

Tooth decay is the most common disease affecting children and young people both in Torbay and across England, yet it is almost entirely preventable. Tooth decay is the most common reason for hospital admissions in children aged five to nine years old.

Dental caries (tooth decay) is a common problem that occurs when acid in the mouth dissolves the outer layer of the teeth. Poor oral health can affect children and young people’s ability to sleep, eat, speak, play and socialise with other children. Other impacts include pain, infections, poor diet, and impaired nutrition and growth. Effective prevention strategies include regular tooth brushing, flossing, using mouthwash and a reduced sugar intake.

**Why is this important?**



Tooth decay is the most common disease affecting children and young people in Torbay, yet it is almost entirely preventable.

**What is the local context?**



Over a quarter of children in Torbay have tooth decay by the age of 5. It is the most common reason for children aged 5-9 to be admitted to hospital.

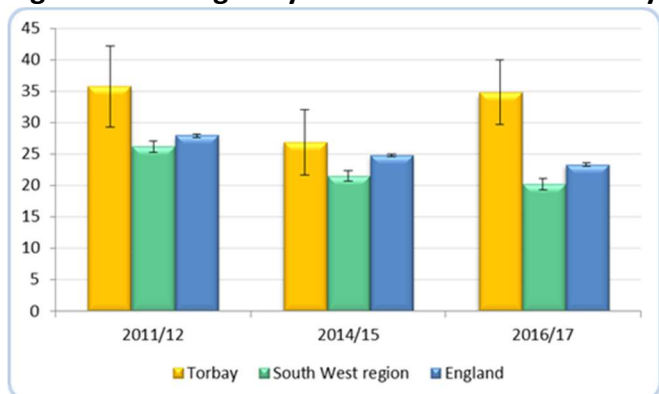
**What should we do?**



Tooth decay can be prevented by regular tooth brushing, flossing, using mouthwash and a reduced sugar intake.

**Decay** - Just over one in three of 5 year olds in Torbay (35%) had experience of tooth decay in 2016/17 (down from 36% in 2011/12). This was significantly higher than both the England and South West average (Fig 1) (NDEP survey of five-year old children).

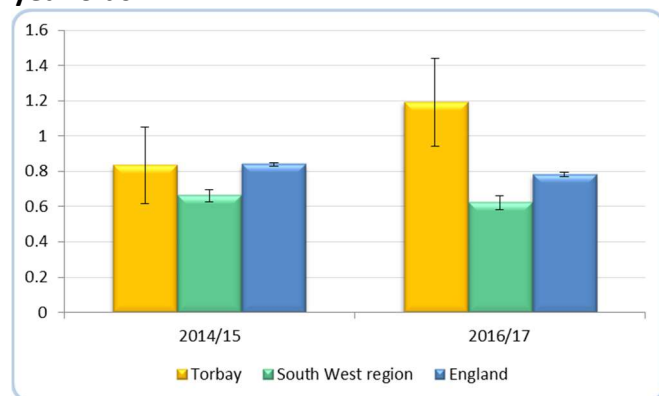
**Fig 1: Percentage 5 year olds with tooth decay**



Source – PHOF (NDEP survey)

The average number of decayed teeth in five year olds has risen and for 2016/17 is significantly higher than England and the South West (Fig 2).

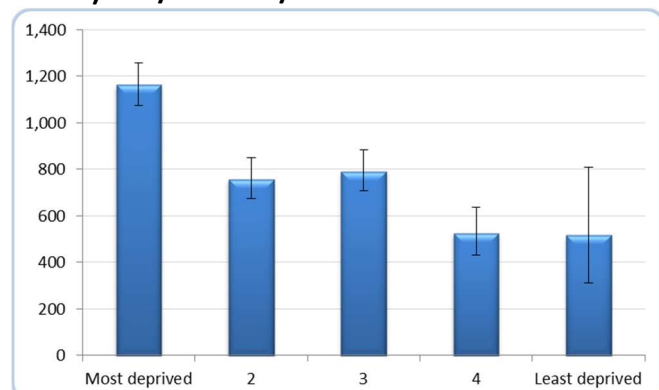
**Fig 2: Average number of decayed teeth for 5 year olds**



Source – PHOF (NDEP survey)

**Extractions (Hospital)** – Without preventative measures, dental caries can result in a hospital admission for tooth removal. From 2012/13 to 2017/18 there were 1738 young people aged 0-18 years attending hospital for dental extractions in Torbay. Around 81% of these extractions were as a direct result of dental caries. On average 1% of children in Torbay attend hospital for a tooth extraction each year. This is significantly higher compared to the England figure for 2014/15 & 2015/16 of 0.3% (latest national data available for 0 to 19 year olds).

