



Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids

Community Engagement Report

February 2018

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1 Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames would like to thank the parents and children who took part in our Healthy Teeth Healthy Kids Art Workshops for their contribution to this report.

1.2 About Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames

Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames (from here on referred to as Healthwatch Kingston) is the local, user-led organisation for involving local people in the design and development of local health and social care services and help improve patient experience. It was established in April 2013 under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. It provides reports and updates about local services to Healthwatch England, a body that campaigns on national issues and raises concerns to the NHS and the Department of Health. Healthwatch Kingston gathers information and feedback from service users about the experiences they have of health and social care services and uses this to make improvements and influence the development of those services. It works with health and social care services to make sure that the voice of local people is heard, and it goes out into the community to listen to what people have to say. In addition, Healthwatch Kingston signposts people to local health and social care services and provides information on how to complain or give feedback about those services. Healthwatch Kingston is a registered charity and is funded by the Department of Health through the local authority, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. It is independent and led by a board of Trustees who are local people with a keen interest in improving the health and social care system for local people.

Healthwatch Kingston Upon Thames is the local independent champion for high quality health and social care services. We have statutory powers to ensure your voice is heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate services. We act on behalf of our local community and we seek to involve as many people as possible in our work.

2 Context and Purpose

Healthwatch Kingston was approached by Royal Borough of Kingston's (RBK) Public Health to contribute to part of the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on children's oral health in Kingston. The JSNA was carried out due to Kingston scoring significantly poorer than England averages for hospital admissions due to dental caries in children aged nought to four years old¹, and 23% of five-year-olds in the borough having dental decay by age five². Excess sugar consumption is known to be a large contributor to dental decay and also can impact health and wellbeing. This concern is driving national initiatives and research around the effects of excess sugar in the diet, and aims to reduce it. The UK Government have recently announced a Soft Drinks Industry Levy, known as the 'Sugar Tax', which comes into effect on 6 April 2018 and aims to reduce the amount of sugar in drinks, which is the main source of dietary sugar for children³.

Good oral health is vital to good overall health⁴, the foundations of which start from a young age. Poor oral health can cause children to have pain and infections as well as the impact upon his or her sleep, school attendance, socialising, nutrition and growth⁵. For parents, they may have to take time off work to take their child to the dentist or to the hospital for a tooth extraction.



Healthwatch Kingston's aims were to find out what children and parents know about how to look after their teeth, where they learnt this information, and what could be done to promote and improve the oral health of children in the borough. This report complements the quantitative analysis by RBK's Public Health team. The available community engagement research period for this work was very short and it is acknowledged that the sample size of children and parents spoken with is limited. That said, the conversations reported provide an insight into some areas where improvement in service provision should be possible.

¹ [Child Health Profile March 2017](#), Public Health England

² [Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator 4.02](#), Public Health England 2014/15

³ [Sugar Reduction: The evidence for action](#), Public Health England October 2015

⁴ [Gum disease and overall health](#), NHS Choices November 2015

⁵ [Tackling Poor Oral Health](#), Local Government Association April 2016



3 Methodology

Two ‘Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids’ art workshops were run:

- Six adults and eight children attended the event on 20th January 2018 at Kingston Quaker Centre
- Six children attended the event at Kingsnympton Youth Centre
- Six parents and three children were spoken to about their child’s tooth care whilst visiting the Kingston Quaker Centre outside of the workshops.

The children’s ages ranged from five to eleven years old. The children and parents who took part were from different ethnic backgrounds with one event held at Kingsnympton Youth Centre, within a social housing estate, to include people from different socio-economic backgrounds.




At the workshops three activities took place:

Activity 1: Children were given a demonstration tooth and toothbrush set to show how they brush their teeth.

Activity 2: Happy and sad tooth posters (Appendix 1) were presented to children with foods and drinks on sticky cards. Children were asked to stick foods on the happy or sad tooth to indicate their knowledge of which foods they thought were good or bad for their teeth.

Activity 3: Children were asked to paint pictures of tooth related things such as a trip to the dentist, brushing their teeth, happy or sad teeth, or foods that are good or bad for their teeth.





Throughout activities the conversation with children was prompted by a set of questions:

- How do you think you keep your teeth healthy? Do you do these things? If you do not - why not?
- Where did you learn about how to look after your teeth (at the dentist, school, from your parents)? How old were you when you learnt this?
- How could going to the dentist, eating less sugar and brushing your teeth be made easier?

