

Children

Whilst children's oral health has improved over the last 20 years nationally, recent data for Hull shows that tooth decay continues to be the main oral health problem affecting children.

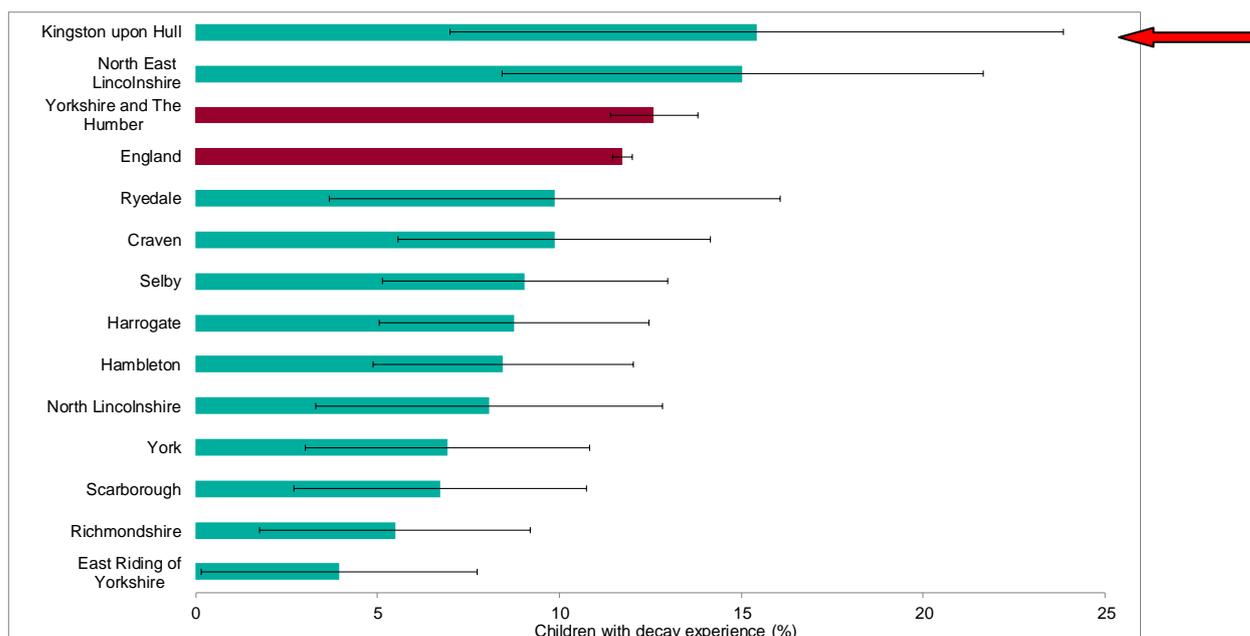
A commonly used measure of tooth decay and treatment experience, the dmft index, is obtained by calculating the average number of decayed (d), missing due to decay (m) and filled due to decay (f) teeth (t) in a population. In five year old children, this score will be for the first (primary) teeth and is recorded as dmft. In 12 year old children it reports the score for the adult teeth, written in upper case (DMFT). The average (mean) dmft or DMFT is a measure of the severity of tooth decay.

The 'prevalence' of tooth decay describes the proportion (or percentage) of the population experiencing tooth decay. The prevalence and severity of tooth decay in children increases with increasing deprivation.

Three Year Olds

The prevalence of tooth decay in three year old children in Hull, at 15.4 per cent, is more than one fifth higher than the regional and one third higher than the national average (Figure 1). Of the three year old children who had decay in Hull, each child had on average three decayed, extracted or filled teeth.