**Fig 3: Rate of dental extractions per 100,000 due to dental caries by deprivation quintile (18 & under) - 12/13 to 17/18**

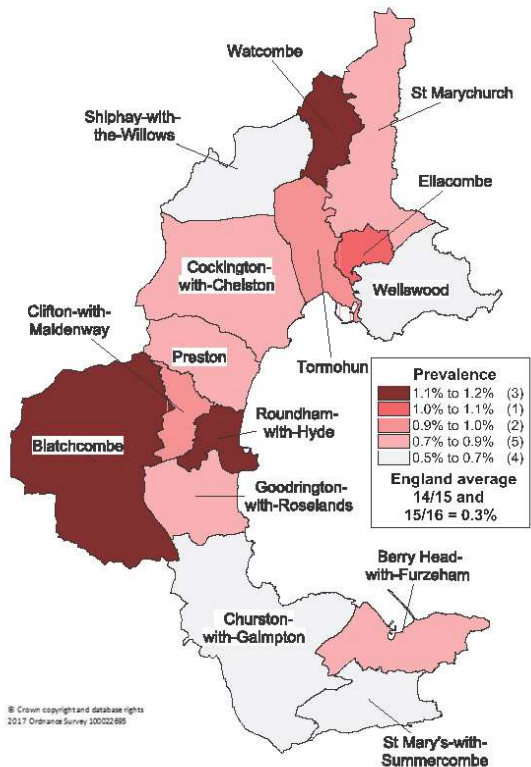


Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, ONS MYE resident population

# DENTAL CARIES IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AN OVERVIEW OF TORBAY – 2018

**Deprivation** – The most deprived areas of Torbay have the highest prevalence of dental extractions per resident population aged 0-18yrs (Fig 3).

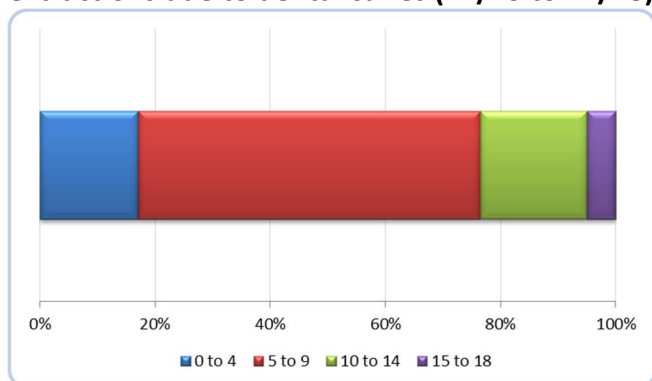
**Fig 4: Prevalence of hospital dental extractions due to dental caries by ward (12/13 to 17/18)**



Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, ONS MYE resident population

**Age** – Comparing age bands (e.g. 0-4 yrs.) for young people aged 18 years and younger, shows a higher proportion of dental extractions as a result of dental caries in the 5-9 year age group (Fig 5). Dental extractions are the most common reason for children aged 5-9 to be admitted to hospital.

**Fig 5: Age distribution of hospital dental extractions due to dental caries (12/13 to 17/18)**



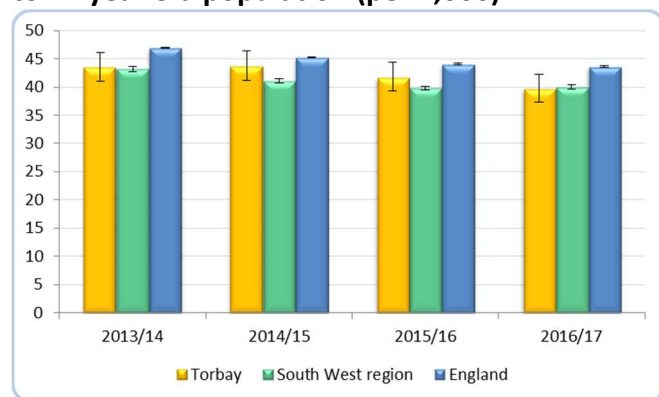
Source: Hospital Episode Statistics

This suggests that preventative intervention may be most beneficial aimed at pre-school and younger primary school children.

**Extractions (High Street)** - The majority of dental extractions take place in high street dentists. The level of extractions has remained at a similar level in Torbay, rates tend to be on a par with South West and National levels (Fig 6). This is in marked contrast to the level of extractions undertaken at hospital where Torbay has a significantly higher level than England and the South West.

Over the last four years (2013/14 to 2016/17) 4,239 children in Torbay had teeth extracted at a high street dentist, this compares to 1,122 who had teeth extracted in hospital.

**Fig 6: Extraction rate by high street dentists on 0 to 17 year old population (per 1,000)**



Source: NHS Dental Statistics (NHS Digital), ONS MYE resident population

## References and further information:

- Torbay JSNA [www.southdevonandtorbay.info](http://www.southdevonandtorbay.info)
- Peninsula Oral Health Task Group (2018) Dental extractions under general anaesthetic in children: A report for the Southwest Peninsula 2016-17 Oral health: local authorities and partners, Public health guideline [PH55], <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph55>
- PHE Dental Public Health Intelligence <http://www.nwph.net/dentalhealth/>
- NDEP Oral Health Survey of 5 year old children <http://www.nwph.net/dentalhealth/5year%20do%20cs.aspx>
- NHS Dental Statistics <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics>