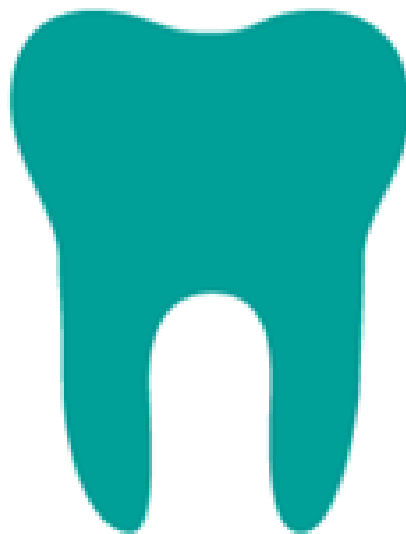




**Report examining the experiences of  
dental visits by primary school age  
pupils in Barnsley**



**May 2017**

**Author:** Jade Bligh, Children and Young people Engagement Worker

**Surveyors:** Jade Bligh, **Report Reviewed by:** Healthwatch Junior Champions, Healthwatch Strategic Advisory Board.

**Published**

## Introduction

### About Healthwatch Barnsley

Healthwatch Barnsley is commissioned by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and hosted and managed by Voluntary Action Barnsley (VAB), Healthwatch Barnsley (HWB) is a community led, community driven organisation with a Strategic Advisory Board, responsible for determining the direction of the organisation. We are also assisted by volunteers (Healthwatch Champions) whose role is to gather information and prioritise areas of work, ensuring engagement with all sections of the local population. This enables us to be representatives of as many health and social care service users as possible. We are part of a national network of Healthwatch organisations that involve people of all ages and from all sections of the community in local health and social care services.

We gather views from the community, report these views to the people responsible for providing and commissioning local services, engage people in decisions about services and monitor the service provision. As part of our work to gather views, we also can exercise our right to visit services through a process known as Enter and View. We also have a role in providing people with information about health and social care services available in the area.

In some areas, Healthwatch organisations provide advocacy for people making a complaint about NHS services. In Barnsley, this service is provided by DIAL and their details are at the end of this report. DIAL is not limited to dealing just with health service complaints and can also look at problems with social care services. Through our partnership with DIAL, we have been able to successfully close a number of complaints from our clients regarding their experiences of local services.

### About this piece of work

This report outlines the views of children and young people who took part in the dental survey which HWB carried out between 1 March and 31 April 2016.

Improving oral health has been outlined as a priority area for Public Health in Barnsley. Barnsley Council is now responsible for oral health promotion and Public Health chose this as a priority area within their 2016 strategy due to:

- Tooth decay being the main oral health concern affecting children in Barnsley. This can have big impacts on the daily lives of children as it can lead to pain, sleepless nights, time off school and low self-esteem.
- There are wide inequalities in the distribution of tooth decay. In Barnsley the average number of decayed teeth in some wards is five times higher than in other less deprived wards of the borough.
- Over 600 Barnsley children and young people are admitted to hospital every year for the removal of decayed teeth. This equates to 1.1% of all children in Barnsley.

The main risk factors for tooth decay are diets high in sugars and lack of exposure to fluoride therefore tooth decay is largely preventable (Public Health Annual Report, 2016).

### **Why did Healthwatch choose to undertake this work?**

Each year HWB forms priorities based on the information received from members of the public. These comments are cross referenced with information and data received through the range of meetings we attend and the local health and wellbeing strategies for Barnsley.

During 2014 HWB undertook a snapshot survey as part of our involvement with the Children and Young People Health and Wellbeing Strategy Task Group. This highlighted that 43% of the 100+ children and young people we had spoken to had not accessed a dentist within the last 6-12 months. This information sparked some interest with our volunteer Healthwatch Champions and Strategic Advisory Board members which led to us becoming involved in the Local Oral Health Advisory Group in 2014 and led to us to support this group through our outreach and engagement activities to raise awareness of the benefits of requesting fluoride varnish treatment.

In 2016, after receiving the Public Health Strategy, HWB felt that there was something practical that we could do in terms of seeking the views and experiences of children and young people accessing dentists in Barnsley, bringing their views and opinions to the forefront of local discussions.

