



healthwatch York

Filled to Capacity: NHS Dentistry in York

March 2018

A report based on local people's experience

Contents

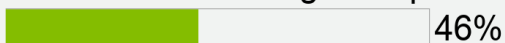
Contents	2
Key Findings	3
What is NHS dentistry?	6
Why is Healthwatch York looking at access to NHS dental services? ...	13
What we did to find out more	21
Survey results	30
Conclusion – A problem of quantity not quality	59
Recommendations	60
Responses from Stakeholder Organisations	61
How to access NHS dentistry	65
Ten Top Tips for getting the most out of your dental appointment	69
Appendices	72
Appendix 1 – Full report: ‘What did people tell us in our work plan survey?’	72
Appendix 2: Full Report: ‘Survey of dentists’ websites in York’	76
Appendix 3: Access to NHS dental services – successfully obtained a dental appointment 2015/16 data for England, Public Health England	81

Key Findings

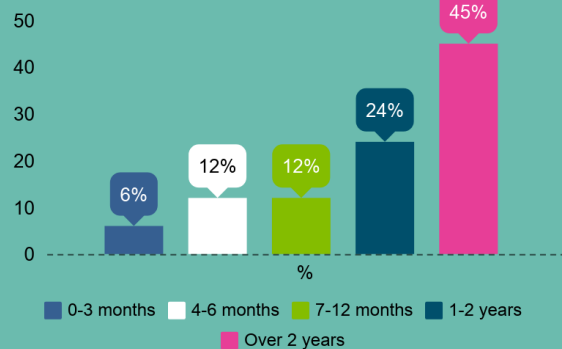
What people told us in our survey

People said the main reason why they didn't have an NHS dentist was because they couldn't find one taking NHS patients

Can't find one taking NHS patients



How long have you been trying to get an NHS dentist?



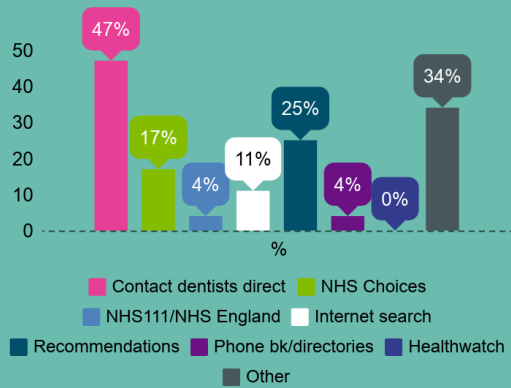
Most people who were looking for an NHS dentist said they had been trying for over two years

Thinking about your most recent appointment with your dentist, how would you rate your experience?

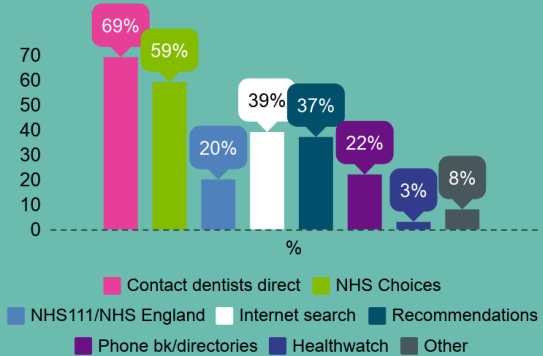


The majority of people said they have had positive experiences when visiting their dentist, and are happy with the quality of treatment they receive

People who have an NHS dentist:
How did you find your NHS dentist?



People who would like an NHS dentist:
Which methods have you used to try to find an NHS dentist?



Ringling around different dental practices in the area until they found a practice accepting NHS patients was the most common way for people to successfully find a dentist.

Reported consequences of not having an NHS dentist:

- pain
- discomfort
- broken teeth
- tooth extractions

90 people said that the cost of dental services had stopped them from getting treatment

Some people said they had to travel long distances to an NHS dentist outside the York area

A lot of people expressed satisfaction with the personal and professional qualities of their dentist

People reported that the NHS Choices website was not up to date, making finding an NHS dentist more difficult

High costs, privatisation, drops in standards and takeovers by large companies were the main themes from negative comments about people's dentists

Designed by:
Piktochart

Note: All percentages (%) have been calculated as the % of the number of people responding to that question. Number of responses can be seen next to the question in the 'Results' section of this report.

What people told us in our survey

We found it hard to access an NHS dentist in York. There was one out of York but I don't have access to a car. We are now with a private dentist but go less often than we should as we can't afford it.

I have had to visit a private dentist recently as I was unable to find an NHS dentist in York and wasn't prepared to travel miles outside of York to a dentist.

Opening hours make it extremely difficult to access appointments. I work full time, and I have asked for an appointment at the end of the day, but was told it was a 9 month wait.

York's lack of dental hospital and its having so few emergency dentists should be a concern to many. I ended up paying to travel outside of York to get an emergency appointment.

I feel the lack of NHS dentists in York is atrocious and the extortionate fees for private treatment puts people like myself off visiting a dentist.

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York

Accessing NHS Dental Services in York

What is NHS dentistry?

NHS dentistry is inspection of oral health and teeth and associated work done by a primary care dental practice with an NHS contract.

Access to NHS dentistry means availability of NHS registered dentists (number of practices/dentists/dentist working hours per head of population). 'Access' also covers:

- Access to information about how to find a dentist
- Advance information about practices, charges and patient criteria (practice websites, NHS sources)
- Availability of appointments for registered patients (waiting times)
- Appropriateness of appointment times (opening times)
- Acceptability of service received (quality of service, punctuality of appointments, complaints processes)
- Inclusion or exclusion of subgroups (payment exempt categories – children, pregnant women, benefit claimants)
- Geographic accessibility (distance, travel time)
- Accessible built environment including signage (disability friendly)
- Access to communication services at dental practices (language interpreters, BSL interpreters, Easy-reads)
- Affordability (perceived and actual)
- Attitude of staff (on the phone and in person)

What should people expect from NHS dentistry?

NHS England says that everyone should be able to access good quality NHS dental services.¹ In order for this to happen, people first have to

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/dentists/Pages/find-an-NHS-dentist.aspx>

find an NHS dental practice that is convenient to them, meets accessibility requirements, and has appointments available.

Once an appointment has been made, people need timely and clear information about the treatments they can have, how much they should cost, and any financial help they might be able to get.

National data tell us that most people who try to make an NHS dental appointment are successful. The majority of those who try feel positive about their experience.²

However, Healthwatch England reports that “the experiences people have shared with local Healthwatch tells us that there are still some problems in some areas”.

Healthwatch England Access to NHS Dental Services report, November 2016

Healthwatch England gathered the findings from local Healthwatch on access to dentistry services, and produced a report in November 2016. They did this to make sure that the experiences of patients and the wider public would be heard by national bodies, and are used to help shape the commissioning and regulation of dental services in the future.