Parents were prompted with similar questions in the following three areas that prevent tooth decay:

- **Taking your child to the dentist:**
 - What is positive about this experience? What is negative about the experience? What could help make things easier? What stops you from taking your child to the dentist?
- **Cleaning of your child's teeth:**
 - What is positive about this experience? What is negative about the experience? What could help make things easier? What prevents your child from brushing their teeth?
- **Your child having a healthy diet:**
 - What is positive about this experience? What is negative about the experience? What could help make things easier? What stops your child from having a healthy diet?

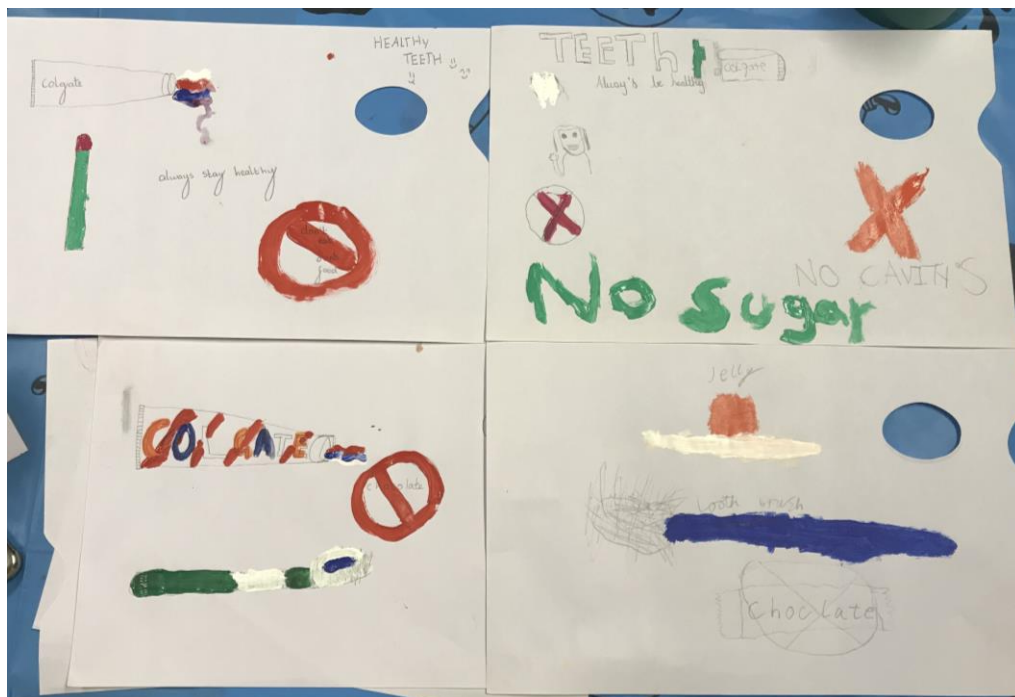
Answers were recorded on question and answer sheets by HWK staff (see Appendix 2). Consent forms were issued beforehand to parents (see Appendix 3) where consideration was given to any special needs or dietary requirements of the child. Parents were also asked to confirm they agreed for their child's artwork to be used for the purposes of this report. Snacks were provided at the two workshops - all of which were low sugar.

An online survey (see Appendix 4) to provide quantitative results was constructed by RBK's Public Health and published on RBK's website between 22 December 2017 and 09 February 2018. Parents who attended the workshops completed the online survey using iPads provided on the day. Parents in Kingston were invited to complete the survey and attend the two workshops. Methods of contact used to invite people to complete the survey included email (656 Healthwatch Kingston stakeholders were contacted), social media, local voluntary and health newsletters, leaflets at public events and RBK's promotional channels.

4 Results

4.1 Summary of findings

- Almost half of the children spoken to had fillings, and one seven-year-old potentially needed a tooth extraction due to tooth decay, despite children and parents having an excellent understanding of what promotes good oral health (low sugar diet, brushing teeth twice a day, and visiting the dentist regularly).
- Parents and children were knowledgeable about the types of food and drink conducive to good oral health, yet parent's inability to monitor sugary treats at school was raised as a source of potential problems with controlling their sugar intake.



- The role of the dentist in achieving good oral health was well understood by parents and children.
- The need for the dentist to be accessible, child-friendly and attentive was highlighted. Some issues were raised about access to dental surgeries due to oversubscription.



- Children and parents were aware of how often to brush their teeth, although there were some who were not clear that they should not rinse with water after brushing. None of the children who attended used dental floss.
- The main source of knowledge about tooth care reported was from parents and the dentist. Healthwatch Kingston heard that information from schools, where provided, was limited to science lessons at age eight or nine. One child, who had been visited at school by a dentist, spoke very highly of the experience.