Figure 1. Prevalence of tooth decay experience in three year olds by local authority in North Yorkshire and Humber, 2013



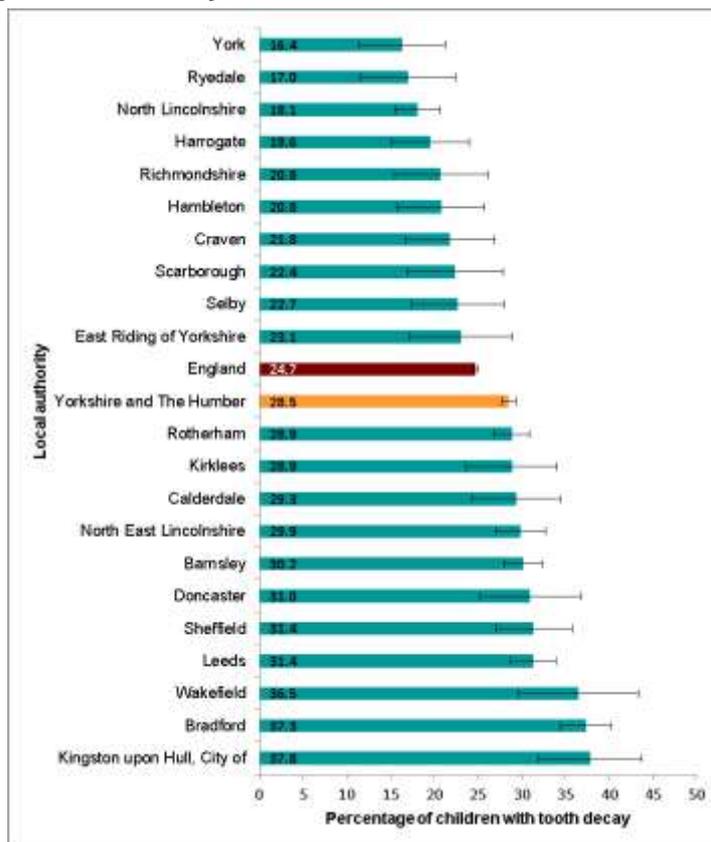
(Source: PHE, 2014)

Five Year Olds

The most recent oral health data for five year old children shows that Yorkshire and the Humber remains the second worst region in England for the proportion of five year olds with tooth decay. The proportion of five year old children experiencing tooth decay in Yorkshire and the Humber (28.5 per cent) was significantly higher than the England average (24.7 per cent).

In Hull, about 38 per cent of five year old children have tooth decay, which is significantly higher than the regional and national figures, and the highest rate of all local authority areas in Yorkshire and Humber (Figure 2). Moreover, particularly in our most disadvantaged communities, poor oral health is likely to remain a significant problem.

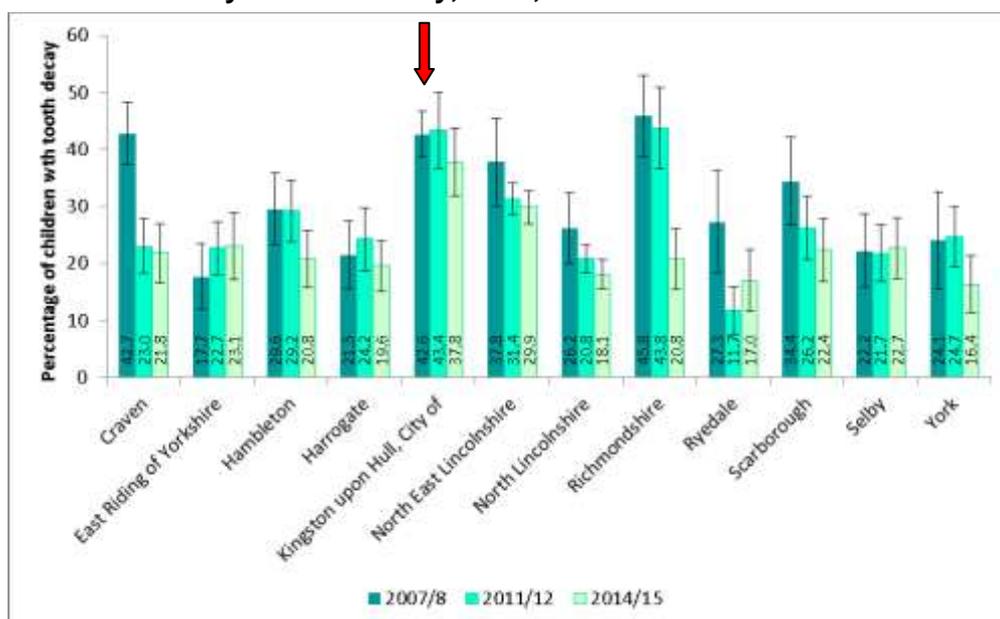
Figure 2. Percentage of five year old children with tooth decay experience in Yorkshire and The Humber by local authority, 2015



(Source: PHE, 2016)

The rates of children with tooth decay in Hull are improving. However, Hull has not seen the same improvement in rates of decay in five year olds that has been shown elsewhere in North Yorkshire and Humber/Yorkshire and Humber between 2008, 2012 and 2015. In Hull there has only been a six percentage point improvement since 2008, just half the improvement seen for the whole Yorkshire and Humber region. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Percentage of five-year-old children with tooth decay experience in North Yorkshire and Humber by local authority, 2008, 2012 and 2015



(Source: PHE, 2016)

Fluoride varnish applications are available as part of NHS dental treatment and are free for children as well as adults who are exempt from payment charges. Information describing fluoride varnish rates is dependent on the applications being recorded by dentists. Although fluoride varnish application rates are generally increasing, there appears to be a significant proportion of children in North Yorkshire and Humber who are not getting fluoride varnish applications from their dentist.

During 2013 and 2014, approximately 43 per cent of Hull children aged between three and 16, and less than 2 per cent of adults, who visited the dentist, received fluoride varnish applications.

Adults

Across the UK the oral health of adults has improved significantly over the last 40 years. More people are retaining more of their natural teeth into older age. Trends from national and local surveys show that the loss of all teeth is now uncommon amongst people over the age of 65, and even the very old (aged 85 plus) have in many cases retained some natural teeth.

Between 1998 and 2009 (the most recent national data) the prevalence of active tooth decay in England fell from 46 per cent to 30 per cent. There were reductions across all age groups but the largest reduction was in those aged between 25 and 34.

As we age, the effects of gum disease may cause exposure of root surfaces, so the rate of root surface decay is likely to increase. Seven per cent of adults in England had active decay on one or more root surface, the proportion increasing with age (20 per cent in the 75 to 84 age group), being male and social deprivation. (Figures for Hull are not available)

Inequalities exist in the oral health of adults both regionally and related to deprivation. The 2009 Adult Dental Health Survey reported that the average number of decayed teeth was higher in Yorkshire and the Humber than the England average.

A self-reported adult postal survey was carried out across Yorkshire and the Humber (YH Public Health Observatory, 2008) which revealed that Hull had a significantly higher proportion of adults (31 per cent) who rated their oral health as fair/poor/very poor compared to the figure for Yorkshire and the Humber (25 per cent).

After the age of 55 there are increasingly more adults in Hull who report having lost some of their natural teeth (or are wearing dentures) compared to the Yorkshire and the Humber averages. Just under a third of adults reported discomfort on eating and being self-conscious because of their mouth, which was comparable to the figure for Yorkshire and the Humber.

Dental Services

The proportion of adults and children in Hull visiting a dentist is showing a year on year increase. For the 24 month period ending 30 June 2016, over 70 per cent of adults in Hull accessed NHS dental services, significantly higher than the national average of 52 per cent. During the same period, the proportion of children accessing dental services was over 71 per cent, again higher than the national average of 58 per cent.

Based on Hull's adult Health and Lifestyle Survey 2011-12, around 70 per cent of men and 76 per cent of women had seen a dentist within the last two years. From the Young People's Health and Lifestyle Survey 2016, around four fifths of pupils had visited the dentist in the last six months, with over 90 per cent having been in the past year (and over 95 per cent in the last two years).

However, with increasing deprivation, dental access rates fall in both adults and children.

Please note, this document will be updated as and when we receive more information or feedback.