People reported in the NHS England (2016) Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey January to March 2016 that generally they are able to make an NHS dental appointment when they try to, and are satisfied with their experience of NHS dentistry. This is consistent with the findings from national polling about access to NHS dentistry by Healthwatch England in 2016, and reviews of NHS dentists left by patients on local Healthwatch websites.

² <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/GP-Survey-Dental-Results-Summary-Y11.pdf>

Findings from local Healthwatch across the country, however, suggest that these national surveys and reviews are limited, and there are some areas of the country where accessing dentistry is more difficult.

After looking at evidence from local Healthwatch, Healthwatch England identified three groups of patients as more at risk of missing out on accessing NHS dentistry:

- “People living in areas where commissioning of NHS treatment has not kept up with changes in demand
- People in particular groups who may find it difficult to access high street dentists (such as care home residents)
- People who don’t currently go to the dentist at all, who attend only when they are having problems”³

Key issues from the Healthwatch England report:

- The need to balance local demand and supply
- Reaching groups of individuals who may be missing out on accessing NHS dental services, such as homeless people, disabled patients and care home residents
- Difficulties some have in finding a dentist
- Access to information for patients, for example on what treatments patients can access on the NHS
- Complaints – the need for clearly signposted feedback and complaints procedures for NHS and private dentists

The Healthwatch England report concludes that the following areas need work in order to address some of the issues patients are facing when accessing NHS dentistry:

- Increasing the flexibility of dental commissioning where local needs have changed rapidly

³ Access to NHS Dental Services: What people told local Healthwatch, November 2016, p. 3
https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.co.uk/files/access_to_nhs_dental_services_-_what_people_told_local_healthwatch.pdf

- Ensuring that patients get the information they need about oral health, the treatments they can get on the NHS, and how to give feedback or make a complaint
- Preventing the needs of patients from vulnerable groups, such as refugees or those living in care homes, from falling through the cracks⁴

How is NHS dentistry funded?

NHS England is responsible for funding NHS dental activity. It currently commissions high street NHS dentists to provide a set number of Units of Dental Activity (UDAs) each year. UDAs represent what needs to be done during a visit to the dentist. For example, an examination may be one UDA, a filling may be 3 UDAs, and dentures may be 12 UDAs.

NHS England has 14 Local Offices that commission NHS dental activity. They decide how many UDAs they will commission for their area. The Yorkshire and Humber Local Office covers the York area.

The value of a UDA is agreed locally and differing courses of treatment are 'worth' differing numbers of UDAs. These are linked to the three 'Bands' of patient charge for NHS dental treatment. For example, if a patient has an NHS filling they will pay £53.90 for a Band 2 treatment, which earns the dentist three UDAs.

In the current contract there are no financial incentives for dentists to keep patients disease-free. Instead, all payment is for treating active disease.

⁴ Access to NHS Dental Services: What people told local Healthwatch, November 2016, p. 3
https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.co.uk/files/access_to_nhs_dental_services_-_what_people_told_local_healthwatch.pdf

A new NHS dental contract?

“A new NHS dental contract is in development and may start to be introduced from 2018-19. New ways of paying dentists for their work are also being tested. For patients the contracts will mean that each person has their own care plan, which will aim to improve their overall dental health, not just treat problems. The new contract is an opportunity to improve the nation’s dental health over the long term.

Under the new contract, dentists would be paid to prevent disease from developing in the first place. In the practices testing the new approach, dentists are giving all patients an initial assessment of their oral health.

The patient then gets a Red, Amber or Green rating, which is used to produce a personalised plan. The plan shows how they can take action to improve their oral health and prevent future problems. The timing of the next assessment is also set in accordance with the patient’s oral health and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance. (NICE Guidance: Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews, October 2004)

The Department of Health will evaluate this new approach and may start to roll it out nationally from 2018-19, if it is successful.”

5

⁵ https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.co.uk/files/access_to_nhs_dental_services_-_what_people_told_local_healthwatch.pdf

National press coverage

There have been a number of news articles about NHS dentistry over the past few years. Most recently, there have been reports of a rise in the number of children having tooth extractions.

The Local Government Association (LGA) reported

“New figures show there were nearly 43,000 hospital operations to remove teeth in teenagers and children last year (2016/17) – equating to 170 a day.

There were 42,911 extractions of multiple teeth in under 18s in England in 2016/17 at a cost of £36.2 million, according to new NHS spending data. This is a 17% increase on the 36,833 in 2012/13. The total cost to the NHS of these operations since 2012 is £165 million.

The severity of the tooth decay means that the treatment has to be undertaken in a hospital under general anaesthetic, rather than a dentist.”⁶

The Chairman of the LGA’s Community Wellbeing Board, Izzi Seccombe, said that “untreated dental care remains one of the most prevalent diseases affecting children and young people’s ability to speak, eat, play and socialise.

These figures also highlight how regular check-ups at a dentist can help prevent tooth decay and the need for hospital treatment.”⁷

⁶ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/170-operations-day-remove-rotten-teeth-children>

⁷ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/170-operations-day-remove-rotten-teeth-children>

National press investigations

In September 2017, the BBC looked at NHS Choices, which allows the public to see which dentists are currently accepting NHS patients.⁸ They did a data analysis of over 7,000 dental practices in England listed on the NHS Choices website. They reported that of the 2,500 practices which displayed information about whether they were currently accepting NHS patients, 48% were not accepting new adult patients, and 40% were not accepting new child patients. This also means just under 65% of practices did not display information. In total 81% of practices either did not display the information or were not accepting patients.

The Times did a similar study of the data on NHS Choices on NHS dentistry in November 2017. They said that “of those surgeries with information on NHS Choices about whether they are accepting new NHS patients, 49% are currently not taking on new adults.”

“Some 42% are refusing to see new children entirely, with others only accepting them if they have a parent who is a patient. Research by the Times suggests these figures are likely to be representative of the wider picture.”⁹

The Times found that the NHS Choices website only holds information for 40% of surgeries, noting that this means “it can be hard for patients to find those dentists with places, and there is often no alternative but to ring round individual surgeries.”¹⁰

York is one of 24 areas where the Times found that 100% of practices which had information on NHS Choices said they were not taking on NHS patients.

The Times reported that “dentists said local health service bosses were simply not funding enough services to meet population needs”, and “in

⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-41113507>

⁹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/millions-denied-an-nhs-dentist-xfhbgz0>

¹⁰ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/millions-denied-an-nhs-dentist-xfhbgz0>

some areas, there is a clear mismatch between the amount of dentistry local people need and what local NHS bosses have funded.”¹¹

This issue around access to NHS dentistry was also raised in a Parliamentary debate in September 2017.¹²

Why is Healthwatch York looking at access to NHS dental services?