4.2 Results of workshops

Knowledge about diet:

- In both workshops children worked together to place foods that were and weren't conducive to good oral health on the happy or sad tooth posters. All of the children and parents spoken to knew which foods were and weren't conducive to good oral health.

“I know what the healthy foods are, but I prefer to eat things that taste nice!”

(seven-year-old at a workshop)

- Children understood the differences between natural sugars found in fruits, and those that have been added to foods and drinks.



- There were some children and parents who mentioned having sugary foods at school and home but not in large amounts or more frequently than current healthy eating guidelines advise⁶. Five of the children said they prefer to eat sugary treats and one said she drank sweet juice ‘*secretly at school*’.
- Four children reported having sweet treats at school, at after school clubs, and for parties, children’s birthdays and other occasions. Two parents reported concern that they were not consulted about the sugary snacks that their children were being given at these occasions.
- Demonstrating how aware the children were on the sugar contents of foods, one seven-year-old girl said “*I check the labels on the back, they are full of sugar!*”

“The yogurts at school are so bad for your teeth!”

(seven-year-old at a workshop)

The role of the dentist:

- Two of the adults spoken to reported having issues in obtaining an NHS dentist in their area - with those closest to them not currently accepting new patients.
- Children and parents were aware of how often to go to the dentist (every six months) but there was mixed feedback on whether reminder letters were sent.
- Children generally had a positive experience of their dentists, one fondly recalled getting a sticker when she left the appointment. Two children said that they enjoyed using plaque disclosing tablets to see where they might need to brush their teeth better and that this encouraged them to do so. One girl mentioned being given fluoride gel at the dentist, which



⁶ [Eatwell Guide](#), Food Standards Agency 2016



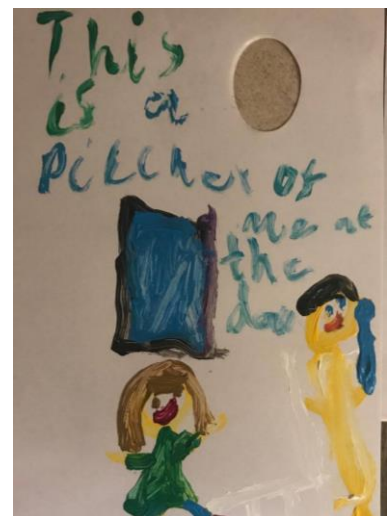
'tasted like cherries!'. Another eight-year-old reported that a musical toothbrush she saw at the dentist, would encourage her to brush teeth.

- The two children who expressed less favourable experiences about their dentist visits, told Healthwatch Kingston this was due to worry about and experience of pain from dental procedures required.
- The personality of the dentist was important: a child-friendly dentist was reported by parents to have an impact upon whether children follow tooth care advice as the communication of this was not placed solely on the parent/s. One mother was upset that her child's previous *'wonderful'* dentist had left the surgery, because the replacement did not direct her child and only spoke to the parent, making the visits far less pleasant for both mother and child.
- Not all parents were aware that they should visit the dentist once an infant has his or her first tooth, and some waited until age two or three.

“How bad does that make me look if she has to get her tooth out?”

(concerned parent at a workshop)

- Two families spoken with were hoping to get advice from Healthwatch Kingston at the workshop, as they were worried about their child's tooth pain and did not feel clear direction was given from their dentist. One of the families had a child who had bad ulcers which began when he was under five from inhaler use, and continued to cause him problems at age seven. His Mum and Dad described how he had pain a lot of the time, and that they were not sure what to do to help him further.



- A second family had a child who was in potential need of a tooth extraction at age eight due to tooth decay. This was a source of worry for the parent, who again felt uncertain about the dental action plan given by



the dentist. The parent had made great efforts to look after her child's health and worried how it would make her appear as a parent if her child needed a tooth extraction due to tooth decay. For the child, she was embarrassed by the bad breath she was experiencing as a result of her oral health.

Information sources:

- Children reported that most of the knowledge about tooth care they had, had come from their parents or from the dentist. Parents also reported that their main source of knowledge was from the dentist. A theme that ran across the workshops was that not much tooth care information was given at school.
- Children reported that they did not learn about tooth care at school or from health professionals other than their dentist, when they were younger. Four children said that they had learnt about looking after their teeth from school science lessons at age seven to eight.
- Only one child of the fifteen spoken to reported having been given any dental advice from their school. The six-year-old who had been visited at school spoke proudly of what she had learnt from the dentist and demonstrated this with the toothbrush demonstration kit. Her parent felt reassured that the pressure was not just on her to *'nag her to brush her teeth'*, as she put it. When asked, parents said that they felt visits from dentists or other health professionals at schools would be helpful to strengthen the message to children about looking after teeth.
- None of the children or parents we spoke to mentioned having received information about oral health from sources other than their school or dentist, such as from a GP or a health visitor.



