

Public health and health integration scrutiny committee

Oral Health Survey of 5-year-olds (2021/22)

April 2024

The survey

- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) National Dental Epidemiology Programme (NDEP) completes the examination of a random sample of 5-year-old children attending state-funded mainstream schools
- These results are from data collection during the 2021/22 academic year across local authorities in England
- The survey routinely takes place every 2 years but was delayed from 2020 to 2021 by the COVID-19 pandemic
- The survey aims to measure the prevalence and severity of dental caries among 5-year-old children.

Summary findings in Leicester

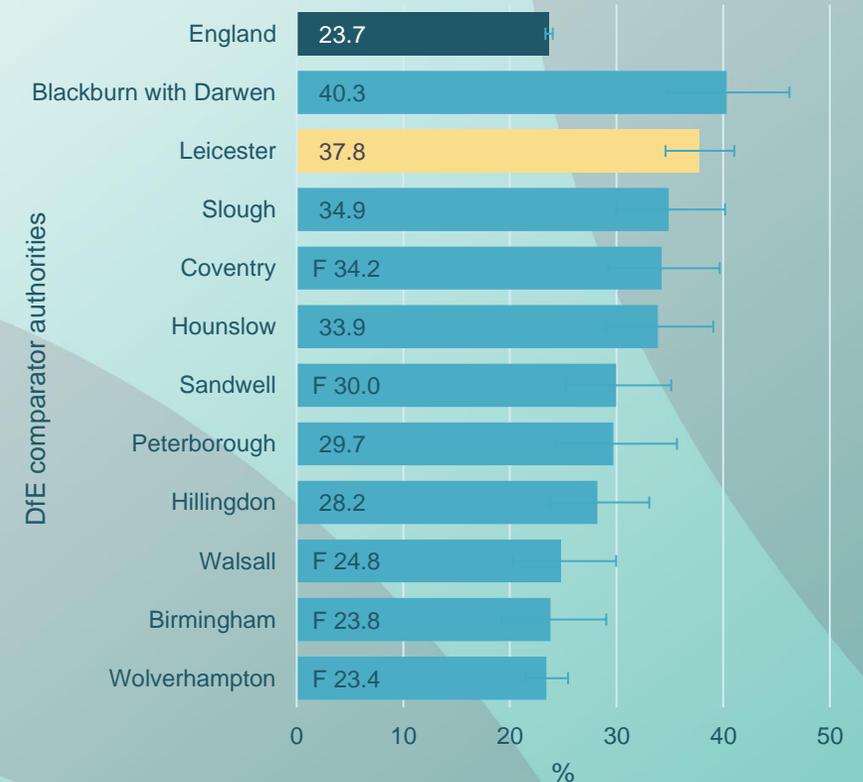
- **Participation** - 866 children from maintained schools across Leicester were examined, a participation rate of 73%. 17% of all 5-year-olds attending mainstream city schools
- **Decay experience** - In 2021/22, 37.8% of 5-year-olds in Leicester had dental decay, which is significantly higher than the national average of 23.3% (see table)
- Leicester prevalence of enamel decay and/or any dental caries was 46.8%, significantly higher than the national average of 29.3%, and many DfE comparator authorities.
- **Ranking** - Leicester currently ranks 9th highest among 132 upper-tier local authorities for dental decay.
- **Trend** - The prevalence of dental decay has remained stable in Leicester since 2017
- Comparing to 2019, there is a significant decrease in 5-year-olds receiving dental fillings, likely influenced by the impact of COVID-19 on dental practice. Incisor caries increased since 2019, although not significantly.

Upper-Tier LA Name	d3mft>0 (%)
Brent	46.0
Liverpool	43.5
Bolton	42.8
Blackburn with Darwen	40.3
Rochdale	39.8
Oldham	39.5
Westminster	39.5
Herefordshire	38.7
Leicester	37.8
Luton	36.5
England	23.7

Comparator areas

- Decay experience is measured as decayed, missing or filled teeth (DMFT)
- When compared against DfE comparator authorities, Leicester has the 2nd highest prevalence of decay experience amongst it's 5-year-olds.
- The presence of water fluoridation schemes in some local authority areas, even with similar deprivation profiles to Leicester such as Wolverhampton (23.4%), Birmingham (23.8%), and Walsall (24.8%), appears to offer a protective advantage over dental decay.

Percentage of 5 year olds with decay experience (d3mft>0), 2022



Geographical and ethnic differences

- **Geographical differences:**

- North of the city is worse affected, particularly for $d3mft > 0$, incisor caries, mean no. dmft, and severe dmft, although not significantly.
- Wards with significantly higher decay burdens are North Evington ($d3mft > 0$; 53%) and Wycliffe (mean no. dmft; 6.1 teeth).
- Lower IMD quintiles have less decay experience, especially in quintile 4 for $d3mft > 0$, severe dmft, and enamel decay, where decay experience was significantly lower.

- **Ethnic differences:**

- Asian ethnicity is associated with higher decay burden in $d3mft > 0$, incisor caries, mean no. dmft, severe dmft, and enamel decay, although not significantly.
- Within ethnic groups, 'White Other' ethnicity shows higher decay experience than 'White British,' although not significantly.

Current activity to improve oral health

- **Supervised toothbrushing** - in schools and early years settings
- **Smile Early Years Award** - This scheme is aimed at promoting the importance of oral health and general health in early years settings.
- **Multi Agency Training** - Quarterly Oral Health training sessions are delivered to health professionals to ensure the workforce have up to date knowledge and evidence of key oral health messages.
- **Children, YP and Families Centres/Family Hubs** – The team support events and upskill the workforce at these centres to facilitate the promotion of oral health
- **Foodshare Oral Health Pack distribution** - Oral health packs consisting of age-appropriate toothbrushes, toothpaste and information for families and adults have been delivered to FoodShare for distribution to vulnerable families across Leicester.
- **Healthy Together Team** - The Health Visiting and School Nursing teams distribute universally Oral Health packs and information during key contacts. For children aged 6-8 weeks, 9-12 months, 2-2.5 years, 4 years.