### **Gathering information**

HWB engaged with five primary schools in Barnsley and led a 45 minute session, highlighting the importance of dental hygiene as well as gathering the views of young people relating to their views on dentists. We spoke with 188 children and young people at the following schools:

- Ward Green Primary School
- Joseph Lock Primary school
- Dodworth St Johns Church of England Primary Academy
- Athersley South Primary School
- Elsecar Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

The main purpose of this session was to highlight the importance of dental hygiene, and to find out how much young people knew about looking after their teeth. The key points asked to the young people were:

- How many times a day should you brush your teeth?
- How long should you brush your teeth for each time you brush them?
- How often should you visit the dentist?
- What is fluoride varnish?

We also asked children and young people about their experiences of visiting their dental practice. The main focus was to find out:

- If children and young people have been to the dentist lately and how often they attend.
- The opinions, experiences, and views of children and young people who have attended a dental appointment.
- If children and young people were aware of the superhero campaign launched by Public Health in 2015.

The feedback we received outlined their experiences and opinions of 20 dental practices covering all six ward areas of Barnsley.

The feedback was then shared with the Young Healthwatch Champions who supported the Children and Young People's Engagement Worker at HWB to analyse the information, key findings and recommendations for change.

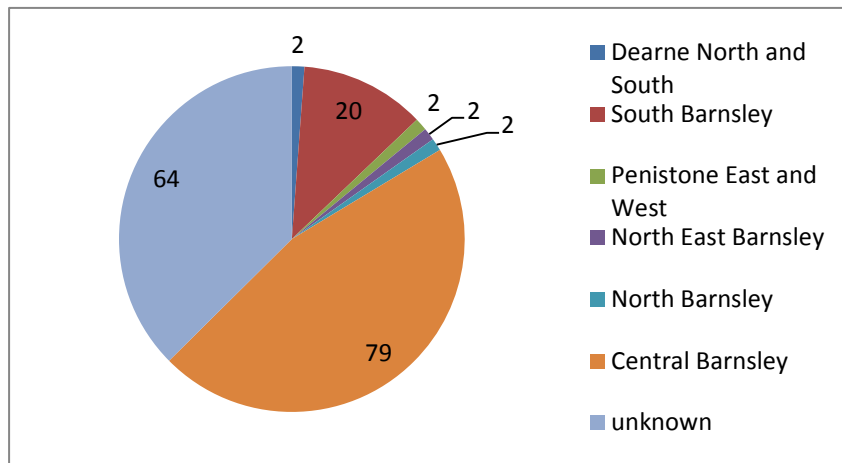
### **Validation of information received**

During the analysis process there were a number of responses which had to be withdrawn from the final data analysis due to the following reasons:

- Five dental practices identified by participants in the survey were located outside of Barnsley.
- Five of the children and young people we spoke to had never visited a dentist.

The feedback that was received has been broken down into the location of the dental practice the young person accessed, rather than where the young person lived. This was done to identify dental practices that are good at oral health promotion and areas where dental practices need to improve in the promotion they do to ensure that children and young people understand the importance of good oral health.

## Survey coverage by ward area



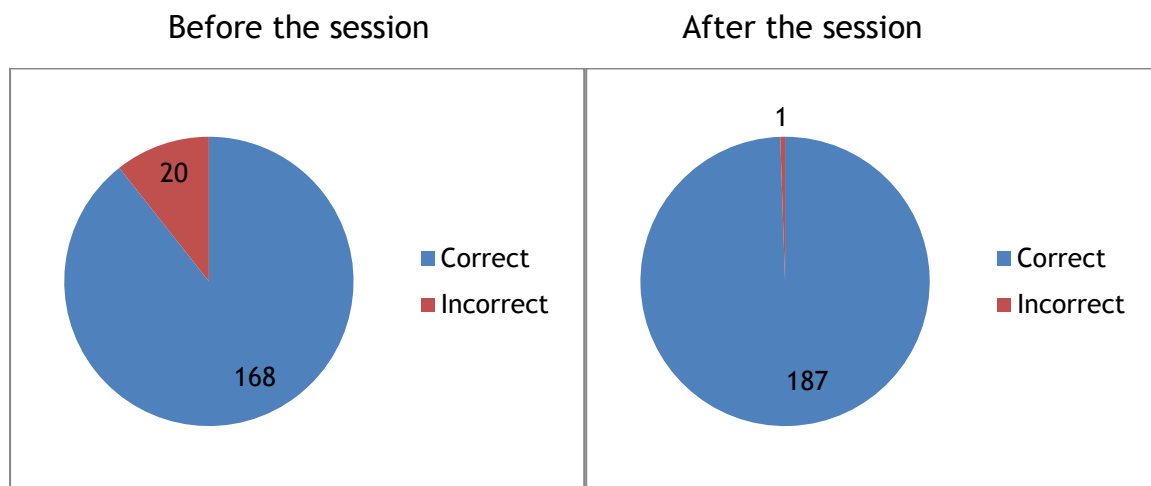
The pie chart above outlines the number of responses received from each of the six local areas, arranged by dentist.