The online survey report by RBK's Public Health team will be published on the Council's JSNA website⁷ in May/June 2018.

4.3 Additional findings

- While this community engagement was happening, Healthwatch Kingston had contact from two people in the Borough who expressed difficulty in registering with their NHS dentist; reporting that several near them were full and not accepting new patients.
- A potential barrier in people asking for help around their children's tooth care was identified while promoting the research with parents, one lady said *'but we are middle class so wouldn't need help with this.'* Likewise, another Kingston parent said *'we don't need to come, all of my children know how to brush their teeth'*, suggesting there is some social stigma in a child having tooth decay - and a perception that it is an issue for those with a lower income.



“This was the best day ever!”

(Eight-year-old who attended a workshop.)

4.4 Recommendations

- Schools could consider limiting sugary snacks given to children for special occasions and have further liaison with parents about whether they are happy for their children to be given these snacks.
- Advice on how to reduce sugar consumption should continue to be promoted to children and parents, making use of resources such as Change4life.
- Dental surgeries could consider asking parents and children if they require any further explanation and that they understand the information they are

⁷ [Royal Borough of Kingston Joint Strategic Needs Assessments](#)



given at appointments. This would ensure a joint effort in communication of tooth care messages to children.

- Dental surgeries not already doing so, could offer reminders for appointments to ensure regular check-ups.
- Dental surgeries should continue to be child friendly in their approach, and see if there is anything else they could do to improve this.
- Tools provided that can encourage children to keep their teeth clean could be promoted e.g. musical / character toothbrushes, flavoured fluoride gels and plaque dispensing tablets.
- Information disseminated to parents and children about how to best care for teeth should make clear that: rinsing with water after brushing is not advised, when and how children should start flossing, and when an infant should be taken for their first dental appointment.
- Children should be given messages promoting good oral health at a younger age, before they have tooth decay. Where possible this should be incorporated into routine visits from health visitors, and passed onto children and parents at nurseries and playgroups.



4.5 Further Information

This report was produced by Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames and will be made available to the public on our website. Hard copies will be made available on request. Should you require this report in a different format, please contact the Healthwatch Kingston office on 020 3326 1255, Kingston Quaker Centre, Fairfield East, Kingston, KT1 2PT. Email: info@healthwatchkingston.org.uk.

www.healthwatchkingston.org.uk



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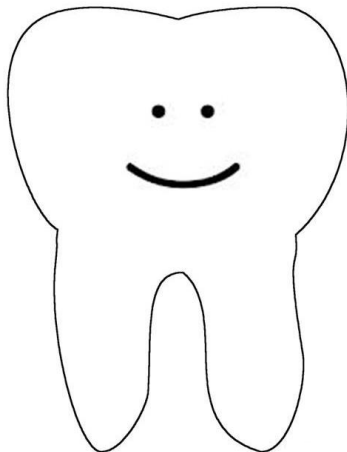
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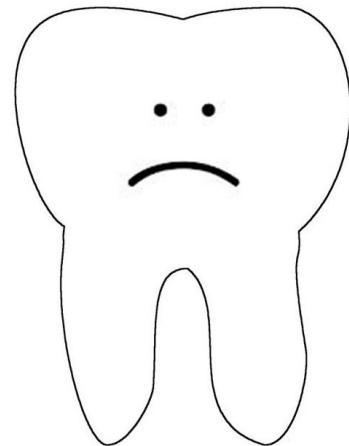
6 Appendices

Appendix 1: Happy/sad tooth posters:

What foods make Mr Tooth feel good?



What foods make Mr Tooth feel bad?



Appendix 2: Question and answer sheets for use at workshops:

Parent's

Thank you for coming along to our 'Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids' event!

- We would love you to answer a survey using the iPad

(survey link: <http://www.kingstonconversations.co.uk/childrens-dental-JSNA>).

There are paper forms in case of technical errors.

- We are keen to get further feedback from the parents about:

1. Taking your child to the dentist

What is positive about this experience?

What is negative about the experience?

What could help make things easier?

What stops you from taking your child to the dentist?

2. Cleaning of your child's teeth

What is positive about this experience?





What is negative about the experience?

What could help make things easier?

What prevents your child from brushing their teeth?

3. Your child having a healthy diet

What is positive about this experience?