Healthwatch York has been hearing from the public about issues regarding dentistry since we opened in 2013. The number of issues we receive about dentistry has been increasing over the period 2015 to 2017. We also received reports that the NHS Choices website was not up to date with details about which dentists were or were not accepting NHS patients.

A number of individuals have commented on the difficulty of finding a dentist taking on NHS patients, and many individuals told us their experience of how not having an NHS dentist affected them. Individuals explained the impact of not being able to access a dentist, both on them as individuals and on their family. For example: having to travel outside the York area to see an NHS dentist, putting up with pain, developing further dental problems as a result of not being able to visit an NHS dentist.

We included access to NHS dentistry in our 2017/18 work plan survey because it was one of the main issues people contacted us about. The majority of respondents selected this as the top priority for Healthwatch York in 2017/18.

¹¹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/millions-denied-an-nhs-dentist-xfhbgz0>

¹² <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-09-12/debates/1709132000001/AccessToNHSDentists>

What is happening locally?

It is possible to look at national data to see what is going on in York with regards to access to NHS dentistry.

Table 1 shows that 92.5% of people trying to access NHS dental services in York successfully obtained a dental appointment in 2015/16. This was lower than the England average, which is 94.7%.

Table 1: Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment (2015/16) ¹³				
Indicator	Period	Count	York	England
			Value	Value
Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment	2015/16	883	92.5%	94.7%

Table 2 shows that in the last two years in the NHS Vale of York CCG area 23% of those trying to get an NHS dental appointment at a dental surgery that they had not been to before were unsuccessful.¹⁴

Table 2: Number of respondents who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, and succeeded, and whether it was a dental practice they had been to before (January to March 2017) ¹⁵								
Last time you tried to get an NHS dental appointment, was it with a dental practice you have been to before for NHS dental care?								
Where	Yes, been there before				No, not been there before			
	Success in getting appointment				Success in getting appointment			
	Total responses (weighted) ^{2,3}	% Yes	% No	% Can't remember	Total responses (weighted) ^{2,3}	% Yes	% No	% Can't remember
NHS Vale of York	2,855	96%	3%	1%	202	77%	23%	1%

¹³<http://www.digital.nhs.uk/searchcatalogue?q=title%3A%22nhs+outcomes+frameworks+indicators%22&area=&size=10&sort=Relevance>

¹⁴https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps_dent_y111864861/

¹⁵https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps_dent_y111864861/

Table 3 shows that when you look at York in comparison to other areas in the Yorkshire and Humber region, York is third worst, in front of Bradford and North Lincolnshire.

Table 3: Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment, 2015/16, Yorkshire and Humber¹⁶

		Yorkshire and the Humber region															
	Period	England	Barnsley	Bradford	Calderdale	Doncaster	East Riding of Yorkshire	Kingston upon Hull	Kirklees	Leeds	North East Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	North Yorkshire	Rotherham	Sheffield	Wakefield	York
Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment	2015/16	94.7	96.8	88.7	93.7	97.3	95.5	96.7	93.9	93.2	94.5	88.4	94.0	97.0	95.8	94.3	92.5

When looking at this in comparison to the whole of England, York is 24th worst.¹⁷ Please see appendix 3 for the full table.

This seems to suggest there is an issue in the York area, ¹⁸ particularly when looking at it alongside the findings from recent investigations by the BBC and The Times into the data from NHS Choices about dentists who are accepting NHS patients.

¹⁶ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/comm-assets/data#page/3/gid/1000031/pat/6/par/E12000003/ati/102/are/E06000014/iid/92785/age/1/sex/4>

¹⁷ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/comm-assets/data#page/3/gid/1000031/pat/6/par/E12000003/ati/102/are/E06000014/iid/92785/age/1/sex/4>

¹⁸ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/millions-denied-an-nhs-dentist-xfhbgzIz0;>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-41113507>

NHS dental activity commissioned for York

NHS England statistics show that there has been a decrease in the number of Units of Dental Activity commissioned for Yorkshire and Humber Local Office over the last year. This can be seen in the table below.

Table 4: Units of Dental Activity Commissioned, Quarterly and Annual Changes September 2016 - September 2017, England, Local Offices¹⁹

Yorkshire and the Humber Local Office			
Total UDAs September 2016	Total UDAs September 2017	Counts Change	% Change
9,624,000	9,403,000	-221,000	-2.3%

When compared to other areas, Yorkshire and Humber had the third highest annual decrease in UDAs in England between September 2016 and September 2017.

The reason for the reduction in UDAs for the Yorkshire and Humber area is not clear, and the impact this may have on future access to NHS dentistry is uncertain.

Table 5: Units of Dental Activity Commissioned, Quarterly and Annual Changes September 2016 - September 2017, England, Local Offices²⁰

	Total UDAs (000s)	Quarterly change		Annual change	
		Counts (000s)	% Change	Counts (000s)	% Change
England	84,047	-23	0.0%	-454	-0.5%
Q74 Cumbria and North East	5,702	3	0.1%	-319	-5.3%
Q84 Lancashire and South Cumbria	2,825	-1	0.0%	314	12.5%
Q72 Yorkshire and the Humber	9,403	-143	-1.5%	-221	-2.3%
Q83 Greater Manchester	5,063	-11	-0.2%	2	0.0%
Q75 Cheshire and Merseyside	4,839	-9	-0.2%	0	0.0%
Q78 Central Midlands	6,950	-37	-0.5%	17	0.2%
Q76 North Midlands	5,946	-15	-0.3%	-47	-0.8%
Q79 East	6,900	50	0.7%	-86	-1.2%
Q77 West Midlands	6,810	19	0.3%	-42	-0.6%
Q71 London	12,525	140	1.1%	88	0.7%
Q82 South Central	4,865	-58	-1.2%	-107	-2.1%
Q81 South East	6,561	-6	-0.1%	-28	-0.4%
Q80 South West	5,660	44	0.8%	-23	-0.4%
Q70 Wessex	4,183	-26	-0.6%	-146	-3.4%

¹⁹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/11/02/dc017856sep17/>

²⁰ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/11/02/dc017856sep17/>

Ambulance call outs for the York area

We requested information regarding the number of calls Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust (YAS NHS Trust) received about dentistry and oral health. In order to get relevant information, we identified 13 postcodes (YO1, YO10, YO19, YO23, YO24, YO26, YO31, YO32, YO41, YO60, YO90, YO91) that best covered the York area.

The YAS NHS Trust came back to us explaining that they searched their database using the terms: ‘Dentist’, ‘Dental’, ‘Oral’, ‘Gum’, ‘Tooth’, ‘Teeth’, as they did not record ‘Dentistry’ as a specific problem when receiving calls.