The quiz and survey that the young people completed during our engagement activities can be found in appendix 1 and 2.

We did a quiz at the very beginning of the session with four basic questions the same quiz was done after the session was complete measuring how much the young people had learnt from the session.

### Question 1 - How many times a day should you brush your teeth a day

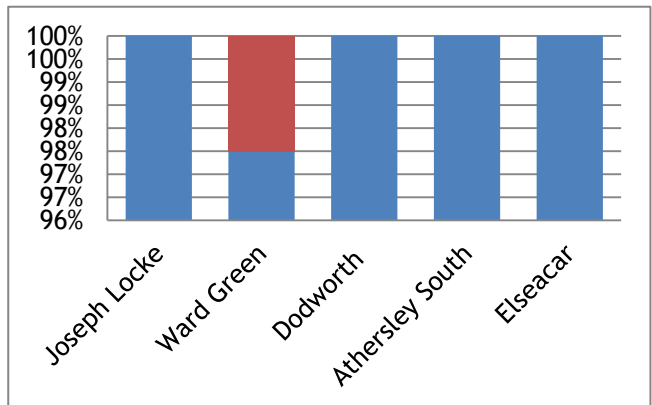
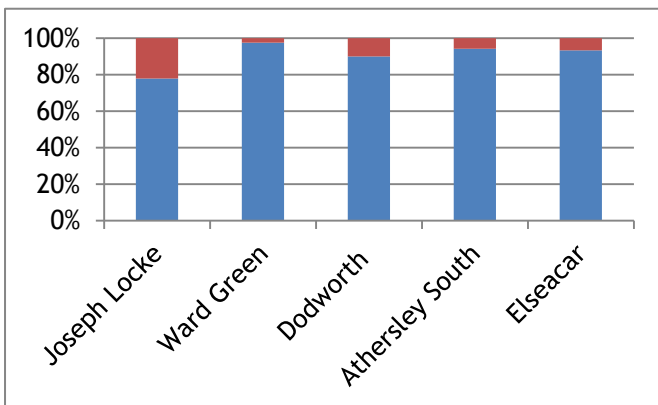
The following charts show the responses from the young people before and after the session.



Data broken down in to schools

Before the session

After the session

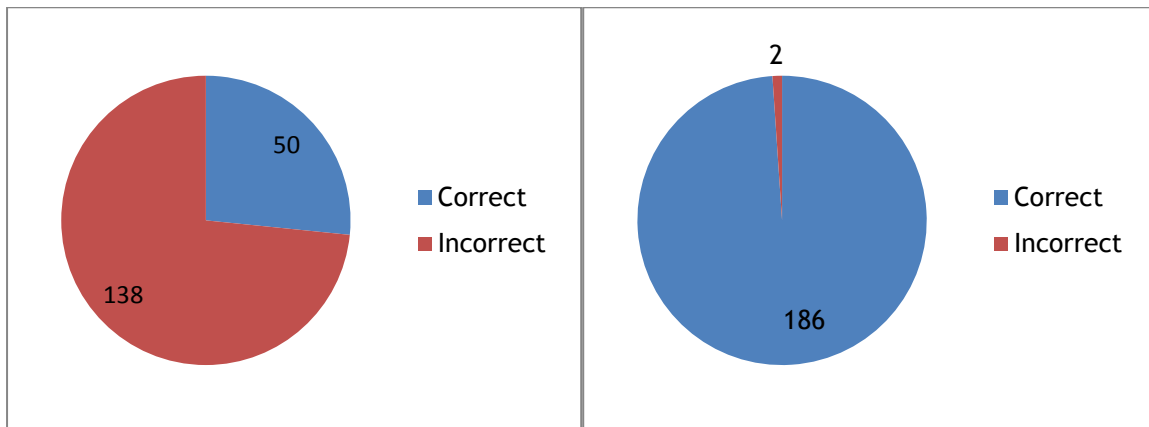


168 were correct when answering this question with 20 been unsure how many times a day they should brush their teeth, this changes at the end of the session with only 1 young person still unsure about this.

