



healthwatch
Salford

The Big Check Up

Mark Lupton, Engagement Officer
March 2022

Background

- Project came about as a result of feedback gathered and our own strategic priorities
- Healthwatch England & Healthwatch in Greater Manchester
- Conversations with commissioners and providers of dental services
- Working group comprising of Healthwatch Salford volunteers

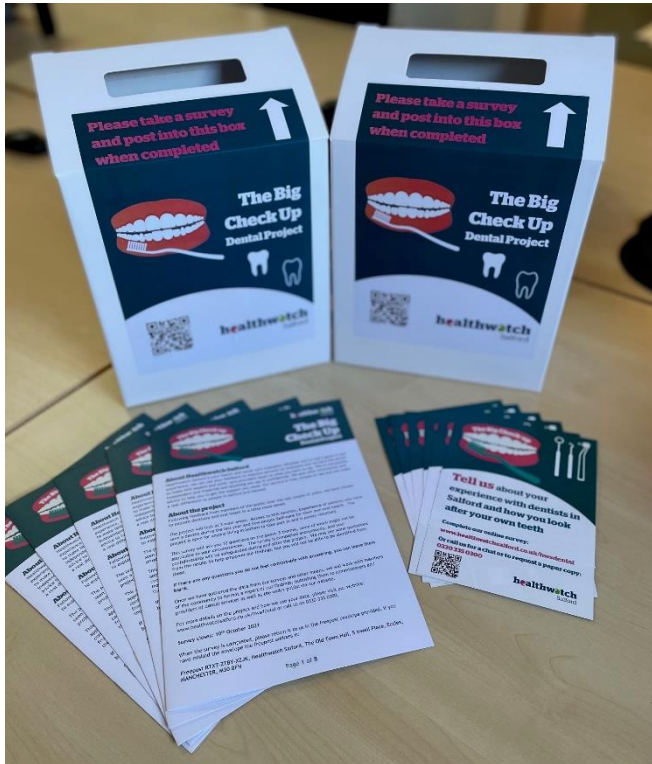
Project looked at 3 elements:

Access to NHS dentists

Experience of patients who had seen a dentist during the last year

Self-care of how people looked after their own oral health

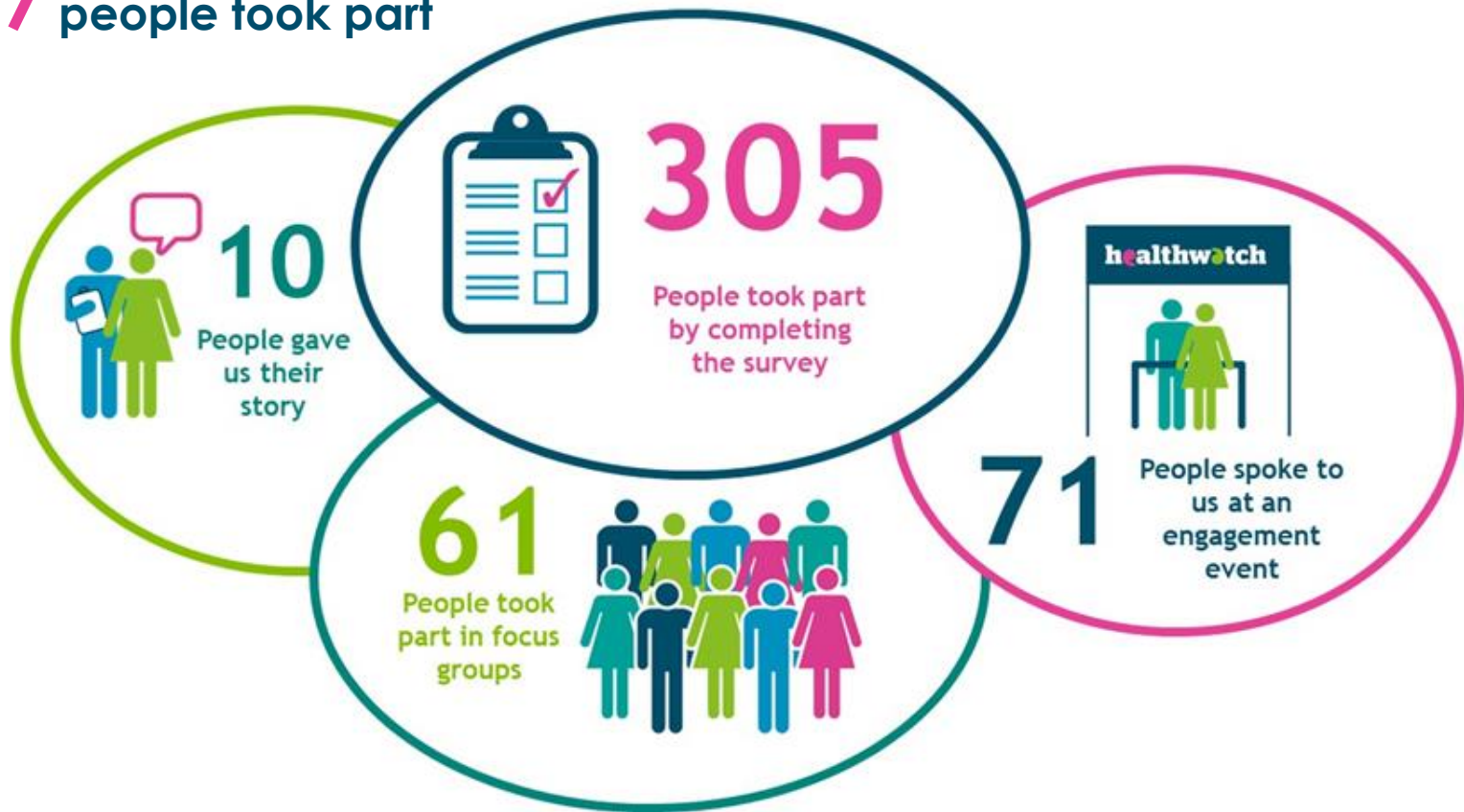
How we did it



- Survey co-designed with partners and working group
- Support from Healthwatch England Research Team
- Online survey
- Paper survey
- 1-2-1 interviews with patients
- Face to face engagement event
- Focus groups
- Engagement phase ran for 5 weeks (September & October 2021)

Who did we talk to?

447 people took part





Summary of our findings

Access

Out of 305 survey respondents

**188 people
had access**

**148
NHS**

**40
Private**

**93
within
year**

**32
within
year**

**116 people
didn't have
access**

**79 would need
treatment**

**Over half would
travel more
than 3 miles**

**20 would
travel 9 – 20
miles**

Access Mystery shop

A screenshot of the NHS website's 'Find a dentist' page. The page has a blue header with the NHS logo and navigation links for 'Health A-Z', 'Live Well', 'Mental health', and 'Care a'. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > NHS Services > Dentists'. The main heading is 'Find a dentist'. Below this is a text input field with the placeholder text 'Enter a town, city or postcode in England'. A green 'Search' button is positioned below the input field.

- 28 practices listed, 4 without a website
- 12 visually difficult to read
- 9 clear info for NHS patients
- 2 didn't have phone number!
- 11 calls answered by a person
- 2 practices indicated they may be taking on NHS patients
- Staff friendly but couldn't advise us where to go next

Affordability



In some cases, this had led to people choosing to neglect going to the dentist because they simply cannot afford the NHS prices for even just a check-up anymore, let alone a private appointment.