The information they gave us can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Calls received by Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust between 01 April 2016 and 31 March 2017			
	Calls regarding dentistry	Total number of calls	Percentage of Total
999 calls	43	60,310	0.07%
111 calls	2858	43,303	6.6%

There were only a very small number of calls to 999 fitting the terms YAS NHS Trust identified as relating to dentistry. However, 6.6% of calls to 111 were identified as relating to dentistry. This equates to just less than 8 calls per day.

Whilst this percentage is small, the number of calls to 111 seems high given that the population of York is estimated to be around 208,000 people.²¹

²¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/lowersuperoutputareamidyearpopulationestimates>

A&E attendance at York Teaching Hospital

Table 7: A&E Attendance and Diagnosis between the period 01/04/2017 and 01/01/2018

Period (Month beginning)	Not Dental		Dental related reasons	
	Attendances	Final £	Attendances	Final £
01/04/2017	5031	£695,959	36	£4,238
01/05/2017	5535	£745,166	33	£4,252
01/06/2017	5309	£730,443	32	£3,762
01/07/2017	5360	£736,256	50	£6,319
01/08/2017	4935	£684,576	31	£3,837
01/09/2017	5075	£696,830	50	£5,738
01/10/2017	5659	£754,415	32	£3,830
01/11/2017	5410	£719,895	25	£2,881
01/12/2017	5474	£739,755	35	£4,483
Grand Total	47793	£6,503,880	324	£39,340

Table 8: Result of visits to A&E for dental related reasons between the period 01/04/2017 and 01/01/2018

	Attendances	Final £
Admitted to a hospital bed/became a lodged patient of the same health care provider	56	£8,534
Discharged - did not require any follow up treatment	213	£24,934
Discharged - follow up treatment to be provided by general practitioner	12	£1,406
Left department before being treated	4	£428
Referred to A&E clinic	4	£428
Referred to fracture clinic	1	£146
Referred to other health care professional	21	£1,908
Referred to other out-patient clinic	13	£1,555
Grand Total	324	£39,340

Data from the NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS VoYCCG) shows that between April 2017 and January 2018, there were 324 visits to A&E for dental related reasons. This is only 0.7% of all visits

to A&E during this period. This averages out at around 1 to 2 visits per day. The cost of this is 0.6% of the total cost of all visits to A&E during this period.

NHS VoYCCG notes that NHS111 should not divert individuals calling them with dental related issues to A&E. This means those visiting A&E are likely to be in addition to those calling NHS111.

The majority of those attending A&E for dental related reasons during this period were discharged without requiring any follow up treatment (66%). This suggests that many of those who turn up at A&E for dental related reasons may be unsure of where else to go.

Student Health Needs Assessment for York

The City of York Council's public health team looked into student health and student use of health services in the York.²² One area they looked at was dental health.

They said that: "Students report very limited access to NHS dental services in York. This is of most concern regarding emergency dental treatment, with very poor access reported by students and stakeholders."

They also stated that: "students reported being actively discouraged from trying to register with a dentist in York. It was felt this was due to the waiting lists being so long that they were unlikely to be offered registration during the few years they were here."

They reported that "dental problems are the most common cause of calls to NHS 111 by 18-25 year olds in York (12.1% of calls in 2015/16, 13.6% in 2014/15). This suggests that there is a need for better

²² <http://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s115873/Annex%20B%20-%20ONLINE%20ONLY%20-%20York%20SHNA%20full%20report%20FINAL%2026-06.pdf>

signposting to emergency dental care, as well as ensuring students take better care of their oral health to prevent the need for emergency treatment.”

This suggests that accessing NHS dentistry is a problem for the students of York.

Hospital admissions for dental treatment

Table 9 shows the results of oral surveys about admissions for dental treatment. These surveys are all about children’s oral health.

The results of these show that although York is higher than the England average for 4 out of 7 indicators, it is worse for the proportion of twelve year olds free from dental decay.

Table 9: Oral Health survey data for hospital admissions for dental treatment Overview ²³

Compared with benchmark: Better Similar Worse Lower Similar Higher Not compared

Indicator	Period	England	Yorkshire and the Humber region	Barnsley	Bradford	Calderdale	Craven	Doncaster	East Riding of Yorkshire	Hambleton	Harrogate	Kingsdon upon Hull	Kirkstree	Leeds	North East Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire	Richmondshire	Rotherham	Ryedale	Scarborough	Selby	Sheffield	Wakefield	York
4.02 - Proportion of five year old children free from dental decay	2014/15	75.2	71.5	69.8	62.5	70.7	78.2	69.0	76.9	78.8	80.4	62.2	71.1	68.6	70.1	81.9	79.2	71.1	83.0	77.6	77.3	68.6	63.5	83.6
dmft (decayed, missing or filled teeth) in five year olds	2014/15	0.84	-	1.06	1.50	1.08	0.61	1.11	0.60	0.71	0.55	1.55	1.07	1.10	1.07	0.52	0.67	1.02	0.54	0.74	0.56	1.11	1.65	0.54
Incisor caries prevalence in three year olds	2012/13	3.9	4.8	6.6	7.2	5.6	2.8	3.3	2.8	3.5	3.1	1.2	6.2	7.5	5.7	2.6	2.8	6.1	2.2	0.0	1.4	1.8	7.2	1.8
Proportion of three year olds free from dental decay	2012/13	88.4	87.4	88.2	83.3	87.9	90.1	91.1	96.1	91.5	91.2	84.6	84.7	80.6	85.0	91.9	94.5	88.5	90.1	93.3	90.9	91.6	80.2	93.1
dmft in three year olds	2012/13	0.36	0.39	0.44	0.58	0.42	0.28	0.32	0.16	0.22	0.26	0.32	0.60	0.49	0.37	0.15	0.20	0.46	0.18	0.13	0.19	0.23	0.51	0.21
Proportion of twelve year olds free from dental decay	2008/09	66.4	-	57.0	47.3	55.7	61.9	46.0	62.0	48.5	63.6	60.9	63.6	54.3	49.0	66.1	51.3	55.4	59.2	43.8	64.4	58.5	59.9	59.3
DMFT in twelve year olds	2008/09	0.74	-	0.99	1.39	1.30	0.76	1.27	0.79	1.23	0.69	0.84	0.91	1.08	1.15	0.72	1.32	1.00	0.87	1.41	0.72	0.98	1.10	0.95

²³ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/oral-health/data#page/1/gid/1938133053/pat/6/par/E1200003/ati/101/are/E0600014>

Data for England shows that York is about average for the number of hospital ‘episodes’ of children age 0 to 19 years old, for one or more ‘baby’ (primary) or ‘adult’ (permanent) teeth.²⁴

Table 10: Finished Consultant Episodes (FCEs)* as % of Population (all diagnoses)²⁵

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
York	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
England	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%

*An FCE is the period a patient spends under the care of a single hospital consultant

What we did to find out more

What people told us in our work plan survey

The Healthwatch York work plan survey gave people a choice of three topics for us to explore in 2017. We asked those who responded to the survey to put a tick against the topic they would like us to focus on, and to tell us briefly in their own words why they chose that topic.