**Question 2 - How long should you brush your teeth for each time you brush them?**

Before the session

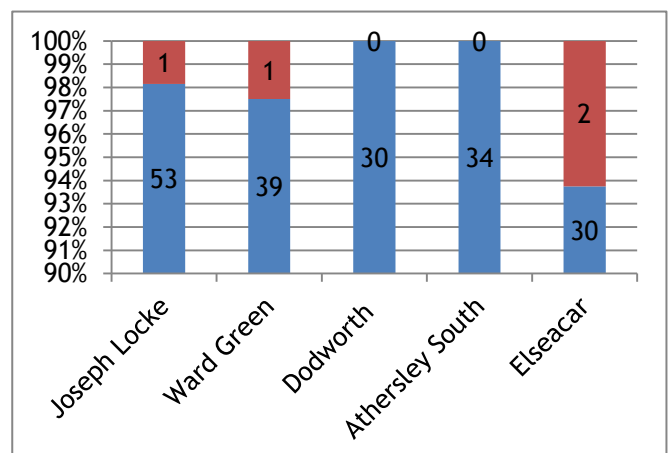
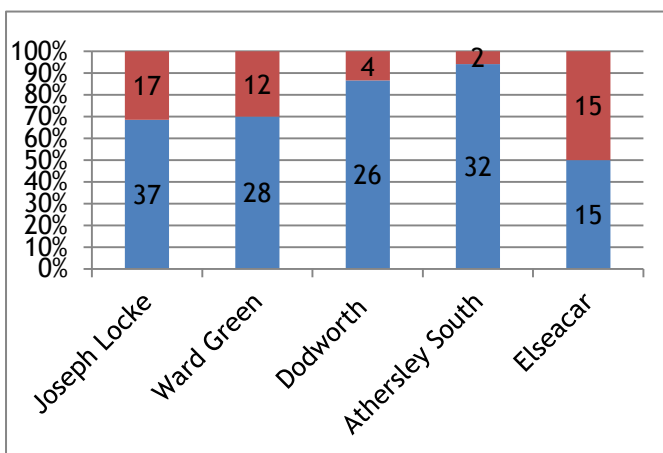
After the session



Data broken down in to schools

Before the session

After the session

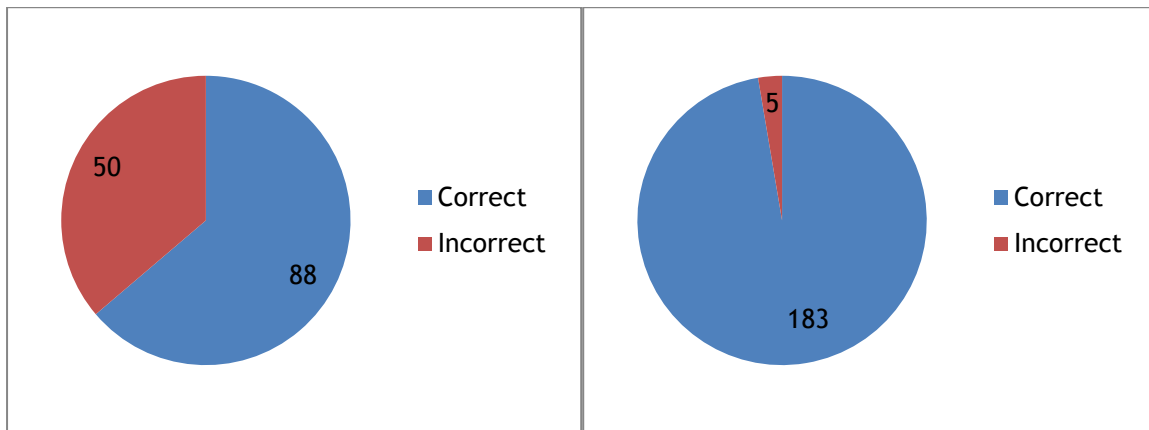


A large proportion of the young people (138) did not know how long they should brush their teeth for. Due to this information we focused on telling the young people that they should brush for two minutes. To demonstrate this we asked the young people to sit in silence and start raising their hands when they thought two minutes was over. Most young people started raising their hand at one minute and so tips were given to the young people to help them keep brushing such as play their favourite song, use an egg timer or even buy a toothbrush that flashes and stops when the two minutes is over.