What is negative about the experience?

What could help make things easier?

What stops your child from having a healthy diet?

Children

Activity 1: Ask children to play with the demo set and show how they brush their teeth.

Activity 2: Happy and sad tooth sheets with a range of food and drinks on sticky tabs will be presented for children to attach to indicate knowledge of which foods are good for teeth.

Activity 3: Children will be asked to paint pictures of them at the dentist, them brushing their teeth, foods that are good and bad for their teeth etc.

Throughout activities the below areas are ones to be explored with the children:

1. How do you make sure your teeth stay healthy? Do you do these things? If you do not - why not?
2. Where did you learn about how to look after your teeth (dentist? School? Parents?)? How old were you?
3. How could these things be made easier?
 1. Going to the dentist
 2. Eating less sugar
 3. Brushing your teeth



Appendix 3: Consent form



Parental Consent Form

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian,

Your child has kindly indicated that they would like to take part in the 'Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids' art session run by Healthwatch Kingston Upon Thames (HWK) in partnership with Public Health. Healthwatch Kingston and Kingston Council are currently undertaking a Needs Assessment on the oral health of children in Kingston. As part of this children will be asked questions relating to what does and doesn't work well for maintaining good oral health in children, and how this could be improved.

The information gathered will help form a report produced by Healthwatch Kingston on children's oral health and inform decisions in Kingston Council so that that children's oral health can be improved in the borough.

Names will not be collected and information provided will not be traceable back to the child providing the information. Children have the right to refuse to answer any questions or to stop taking part at any time. Images of the children's artwork may be used to illustrate the report if you consent for us to do so. Any time taken to answer these questions is greatly appreciated.

By signing the consent form you are showing that you are happy for your child to be included in the focus group.

Thank you.





What will my child do at the session?

- They will be invited to take part in the activities which will involve playing with a giant demo tooth set, painting 2 or 3 paintings around the topic, and playing a 'happy tooth, sad tooth' game where the children will stick images of different food types onto an image of a happy or sad tooth,
- Answer our questions during the activities to let us know their thoughts,
- There will be some tooth friendly snacks available to them.

We would be grateful if you could fill the form below to confirm that you agree to your child taking part.

Name of the event: Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids Art Session

Date and Time: 30th January 2018 17:00-18:00

Child's Name*

Parent's Name*

Phone

Address

**Emergency Contact
Details**

Name, Phone, Email



Age Of Child*

4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11

Special Information

Special medical conditions, sensitivities to medication, allergies, dietary requirements

I authorise HWK to use images of my child's ARTWORK taken at the event for report writing, and publicity materials related to this event (we will not take pictures of your child).*

Yes No

Sign the parental consent form*

By signing below I agree to my child's participation and to the details above.



Appendix 4: The paper version of the online survey:

7 Healthy teeth, healthy kids survey

This survey is being carried out by Kingston Public Health to help us understand how well young children and their families are being supported to look after their teeth. If you live in Kingston and have a child aged under 12, we'd like to hear what you think. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The results will be used to help us improve our work to keep local children's teeth healthy.

8 About your child

If you have more than one child, please think about your youngest child when completing this survey.

1. How old is your youngest child, in years (if aged under 1 year, please write 0)?
Please write in numbers, not words

2. Is your youngest child male or female?
Please tick one answer only

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Which of the following settings does your youngest child attend at least once a week?
Please tick one answer only

Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authority nursery or children's centre	
Independent nursery	
Childminder	
None of the above	

Advice about your child's dental health

4. Have you ever been given advice from a dentist or another professional about cleaning your child's teeth and/or gums?

Yes (go to 4a)

No

4a. Who gave you this advice?

Dentist

Dental nurse

Health visitor

School Nurse

GP

Other (specify).....

5. Has a dentist or member of the dental team or another professional ever asked you about the types of food and drink your child consumes?

Yes (go to 5a) No



5a Who asked you about this?

- Dentist
- Dental nurse
- Health visitor
- School Nurse
- GP
- Other (specify).....

6. Have you ever been given advice or help from a dentist or another health professional about the food and drinks your child should be consuming?

Yes go to 6a

No

6a. Who gave you this advice?

- Dentist
- Dental nurse
- Health visitor
- School Nurse
- GP
- Other (specify).....

7. Have you ever been given advice from a dentist or a member of the dental team or a health professional about how frequently your child should visit a dentist?

Yes (go to 7a)

No

7a. Who gave you this advice?

- Dentist
- Dental nurse
- Health visitor
- School Nurse
- GP
- Other (specify).....