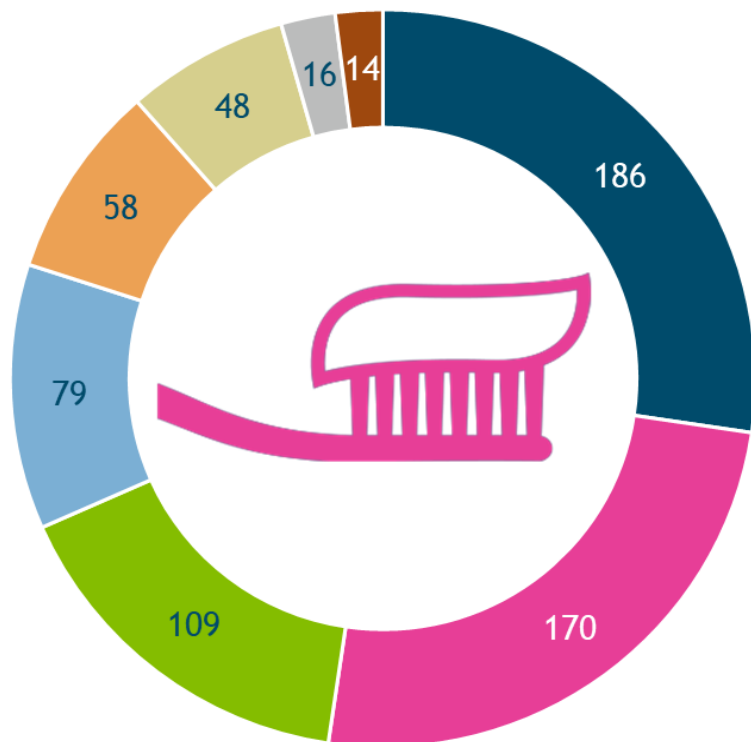
Affordability was a major concern for a lot of people who felt that they were being forced to 'go private'

Most people, especially those of an older age told us they were finding the NHS dental treatment prices too expensive.

Some patients also feel like they have been treated for non-existent issues or more expensive treatments in the first instance.

Self-care

What else did people do to look after their own teeth?