### Question 3 - How often should you visit the dentist?

Before the session

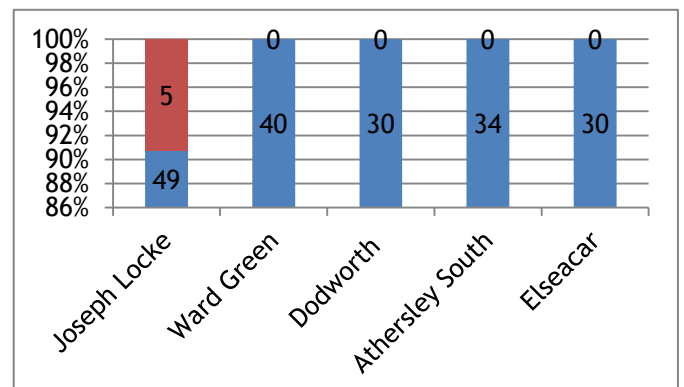
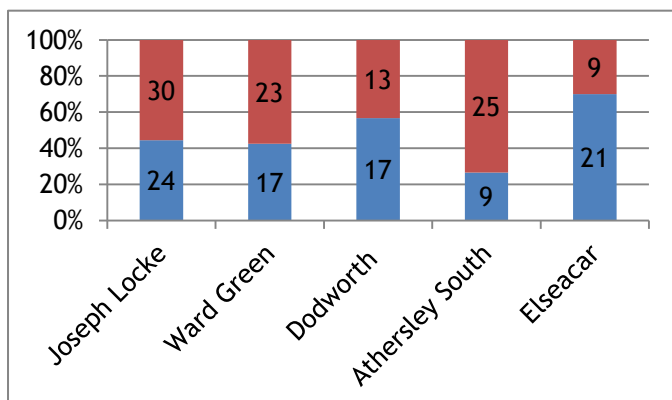
After the session



Data broken down in to schools

Before the session

After the session

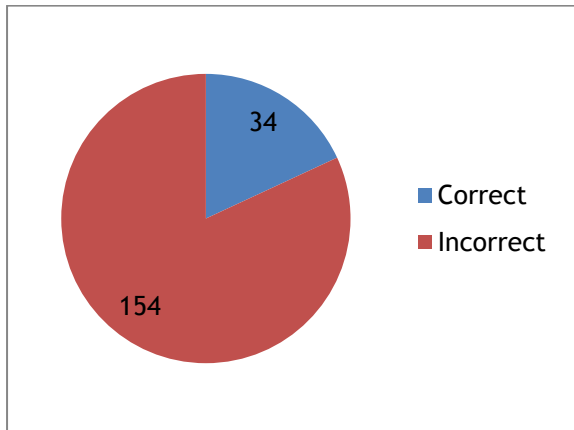




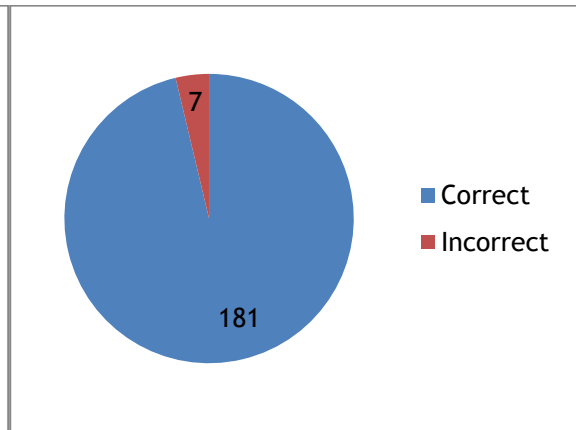
64% of the young people knew how often you should visit the dentist and this increased to 97% by the end of the session showing that 45 of the young people had gained important information by the end of the session.