Most votes (57 out of 153) went to the topic: ‘Looking at how easy it is to register with a dentist, make appointments, and get NHS treatment in York’, summarised as ‘Access to dentistry’.

36 of the 57 people who chose access to dentistry explained why they made that choice. Of those, 19 people cited a *personal* experience relating to dentistry in York.

The reasons for choosing access to dentistry fell into four main groups:

- Personal experience of getting a dentist

²⁴ <http://www.nwph.net/dentalhealth/Extractions.aspx>

²⁵ <http://www.nwph.net/dentalhealth/Extractions.aspx>

- Beliefs or awareness about the difficulty generally faced in getting a dentist
- Consequences of limited access to and availability of NHS dentistry
- Universal rights of access to NHS dentistry and health and wellbeing

Personal experience of difficulty getting a dentist

It appears from personal experiences reported that the difficulty of getting a dentist is acute for people who have moved to York.

People told us:

- “I’ve had problems getting registered with a dentist here in York”
- “Difficulty accessing NHS dentist when moving to the area”
- “Very difficult to get a dentist when we arrived in York”
- “We found it impossible to access an NHS dentist in York”
- “I have been unable to find a NHS dentist in York”
- “When [relative] came to live with us I found I could not register her with an NHS dentist”

Beliefs or awareness about the difficulty generally faced in getting a dentist

People told us that they believed or knew that finding a dentist is difficult.

Almost all comments referred to NHS dentists. Perceptions ranged from “I think that people find it hard to find an NHS dentist” to a definite “waiting lists are full”.

There were strong views that “too many people are unable to register with an NHS dentist in York” and “the lack of NHS dentists in York is appalling”.

Consequences of limited access to and availability of NHS dentistry

People told of the impact on their dental health when they could not access an NHS dentist.

- No treatment when “in desperate need” but without money to go privately
- Cutting down on visits, not going as often, and missing essential follow-up treatments because they could not afford them were consequences of seeing a private dentist instead of an NHS dentist
- Impact on children’s dental health

Universal rights of access to NHS dentistry and health and wellbeing

People said the topic of access to dental services is important. Some indicated that it was worth exploring because dentists “are more universally of interest” and “everyone needs a dentist”.

Rights and fairness of access were raised:

- “It would be good to insist that all patients have a right to an NHS dentist”
- “Dental services are very important to health and wellbeing so we should all be able to get treatment under the NHS”

There was also a call to “increase access to Community Dental Services for children with special needs”.

Please see Appendix 1 for the full report on ‘What people told us in our work plan survey’.

Themes from our online Feedback Centre

Healthwatch York runs an online Feedback Centre where the public can rate and review services across York.

We looked at the reviews of dental services on the Feedback Centre between 2013 and 2017 to see if they could tell us anything about access to dentistry in York. 15 out of the 17 reviews were positive. One was mixed. One was negative.

The negative comment included concerns following the take-over of a practice by a corporate company. The review stated that the phone was never answered, check-up appointments were short, and that problems with their children's teeth had been missed. The mixed review included comments about lack of parking for both cars and bicycles. There was an observation that receptionists were often very busy and unable to answer the phone.

Positive reviews expressed satisfaction with the dental care people had received. Comments included: "a caring and considerate service"; "staff are friendly and helpful"; "appointments run to time"; "they explain any treatment required in a friendly and professional way"; "Urgent appointments are done within the day"; "engages patients as active and informed partners in their own dental health"; "accommodates my fears, wishes and requests".

These reviews show that once able to access a dentist, the care is good. However, they don't provide much information on people's experiences of accessing dentistry in York. This may be due to people only using the feedback centre once they have found a dentist.

Issues log

We reviewed our issues log for issues regarding dentistry from August 2013 to the end of November 2017.

Themes from the comments include:

- Reports of long waits and not being able to find an NHS dentist since we started in 2013.
- Reports of NHS Choices website not being up to date – reports that it says a practice is taking NHS adults, but when they enquire the practice is not.

The impact of lack of access to NHS dentistry included:

- Poor fitting dentures
- Long commutes to dentists outside the York area
- Paying for the high cost of private treatment
- Putting up with pain
- Frequent visits to community dentist for emergency appointments; families having to visit multiple dentists
- Having to travel to pick up prescriptions

Many of the enquiries we have received suggest there is little awareness of community dentists and emergency appointments.

On 5 January 2018, we received a call from someone seeking an NHS dentist. When we checked NHS Choices, there were no dentists in York taking on NHS patients. The nearest dentist was in Wetherby. This confirms the work undertaken by the Times, which identified York as one of 24 areas where no dentists were taking on NHS patients.

Survey of dentists' websites in York

We completed a survey of dental websites in York. Our aim was to check how well they met the guidance to dentists on advertising from the General Dental Council (GDC), and to check for information on whether the practice was currently accepting NHS patients.²⁶

Summary and Overview

Most dental practices in York had websites and, in general, (though not universally) the websites were easy to navigate. They provide useful information for patients about:

- The location of the practice
- The dental team
- How to make contact
- Fees
- Opening hours
- The procedures available
- Whether it was possible to get emergency appointments.

All of the websites complied with GDC guidelines in giving their address and telephone number, but a minority did not give an email address. Only around half of websites gave an address or link to the GDC. A substantial minority did not give details of a complaints procedure, or information about the independent organisations to whom dissatisfied patients could complain. To omit this information is not in accordance with GDC guidelines. Giving quotes from patient feedback on the website is not a substitute.

Investigation of CQC lists in October 2017 uncovered one further dentist in York not previously listed on the Healthwatch York website. The website for this practice was limited. It did not state explicitly whether the

²⁶ [https://www.gdc-uk.org/api/files/Guidance%20on%20advertising%20\(Sept%202013\).pdf](https://www.gdc-uk.org/api/files/Guidance%20on%20advertising%20(Sept%202013).pdf)

practice was private or mixed but from the description it appeared to be private. No fees were given. There was no link to the GDC website, nor any details of a complaints procedure.

Practices with late evening opening or Saturday appointments by arrangement could be found. But they were in the minority. Most, but not all, private practices gave up to date lists of pay as you go fees and varying amounts of detail about payment plans.