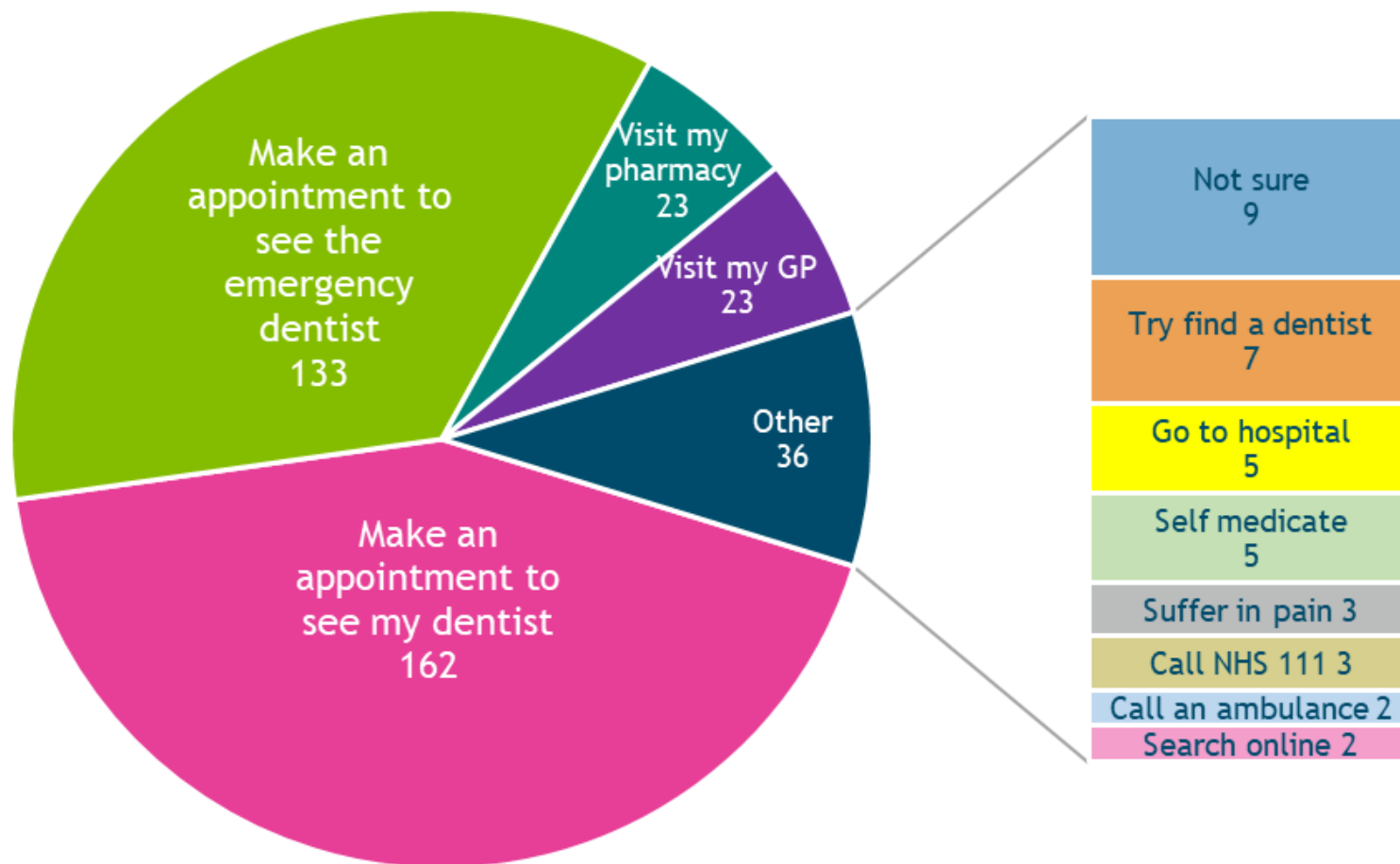


- Electric toothbrush
- Mouthwash
- Dental floss
- Interdents/toothpicks/woodsticks
- Interspace brush
- Sugar-free chewing gum
- Denture cleaning solution
- Other

| Method | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Electric toothbrush | 186 |
| Mouthwash | 170 |
| Dental floss | 109 |
| Interdents/toothpicks | 79 |
| Interspace brush | 58 |
| Sugar-free gum | 48 |
| Denture cleaning | 16 |
| Other | 14 |

Self-care

What people would do if they encountered an emergency



NHS 111

Freedom of Information request to North West Ambulance Service

4,847 contacts about dental problems from Salford people

1,823 further referred on for emergency treatment

846 OOH emergency dental service

923 in hours emergency dental service

2,643 of these enquiries were categorised as 'Health or medication information requests', 'Information about location of health services required' and/or 'Dentist location request'.


Self-care

The self-care statements

- Most people who completed our survey told us that they do brush their teeth at least twice a day but a third of them were not using fluoride toothpaste.
- Nearly half of the people admitted to regularly eating sweet foods and snacks in between meals.
- Just over a third of the people told us that they would like more help to better understand the ways in which to keep their teeth healthy.

- Getting access to an NHS dentist
- What people can do about bleeding and receding gums
- How to be careful of what they eat and drink (dietary advice)

- Best techniques for using manual and electric toothbrushes
- How they can keep their teeth white



Dentists should provide patients with advice on how they can look after their own teeth, but we found that out of the 106 people that wanted more help in understanding the best way to look after their teeth, less than half of them (50) had a dentist to ask for advice.