#### Question 4 - What is fluoride varnish?

Before the session

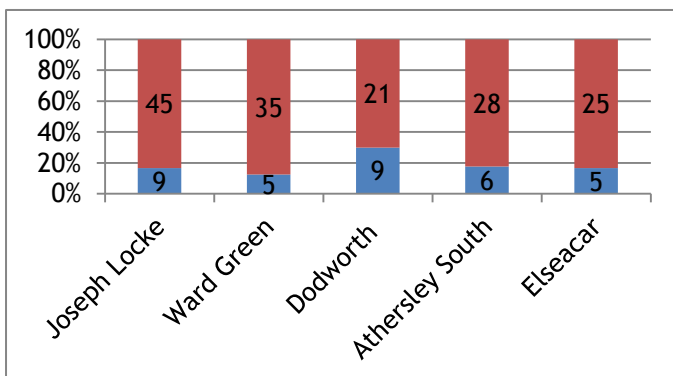


After the session

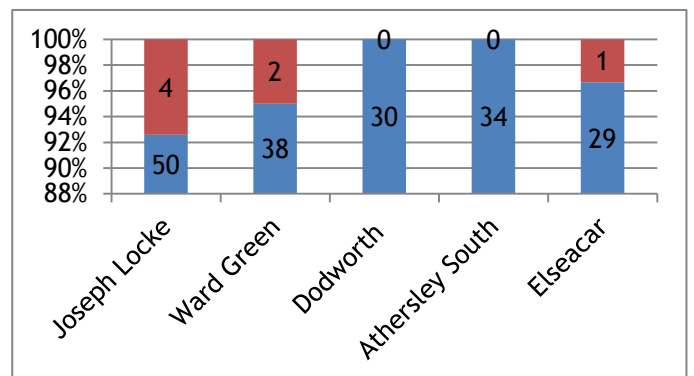


Data broken down in to schools

Before the session



After the session



NHS Choices describes what fluoride varnish is:

“Fluoride varnish can be applied to both baby teeth and adult teeth by a dentist. The process involves painting a varnish containing high levels of fluoride onto the surface of the tooth every six months to prevent decay. It works by strengthening tooth enamel, making it more resistant to decay.

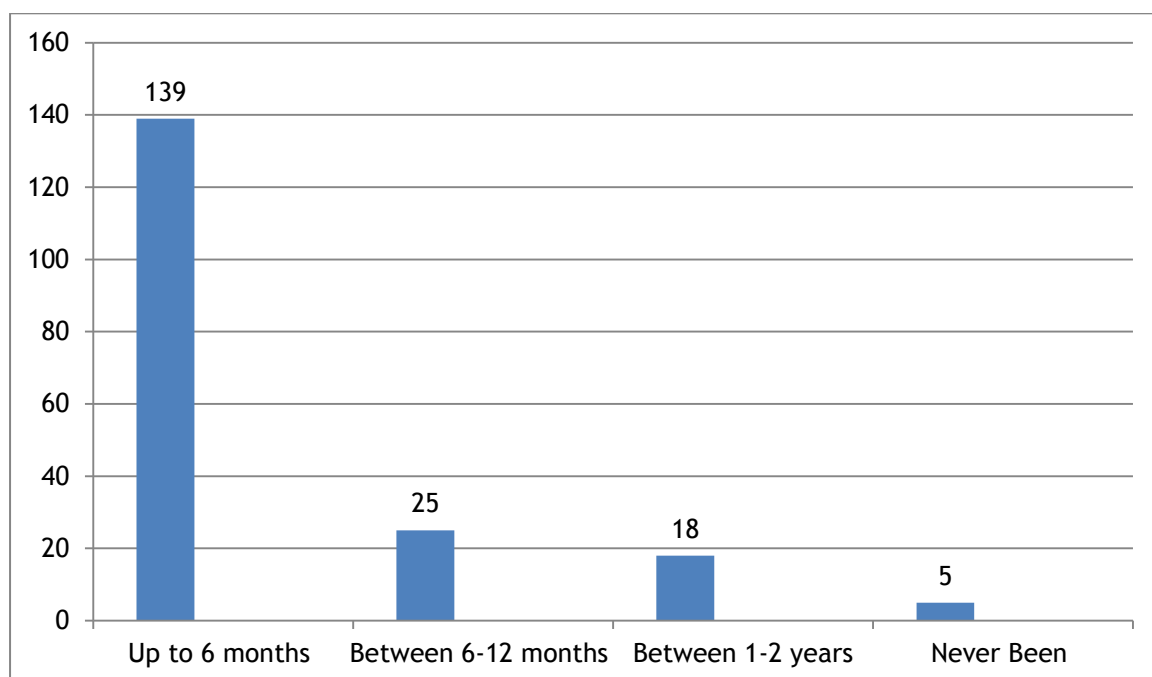
“From the age of three, children should be offered fluoride varnish treatment at

least twice a year. Fluoride varnish should be offered two or more times a year for children of all ages with tooth decay or those at high risk of developing it.”<sup>1</sup>

On the charts it is clear to see most of the young people (154 out of 188) did not know what fluoride varnish was. Once the session was over and it was explained what fluoride varnish was this changed to 181 of the 188 young people knowing what it was.

The following information shows the basic findings from the dentist survey (appendix 2) completed by the young people surveyed.