8. [Where?]

9. How strongly would you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I am confident about how to look after my child's teeth on a day-to-day basis"

Please tick one answer only

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	



Visiting the dentist

10. Has your youngest child ever been to a dentists' surgery or clinic, either for a check-up, for treatment or just to get used to going?

Please tick one answer only		
Yes once	<input type="checkbox"/>	→
Yes two or three times	<input type="checkbox"/>	→
Yes, more than three times	<input type="checkbox"/>	→
No, never	<input type="checkbox"/>	→ Go to Q16

11. How old was your youngest child when they first went to the dentist?

Please write in years. If they were less than one year old, please write 0

12. Does your youngest child usually go to the dentist.....

Please tick one answer only

.. for a check-up	<input type="checkbox"/>
...only when they have trouble with their teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. When was the last time your youngest child went to the dentist? Please do not include any visits to an orthodontist

Please tick one answer only

In the last 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the last year	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Longer than 2 years ago	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Thinking about the dental practice you took your youngest child to last time, how would you rate the practice in terms of each of the following?

Tick one box in each row

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Not applicable
Length of wait to get a routine appointment						
Length of wait to get an urgent appointment						
The standard and quality of your child's dental care						
Child-friendly nature of dental practice						
Provision of advice about how to look after your child's teeth						
Communication skills of dental team						



15. Overall, how would you describe your youngest child's experience of that dental practice? *Tick one answer only*

Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Would you recommend that dental practice to a friend or neighbour who wanted to find a dentist to treat their child? *Tick one answer only*

Yes, would definitely recommend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes would probably recommend	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, would probably not recommend	<input type="checkbox"/>
No, would definitely not recommend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>

About your child's teeth, mouth and gums

17. Over the last 6 months, has your youngest child had any of the following problems with their teeth, gums or mouth?

Please tick one box in each row

	Yes	No
Toothache		
Any other pain in the mouth (includes painful mouth ulcers or mouth infections)		
Bleeding or swollen gums		
A broken tooth		
Bad breath		
Problems with appearance of their teeth or mouth		
Problems caused by dental treatment they have had		
Other problems, write in below		

18. We would like to know more about the ways in which your child's teeth and mouth may have affected your family life. Please place a tick in the box the describes the situation

In relation to your youngest child's dental health

How often in the past 6 months.....Tick one box on each row

	Never	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often	Every day or almost every day
--	-------	---------------	-----------	-------	-------------------------------



Have you or the other parent taken time off work					
...has your child's dental health caused financial difficulties in your family?					
...has your child required more attention from you or the other parent?					
..has your sleep or that of the other parent been disrupted?					
...have your normal family life activities ben interrupted?					
...have you or the other parent felt guilty?					
...have you or the other parent felt stressed or anxious?					

Looking after your child's teeth

19. How old was your youngest child when they started brushing their teeth or having them brushed for them? *Tick one answer only*

Under 6 months of age		
Between 6 months and 1 year of age		
Between 1 and two years of age		
Between 2 and 4 years of age		
Between 4 and 6 years of age		
6 years of age and older		
My child does not brush their teeth or have them brushed for them		Go to Q21

20. Who usually brushes your youngest child's teeth nowadays? *Tick one answer*

Your child	
An adult	
An adult and your child together	

21. How often does your youngest child usually brush their teeth (or have them brushed for them)? *Tick one answer only*

More than three times a day	
Three times a day	
Twice a day	
Once a day	
Less than once a day	
Never	



22. Over the last year has your youngest child regularly used any of the following products to look after their teeth or mouth? *Please tick one box in each row*

	Yes	No
Toothbrush (non-electric)		
Electric/battery operated toothbrush		
Toothpaste		
Fluoride drops/tablets (usually taken each day)		
Mouthwash		
Dental floss		
Dental Disclosing (plaque revealing) tablets		
Sugar free or dental chewing gum		
Other, write below		

23. Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about your child’s dental health or dentistry in Kingston?

.....

About you and your wider family

Knowing more about you can help us to understand whether some groups of people are having a better experience of dental care than others.

