

# Health Secretary welcomes reduction in child tooth decay

The Welsh Oral Health Information Unit (Cardiff University) report, published in partnership with Public Health Wales, shows that the percentage of children experiencing obvious tooth decay has dropped significantly from 45% in 2004/05 to 30 % in 2016/17.

The Welsh Government launched the Designed to Smile campaign in 2008/09 to improve children's oral health and has been piloting a preventive approach to care in dental practices across Wales.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

"I am very pleased to see the progress being made in reducing tooth decay in children. It is obvious the Welsh Government's investment in Designed to Smile and access to preventive dental services is having a real impact across Wales.

However there is no room for complacency. We have revamped our prevention programme to include more help for very young children and their parents and we are also stepping up prevention for older adults."

The Chief Dental Officer for Wales, Colette Bridgman added:

"Dental decay is unpleasant, can be painful to experience, it is costly to treat and yet is largely preventable. Research has shown that dental decay often starts early and therefore early prevention will have the most impact. The evidence is now clear that sustained investment in prevention in services and targeted population programmes can reduce dental decay.

It is important that every young child in Wales is supervised to brush their teeth with family fluoride toothpaste at bedtime, and on one other occasion every day. Having nothing sweet to eat or drink in the last hour before bedtime will also help to protect teeth from decay."