our dentist has been outstanding. My daughter's supernumerary tooth was picked up early and she was referred to Warwick Hospital who were also excellent. Our dentist has been so kind, gentle and reassuring throughout. We are really grateful.”

“My child had a toothache, and I could get an emergency appointment, but this was only for a visit. The treatment will be in two months' time - it doesn't make sense. When it is an emergency, it should be treated.”

“Special care dental service struggles with regular appointments - they seem very busy. If you need to be seen in an emergency, it is OK - we got in the next day.”

“Both children have been waiting for orthodontic treatment for at least 2 years. They need corrective braces. They are going to be young adults once they eventually have braces. The wait is disappointing.”

“Dentist are pretty good. As my child has additional needs they will be sent to a specialist if they need something like a filling.”



## Emerging Issues

“We do not have a dentist and have not looked to find a dentist.”

- We heard from people new to the country who were unsure how and why to register with an NHS dentist.
- During engagement we signposted to the Special Care Dental Service for parents of children who were not attending dentists due to additional needs – this service was not well known about.
- We heard about a variation of practices at different dentists. At some, young children were invited to attend their parent’s appointments before having their own, but not at others. There was a variation in the expectation as to how often a child should attend a dentist and confusion amongst parents as to what age they should start going.

“I would like more information regarding the age of babies/children to visit the dentist.”

“My child doesn't eat orally so has problems with their teeth. They have lots of hospital appointments and I don't want to cause extra anxiety. I don't want them to have problems with their adult teeth so would like to see someone who is a specialist.”

## Emerging Issues

“The children have NHS dental care until June when the dentist will move to private.”

- 6 people told us that they had lost their child’s NHS place recently and needed to find a new dentist for themselves and their children.
- Some people chose to go private to ensure their dental needs are met.

“My daughter was registered with the special care dentist due to her disabilities which was covered financially as I receive universal credit. However, we found the service to be very poor and so had no option but to change to a private dentist.”

“They are brilliant which is why we are happy to stay as private patients.”

“Will need to phone round to find an NHS dentist.”

“ My 3yr old developed decay before she was 2. I could not get her into a dentist before this...She then did get an emergency appointment when the decay was so severe it was visible, and we are now under the NHS special dentistry. However, the wait list for that was 9 months so in the interim we saw a private dentist who did fillings and crowns.”

## Next Steps

- We have shared our findings with NHS England Midlands and are continuing in further discussions to ensure any dental health promotion activities are relevant to the area.
- Feedback on the Special Care Dental Service has been shared with this service.
- We continue to promote the Special Care Dental Service and how to find an NHS dentist through our information and signposting activities.
- [Find a dentist - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [Dental Choices » Find an NHS dentist taking new NHS patients](#)

**Thank you to everyone  
who shared their  
experiences with us.**



# For more information

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