24. Are you male or female? *Please tick one box only*

Male	
Female	

25. What was your age at your last birthday?

16-24	
25-34	
35-44	
45-54	
55+	

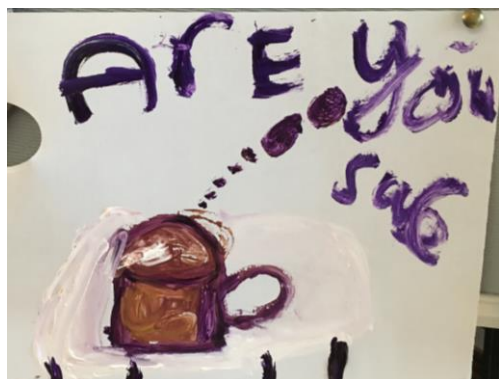
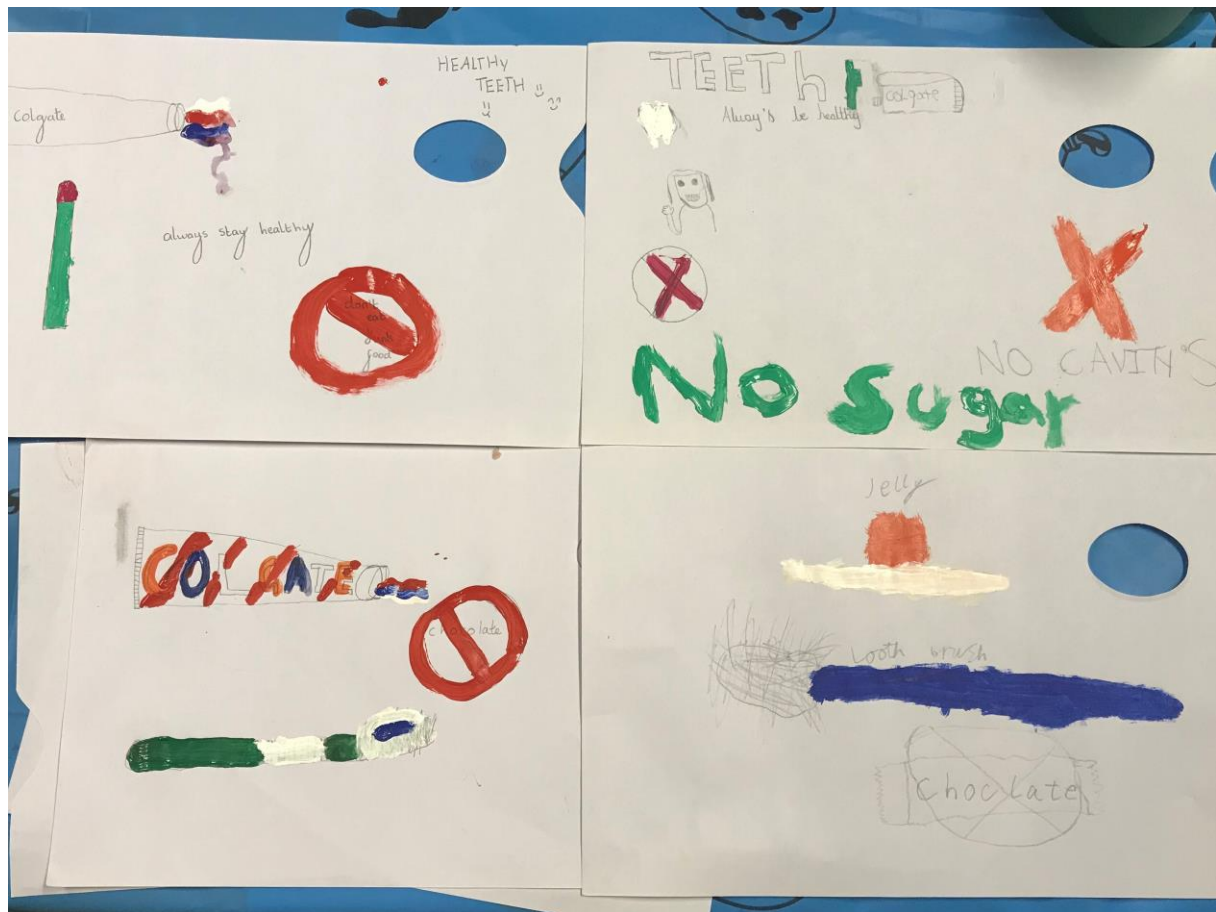
26. How many children aged under 18 live in your household? *Please write in numbers*