### When was the last time you went to the dentist?



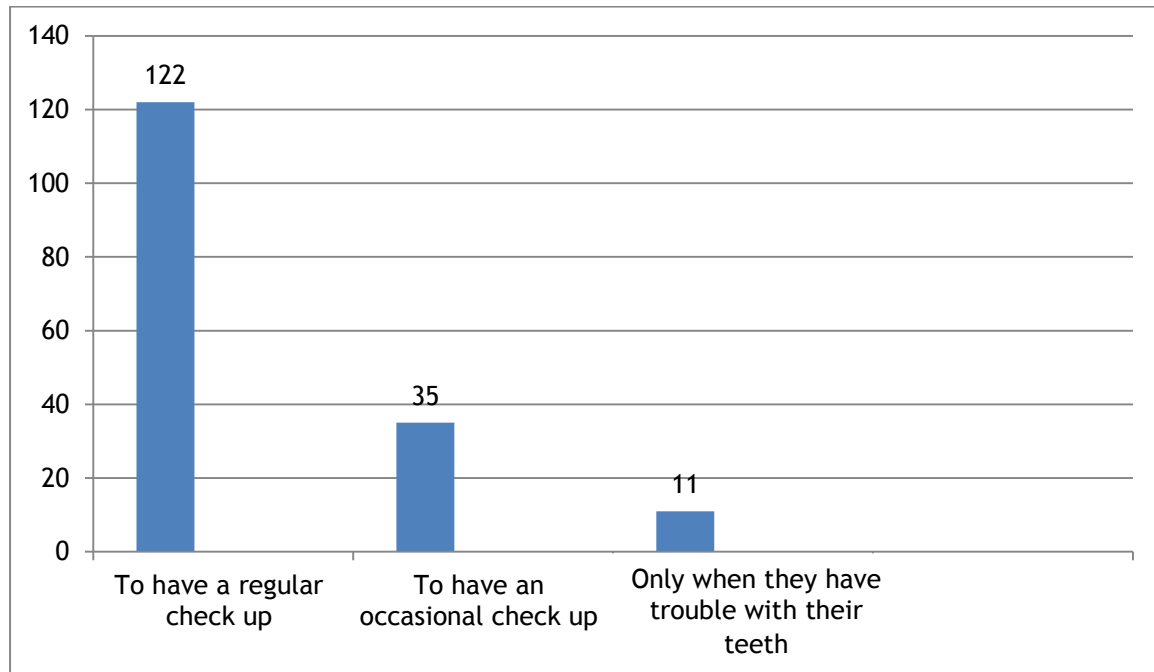
The recommendation is that children and young people should see a dentist at least once every 12 months<sup>2</sup>. When we were at the session we promoted visiting the dentist once every 6 months (twice a year), to stay in line with the superhero campaign run by Public Health within Barnsley. Looking at the graph above most of the children and young had visited their dentist in the last six months.

The number of children and young people surveyed that have never been to the dentist is high, five of the young people in total stating they had never been to the dentist. It was not clarified as to why they had never visited a dentist.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fluoride/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg19/ifp/chapter/How-often-should-I-come-back-for-a-check-up>

To get more understanding about what prompts the children and young people surveyed to go to the dentist we then asked why they went to appointments. The answers they gave are in the following graph.



