

# Briefing: N R U F H of C OVID-19 on dental services

January 2021

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## Summary

The prevalence of dental extraction due to tooth decay amongst in children in England is falling. Whilst this is good news, children from the most deprived areas have more than twice the level of tooth decay compared with those from the least deprived areas.

There are significant health and social consequences resulting from poor oral health. These entrench existing inequalities. The Current pandemic will further exacerbate these. The UK Government should introduce a number of preventative measures and support programmes that close the inequality gap in prevalence of tooth decay.

- Between 2011/12 and 2018/19, the rate of children aged 0 to 5 years who have had tooth extractions due to decay has fallen from 3.5 to 2.8 per 1,000 children in England. <sup>1</sup>
- Tooth decay has been the most common reason for hospital admission among children aged five to nine for the past three years. <sup>2</sup> For young children, tooth extractions usually require a general anaesthetic and an admission to hospital. This is associated with increased morbidity, and places financial burden on the NHS. <sup>3</sup>
- Between 2008 and 2017, prevalence of visible decay fell from 30.9% to 23.3%. <sup>4</sup>
- Children from lower socioeconomic groups have a greater prevalence and severity of tooth decay. In England, while 77% of 5 year old children were free of visually obvious tooth decay in 2017, there are significant regional inequalities, with children from the most deprived areas having more than twice the level of decay compared with those from the least deprived. <sup>5</sup>

## Impact of COVID-19