Out of all 10 boroughs in Greater Manchester, Salford is the only one not to have a health improvement team dedicated to oral health

Self-care

Adults responsible for children under the age of 13yrs

- 52 Adults responded and told us that many of the children (43) brush their teeth at least twice a day with a high number of them (45) using fluoride toothpaste.
- Similarly, to the adults though, nearly half (21) of the children were eating sweet foods and snack in between meals.
- Just over a third (19) wanted more help to better understand how they can look after the children's teeth:

- More information in schools to reinforce the messages given at home
- How to brush the teeth of a wiggly toddler

- What snacks are good to give to a child for packed lunch at school
- Access to a dentist for children
- Basic guidelines for looking after children's teeth

NHS data for children

- Salford has had one of the highest instances in tooth decay in children



A national oral health survey of five-year-old children in 2015 showed that 51% of 5-year-olds in Salford were showing signs of decay

The same oral health survey results for five-year-old children in 2019 showed this has been slightly improved with just 39% of children in Salford showing signs of dental decay



The 2020 survey of three-year-olds indicates that tooth decay begins at an earlier age in Salford compared with other areas of England, showing that 27.5% of 3-year-olds in Salford were showing signs of tooth decay

Interventions for children

Salford City Council, Salford CCG, Salford Community Leisure & Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership

- **Reducing sugar (Start Well Partnership):** GULP; Sugar Smart Brownies; Salford Community Leisure removing sugary drinks from their facilities
- **Oral health promotion:** Health Visitors giving parents advice; Health Improvement Team delivering fluoride tooth brushing scheme to nurseries
- **Prevention of oral ill health through general dental practices:** Baby Teeth Do Matter; Healthy Living Dental Practice – Prevention of dental disease is implicit within the dental contract. Dentists are advised to follow the national guidance of 'Delivering Better Oral Health'

NHS data

- The number of dentists providing an NHS service in Salford had steadily increased over the years from **154** in 2014/15 to **221** in 2019/20, however this number fell by 24 (10.9%) during the last reporting year 2020/21 to just **197**
- There are **76** dentists per 100,000 population of Salford. Out of the 27 Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) areas in the Northwest region, Salford has the best ratio of dentists per population than any other CCG.
- NHS figures show us that during the 2-year period 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2021, **96,008** adult patients were seen by a Salford based dentist. This equates to approx. **47.7%** of Salford's adult population, and just over the national average of 40.8%.

NHS data

- In addition, for a shorter period of 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021, **19,783** children were seen by a Salford based dentist. This is approx. **34.4%** of Salford's child population and again just over the national average of 33%.

Statistically, Salford seems to be in a better position regionally with regards to dentists and population ratio, with more adults reported to have had access to NHS dental treatment in the last 2 years than the England average. However, as the NHS data is based upon 'units of dental activity', it is not possible to determine how many of those people seen by Salford dentists were actually residents in Salford.

COVID-19

- Restrictions as a result of COVID-19
- Before the pandemic, a dentist was able to see in the region of 14 or 15 patients per day, however, as a result of the pandemic this has reduced to about 6 or 7 patients due to the requirement to adhere to IPC (Infection, Prevention and Control) guidance.
- Fallow period and air filtration



Our recommendations

Recommendations

We decided to adopt and champion those of Healthwatch England and Healthwatch in Greater Manchester:

- 1. A more rapid and radical reform of the way dentistry is commissioned and provided**
- 2. Using the reform of commissioning to tackle the twin crises of access and affordability**
- 3. Greater clarity in the information about NHS dentistry**
- 4. Look at using dental practices to support people's general health**

Recommendations

In addition, we also make 2 recommendations local to Salford:

- 5. To review the need for a health improvement team dedicated to oral health in Salford**
- 6. Healthwatch Salford to have a more proactive working relationship with the commissioners for NHS dental services**

What happens next?

- Continue to gather feedback from people in Salford
- Monitor progress at Healthwatch England level and share with Salford
- Work with local providers and commissioners to achieve recommendations
- Revisit project at the end of the summer and publish addendum report on progress made



Any questions?

For further information or to chat about the project:
mark@healthwatchsalford.co.uk



For more information

Healthwatch Salford
The Old Town Hall
5 Irwell Place
Eccles
Salford
M30 0FN

www.healthwatchsalford.co.uk

t: 0330 355 0300

e: info@healthwatchsalford.co.uk



healthwatch