Out of the 27 websites covering 30 practices, 18 practices were wholly private. Of the 8 practices who described themselves as mixed, only 2 stated without qualification that they were currently accepting new NHS patients. This suggests that access to NHS dentistry in York is extremely limited, although not wholly non-existent (if the information on websites is correct). As websites rarely, if ever, gave the date when they were most recently updated it is difficult to assess whether information is current.

To read the full report, please see Appendix 2.

Telephoning dental practices

In order to check what the current offer was in York, we identified and contacted dentists across the city by telephone in Nov/Dec 2017.

Of the 40 identified, 19 responded, 1 practice refused to take part and others that were not able to respond at that time were contacted by email. No responses to the emailed surveys were received.

The majority of dental practices that responded were private with only 6 of the 19 reporting they were mixed (taking private and NHS patients). None of these were able to say how many adult or child places they had. Only one practice was currently accepting NHS patients and this was

only available for children. A couple of practices would take families if there was space, two would take children only for NHS work.

Five practices said they had waiting lists and were currently accepting people onto the list. Waiting time was reported by 3 practices only, and ranged from 0 – 12 months.

NHS Choices is often a route people are directed towards to find a dentist. Five of the practices said they updated their information on NHS Choices, although one stated that the details were not being properly updated by NHS Choices. Only 4 practices said they updated their own website regularly to say if they were accepting new NHS patients.

Since responses were only received from 19 practices it is not possible to draw conclusions as several of the practices that did not respond may be NHS or mixed.

York Press coverage

York Press published an article on the initial findings from our survey, Access to NHS Dentistry in York.²⁷ The article included a comment from Moira Dumma, the director of Commissioning Operations for NHS England in Yorkshire and the Humber. She reported that the NHS is committed to finding people a dentist, and is currently reviewing access and looking at how additional capacity can be introduced. She said: “We are looking both in-hours and out of hours services and at how people can be better signposted to the most appropriate services. We will be paying particular attention to areas where we know this is particularly challenging”.

²⁷ www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/15518311.York_families_are_waiting_more_than_2_years_for_a_dentist/

Comments from the public on the online version of this article emphasise the difficulty some people have when trying to access NHS dentistry services.

One individual reported: “And when you get an NHS dentist it is nowhere near where you live, or requires the cost of a bus ride to town or a hefty parking charge”.

Another said that “Finally after 18 years of living in York... despite medical problems associated with a genetic form of vitamin D deficiency/calcium problems, I have an NHS dentist.” They reported having “serious pain for months”.

Comments by other people included:

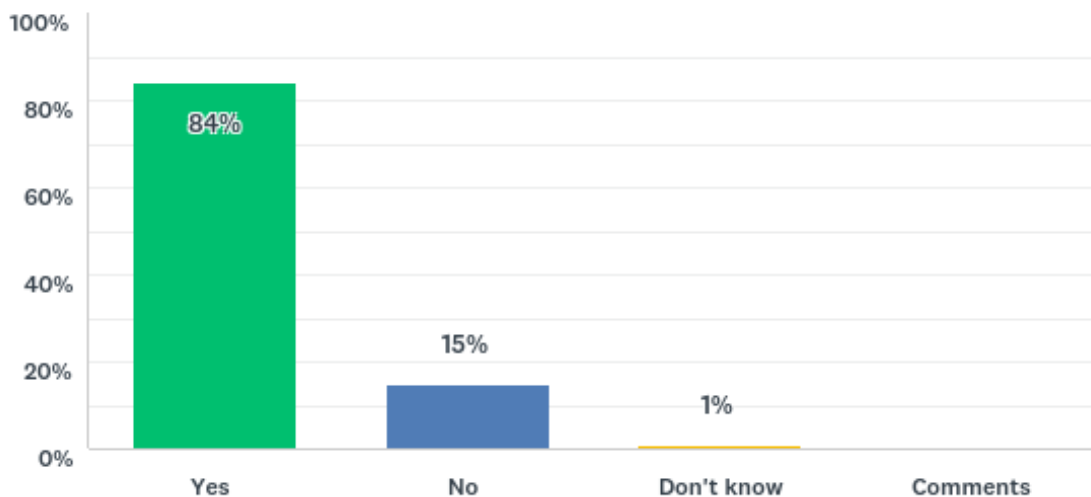
- “It’s not only finding a dentist taking NHS patients that is the problem. Out of hours emergency dental care is an issue too. A friend of mine got excruciating toothache one Friday evening. His practice was shut over the weekend so he called 111 only to be told that the nearest emergency dentist available for the York area was in Hull! He ended up at A & E stretching an already overloaded department further.”
- “There’s plenty of availability for private treatments – same day in some cases. Whereas NHS appointments are notoriously hard to come by.”

Survey results

Please note, the number of respondents for each question has been stated next to the question before the summary of the results for that question is explained. E.g. **Q.1 Do you have a dentist?** (370 respondents).

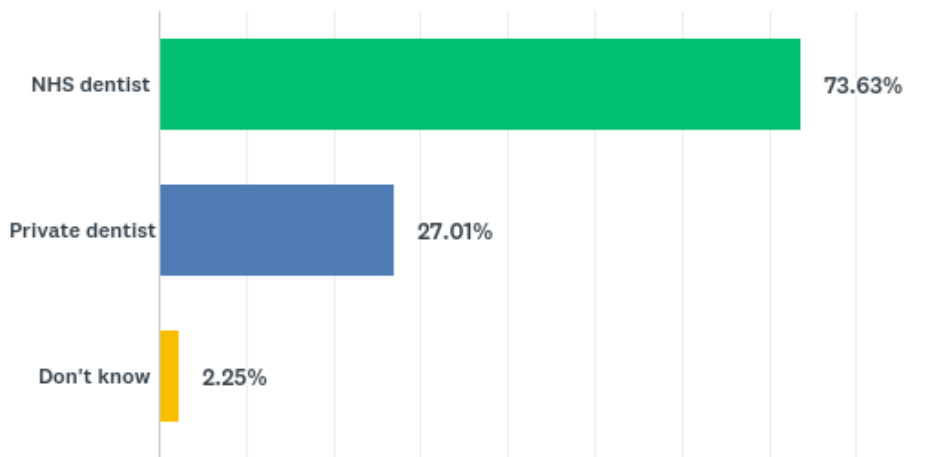
All percentages (%) seen in the summary of the results for each question have been calculated as the % of the number of people responding to that question.