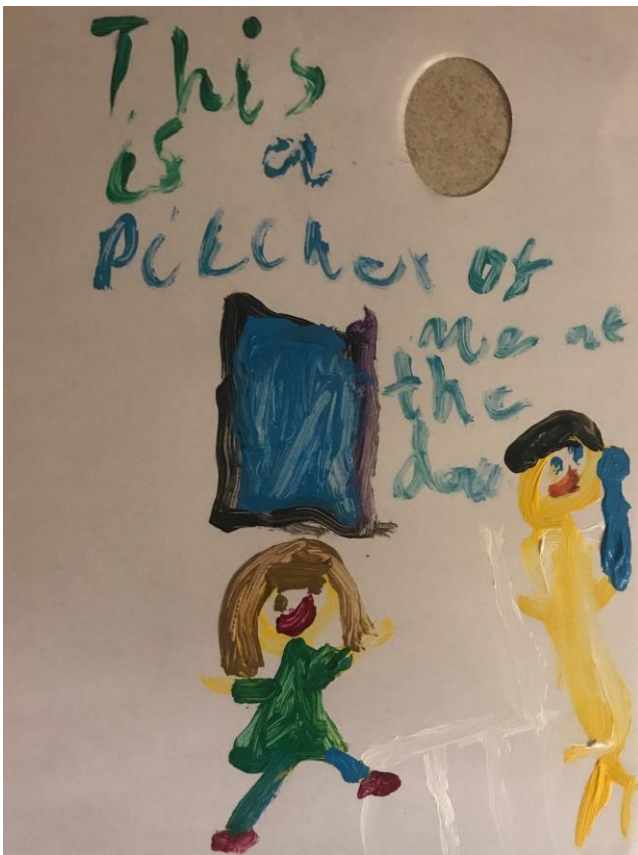
27. What is your highest level of educational qualification?

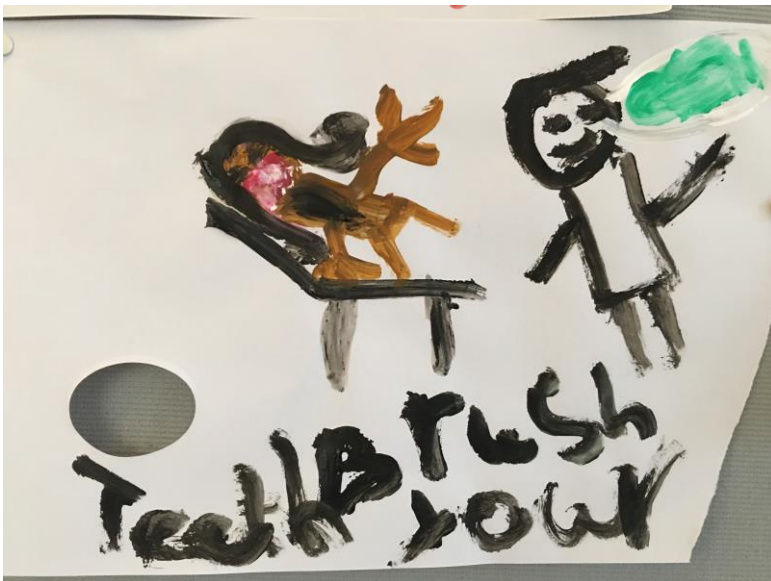
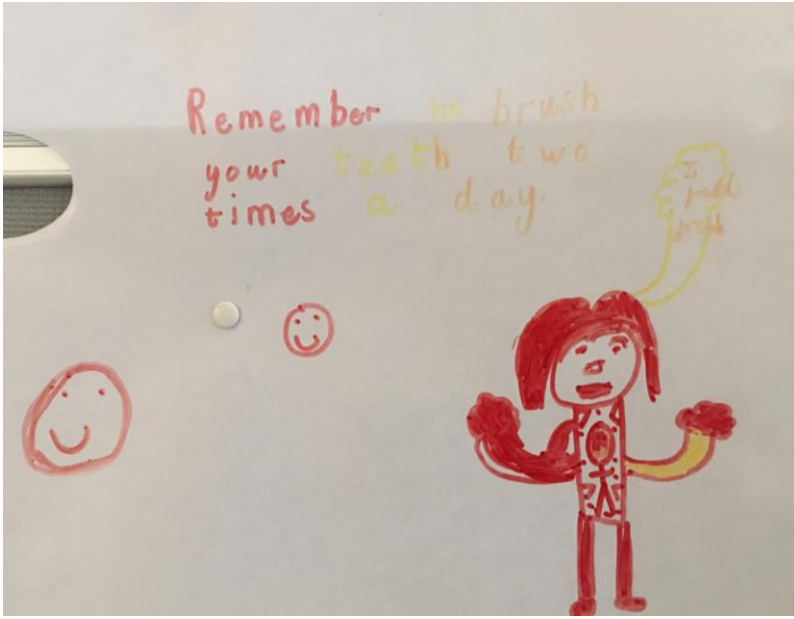
Degree level or above	
Another type of qualification	
No qualifications	



Appendix 5: Paintings from the workshops







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