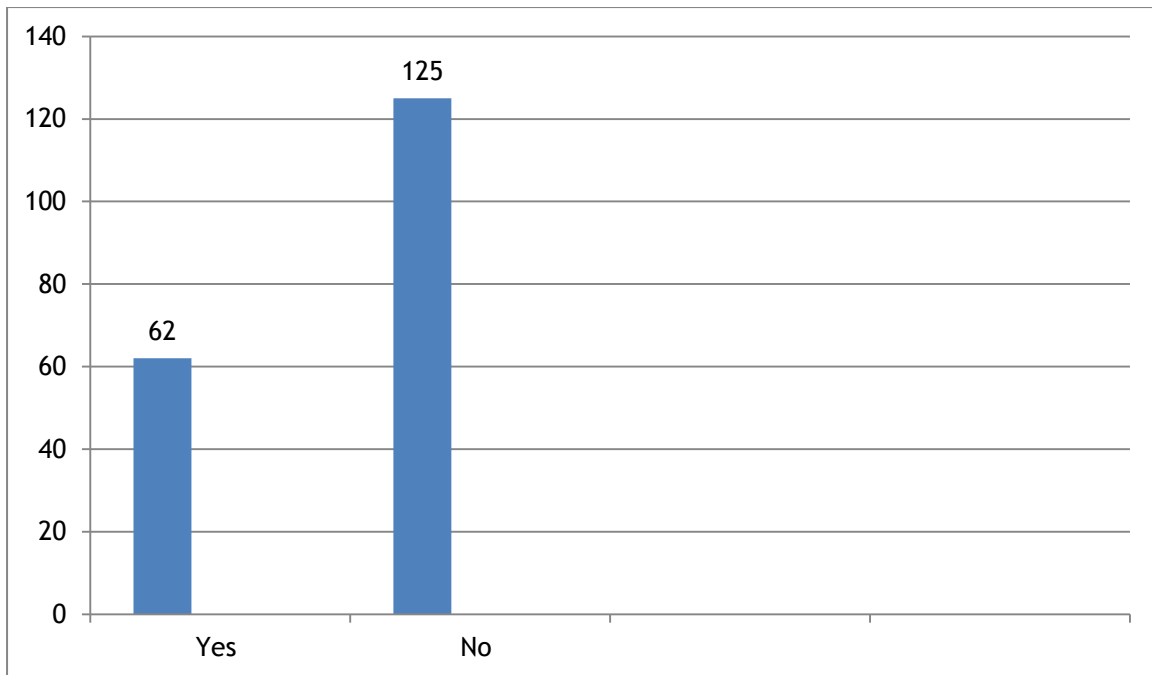
### The superheroes campaign

The survey went on to ask the young people if they have seen promotional material related to the superheroes campaign. The superheroes campaign is a Public Health initiative to encourage young children to take care of their teeth in the right way; the superhero way.

The campaign champions the importance of brushing teeth for two minutes, twice a day from the moment the first tooth appears.

Young children can also use a colorful superhero brushing chart which tracks the progress of brushing their teeth in the morning and at night for 30 days. Children who brush their teeth consistently for a month will be more likely to carry this on through the rest of their lives, and keep strong healthy teeth and gums well into adulthood. (25 March 2015 - [barnsley.gov.uk](http://barnsley.gov.uk)).

We asked the young people if they had seen the dental superhero poster and information in the past 12 months, the graph shows the number of young people who had and who have not seen the super hero information in the past 12 months.



Of the children surveyed, significantly more (2/3) had not seen the campaign materials within the last 12 months

### **What do you like and dislike about attending the dentist**

We identified the following three trends on what the young people of Barnsley like about their dentist:

1. They are helpful and professional.
2. The dentists are nice and kind to them
3. The dentists are clean and hygienic

We identified the following three trends on what the young people of Barnsley do not like about their dentist:

1. The waiting times
2. They don't understand the terminology they use
3. They can be too rough when giving treatment

We identified the following three trends on what the young people of Barnsley would change about their dentist:

1. The dentist could have things to do for young people when waiting
2. The dentist areas/waiting rooms could be made young people friendly
3. They need to explain the treatment in a way young people will understand

## **Key findings**

- Most young people did not know what fluoride varnish was.
- 89% of young people knew how many times a day they should brush their teeth.
- A large number (73%) of the young people did not know how long they should brush their teeth for.
- 3/4 of the young people have attended the dentist in the past six months.
- 182 young people out of 229 have not seen the superhero poster and information in the past 12 months.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the sample of children and young people surveyed the following recommendations are based on findings in all areas.

### **Recommendation 1**

Most young people surveyed did not know what a fluoride varnish was, but in reference to the Barnsley Dental Practice Fluoride Application Audit report 2017 (appendix 3).

It states that most of young people who visit the dentist have had fluoride applied to their teeth, we recommend dentists explain to young people what fluoride varnish is and how it helps protect the teeth, and we recommend this is done at every application, refreshing the children and young people's knowledge on fluoride varnish.

### **Recommendation 2**

The superheroes campaign is not well known by the children and young people that were questioned so it may be useful to do an audit of where the posters and promotional materials are located in the dental surgery. It would also be worthwhile completing some snap surveys if there are any young people in the surgery to get on the spot feedback about the campaign and to see if they can suggest improvements to make the posters more noticeable or if they think there would be a better way to promote treatments.

## **Special Thanks**

Healthwatch would like to thank the primary schools for enabling us to work with their year 6 pupils. We would also like to say a big thank you to the 188 young people who took part in our session and completed our survey.

If you have read this report and have any further questions or experiences you would like to share they will be gratefully received and shared via our intelligence networks. Your continued feedback will also help us to keep up to date with what is happening within the service. Your feedback will also inform us of progress within the service.









## **Contact us**

If you would like to contact us about anything in this report, or about any health or social care issue in Barnsley, you can do so in the following ways:

**Address:** The Core, County Way, Barnsley, S70 2JW

**Telephone:** 01226 320106

**Text/SMS:** 07870 599445

**Email:** [healthwatch@vabarnsley.org.uk](mailto:healthwatch@vabarnsley.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.healthwatchbarnsley.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbarnsley.co.uk)

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