Q1. Do you have a dentist? (370 respondents)



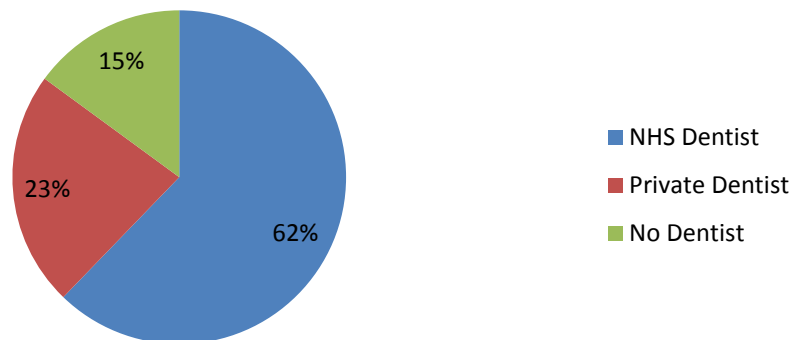
84% (312 out of 370) of those who answered this question said they had a dentist.

Q.2 Is your dentist an NHS dentist or a private dentist? (311 respondents)



We have collated the data for questions 1 and 2 to understand who has a dentist and what type of dentist they have.

Dentists used by survey respondents



NHS dentist	229	62%
Private Dentist	84	23%
No dentist	55	15%
Total	368	

The majority of respondents had an NHS dentist. Around 1 in 4 had a private dentist. A significant minority had no dentist at all.

Q3. Why don't you have an NHS dentist? (129 respondents, 171 responses selected in answer to the question)

Those who did not have an NHS dentist were asked why this was so. People were able to give more than one reason.

Can't find a dentist taking on NHS patients	59	46%
Chose to stay with dentist who went private	27	21%
Used to have one but they went private	14	11%
Chose to have private treatment	20	16%
Used to have one but was taken off the list	17	13%
Found an NHS dentist but too far to travel	12	9%
Don't know how to find one	11	9%
On a waiting list	8	6%
Don't need or want one	3	2%

Very few people (16%) had positively opted for private treatment.

Most commonly people reported that they could not find an NHS dentist, or they used to have an NHS dentist who had changed to being private.

Other difficulties included being taken off an existing list or finding that it was too far to travel to an NHS dentist.

A small number of people said they did not know how to find an NHS dentist.

Comments included:

- "I did have a dentist before I moved areas. I can't find one in my area taking on NHS patients. I call round every few months but no luck as of yet."

- “Went to live in Spain so was taken off the list of the dentist I was with. Have not needed one until a few months ago but cannot find one taking NHS patients.”
- “Couldn't find an NHS dentist when I finished University and had to go private with the dentist I was already signed up with.”
- “Live in York and requested an NHS dentist. Was on a waiting list for 6 months and was then offered the nearest option in Catterick. I chose to go private rather than travel.”

Q4. How long have you been trying to get an NHS dentist? (104 respondents)

People without an NHS dentist were asked how long they had been trying to get an NHS dentist. 104 people answered this question although, of these, 38 (37%) said they were not looking.

<i>Q4. People who did not have an NHS dentist – of those who were looking, how long had they been looking?</i>		
0-3 months	4	6%
4-6 months	8	12%
7-12 months	8	12%
1-2 years	16	24%
Over 2 years	30	45%
Total people looking	66	

Just over one third of people who answered this question had given up looking. Of those who were still looking, almost half had been looking for more than two years.

Comments included:

- “Since we moved to York Nov 2013”
- “Gave up trying to get one”

Q.5 and Q.7 have been grouped together to enable comparison between the methods used by those who successfully found an NHS dentist and those who have not.

- **Q.5 Which of the following have you tried to find an NHS dentist? (87 respondents)**
- **Q.7 How did you find your NHS dentist? (175 respondents)**

Question 5 was asked to those who did not have an NHS dentist. Question 7 was asked to those who did have an NHS dentist. People could indicate use of more than one method for both questions.

People who did not have an NHS dentist seem to have tried many more methods than people who did have an NHS dentist.

One individual who had not been able to find an NHS dentist described the process of trying to find an NHS dentist:

“Printed NHS choices list of York dentists. Out of 20 only 1 took NHS and when I contacted them was told the next date for applicants, and that you had to ring in on this date and it was on a first come first served basis no waiting list.”

Many of the comments by those who have an NHS dentist referred to the long length of time the patient had been with the practice, or the fact that this was a longstanding family dentist.

- “Same dentist for 50 years”
- “Parents’ dentist and been with them ever since”
- “From birth...went with my mum born 1959”

These comments suggest that people who have an NHS dentist may have secured this dentist years ago when access was easier.

Those who have attempted to find an NHS dentist more recently have much more difficulty.

The following table gives a comparison of the responses of these two groups.

Methods used (multiple choice)	People with an NHS Dentist	People seeking an NHS Dentist
Contact dentists direct	47%	69%
NHS Choices	17%	59%
NHS111/NHS England	4%	20%
Internet search	11%	39%
Recommendations	25%	37%
Phone book/ directories	4%	22%
Healthwatch	0%	3%
Other	34%	8%
Number of respondents	175	87

Q.6 When looking for an NHS dentist, were you offered private (non NHS) treatment or a dental care plan that you have to pay for? (94 respondents)

When looking for an NHS dentist, were you offered private (non NHS) treatment or a dental care plan that you have to pay for?		
Yes	53	56%
No	41	44%
Total	94	

Just over half of people who would have liked an NHS dentist had been offered private treatment or a paid dental care plan at some point.

Q.7 Please see Q.5

Q.8 How long did you wait to get your NHS dentist? (197 respondents)

<i>Q.8 People with an NHS dentist – how long they had waited to get an NHS dentist</i>		
0-3 months	116	59%
4-6 months	32	16%
7-12 months	19	10%
1-2 years	11	6%
Over 2 years	19	10%
Total respondents to this question:	197	

59% of people who have an NHS dentist reported that they had waited 0-3 months to get a dentist. 16% had waited more than a year.

Comments included:

- “Didn't wait, but was 17 years ago”

People who had been accepted recently sometimes commented that they had been lucky.

- “Fortunate as they just opened”
- “I tried contacting a lot of dentists a few years ago, some said they were private only (it’s not always clear from websites) and others just didn't get back to me even when I rang and left a message. It is only sheer fluke that I tried again earlier this year and managed to get registered. Persistence seems to be the key.”

Q.9 Which dentist do you go to? (299 respondents)

Question 9 asked people what dentist they went to.

Q.10 How often do you visit the dentist? (284 respondents)

People were asked how often they visited a dentist.

<i>How often people visited their dentist (Question 10)</i>		
Every 3 months	15	5%
Every 6 months	195	69%
Every 12 months	54	19%
Every 18 months	3	1%
Every 2 years	3	1%
Only in emergencies	3	1%
I don't	11	4%
Number of respondents to this question	284	

The responses show that 6 monthly is the usual frequency, with every 12 months being the second most popular.

