



Dental decay targets the neglected!

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Designated Doctor Looked after Children,
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Background

- Consultant since 2001
- Seeing general paediatricians in Blyth Valley
- Looked after children from all over Northumberland
 - See all those coming into care
- Advising on those being placed for adoption
 - Most neglected
 - Can't return to birth families
 - Younger children
 - Anecdotally seeing children with 7-9 teeth removed before being placed for adoption (usually under 6y)

Huge proportion with severe dental decay

- 88 teeth from 9 children
- Post-coded
 - 8 out of 9 from non fluoridated areas
- 2½yr old last month:
 - -9 teeth to be extracted following day
 - -couldn't eat
- Decayed baby teeth are painful!
- Youngest child 7 months with their first (only) tooth **ALREADY** decayed

Not inevitable

- North Tyneside LAC also deprived
- Less bad dental decay
- Hartlepool deprived but protected by fluoride in water

Why are looked after children vulnerable?

- Poor diet
 - Pacified with sugar/pop
- Dummies
- Lack of supervision (so no effective tooth brushing)
 - “ Can I brush my teeth now?”
- Not taken to dentist
- Miss health promotion/ school/ nurse
- Neglected so don't signal pain
- Difficult to treat, as frightened and wary!

Interventions

- Giving out tooth brushes may well not reach them
 - Highly mobile
 - Parents don't open post
 - Need support to use
- Parents wary of professionals
 - won't engage with supervised brushing
 - Withhold consent for school-based programmes
- Fluoride paint only useful for those accessing dentist or community programmes
 - Neglected children don't get taken



Only fluoride in water will work!

Neglected children will not respond to consultation!

- By definition they won't be reached by usual routes
- Foster carers/ adopters / parents and social workers all think fluoride *already* in the water
- *No one* against it in many years of daily discussion



Only fluoride in water will work!

- It is an equality issue
- The longer we leave it the more neglected children will suffer