Some people made comments suggesting that they could be seen in between routine appointments if needed:

- “But she will always respond promptly to an emergency”

Others comments included:

- “Seen faster if emergencies”
- “Visits in between [usual check-ups] if needed”

Q.11 When did you last see a dentist? (346 respondents)

Within the last 2 weeks	46	13%
3 weeks to 1 month	49	14%
2-3 months	78	23%
4-6 months	87	25%
7-12 month	36	10%
1-2 years	16	5%
2-3 years	12	3%
Only in emergencies	10	3%
I don't	12	3%
Total respondents	346	

Most people (75%) had seen a dentist within the past six months.

Comments suggest that not all of these respondents had a regular dentist.

- “As I don't have a dentist I have had to use the emergency dental service when I have been in pain”
- “For my first appointment as a new patient, but prior to this I had not been to a dentist in York – I have lived here 5 years but went back to a dentist where I used to live as struggled to get a dentist in York.”

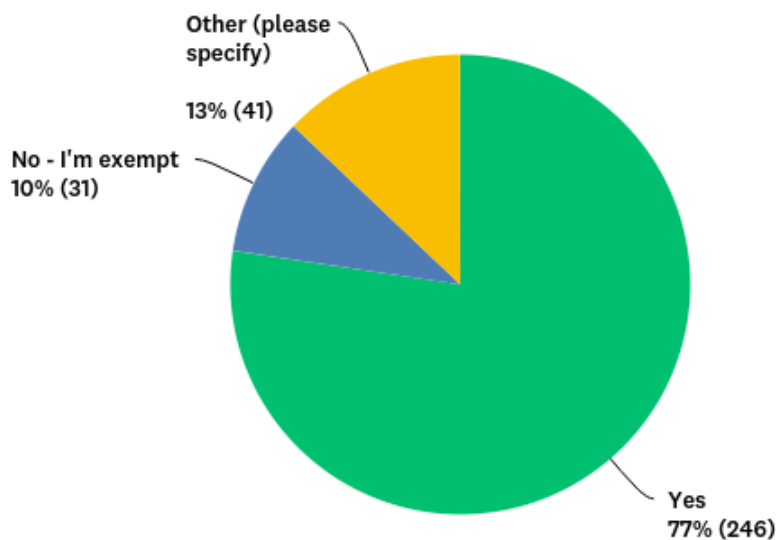
A few people reported anxiety, or specific dental problems as a consequence of lack of access:

- “I really want to see a dentist but cannot find one”
- “I was seen by a private dentist due to having severe tooth pain. I now have an appointment with YDH for November due to requiring 8 tooth extractions.”
- “I have been on an NHS waiting list for 3 years. I have had a broken tooth for 6 months. I can't get treatment for this that I can afford.”

Costs and Options

Questions 12, 13, 14, and 15 asked respondents about their experiences of payment, cost and treatment options when seeing a dentist.

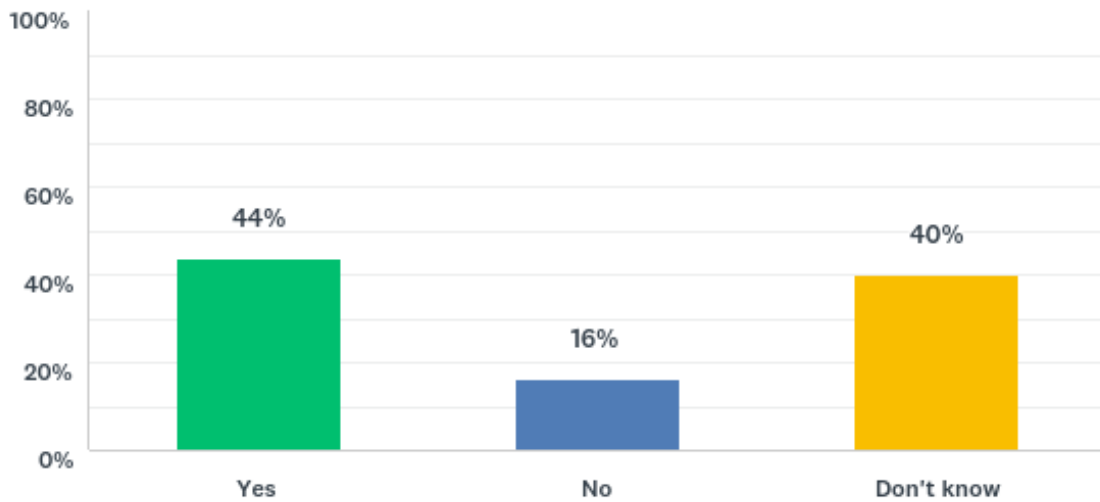
Q.12 Do you pay for your NHS treatment? (318 respondents)



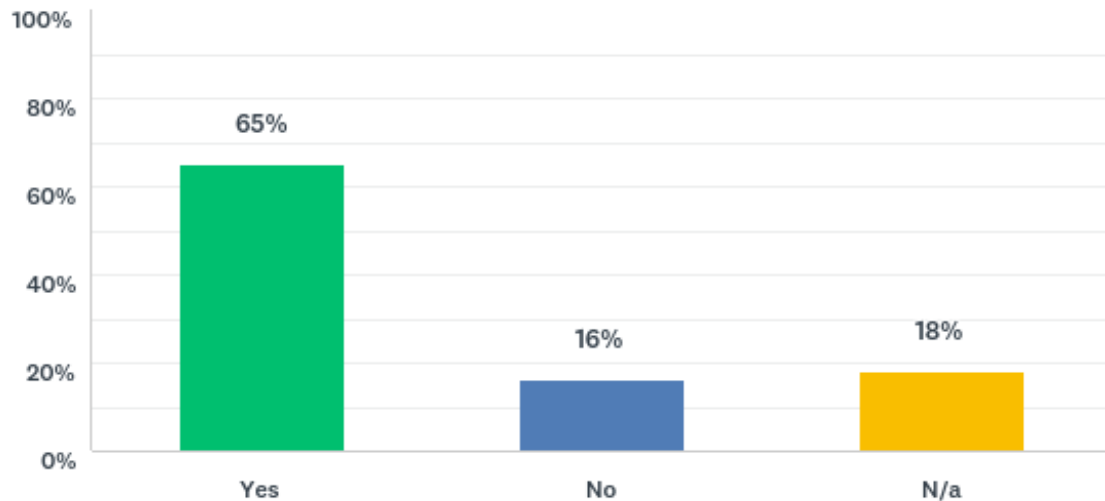
31 people reported that they were exempt from payment. This represents 14% of those who answered they had an NHS dentist in question 2.

Questions 13, 14, and 15 explored whether charges were displayed in the waiting room or reception area, whether costs were clearly explained, and whether written plans with costs were provided.

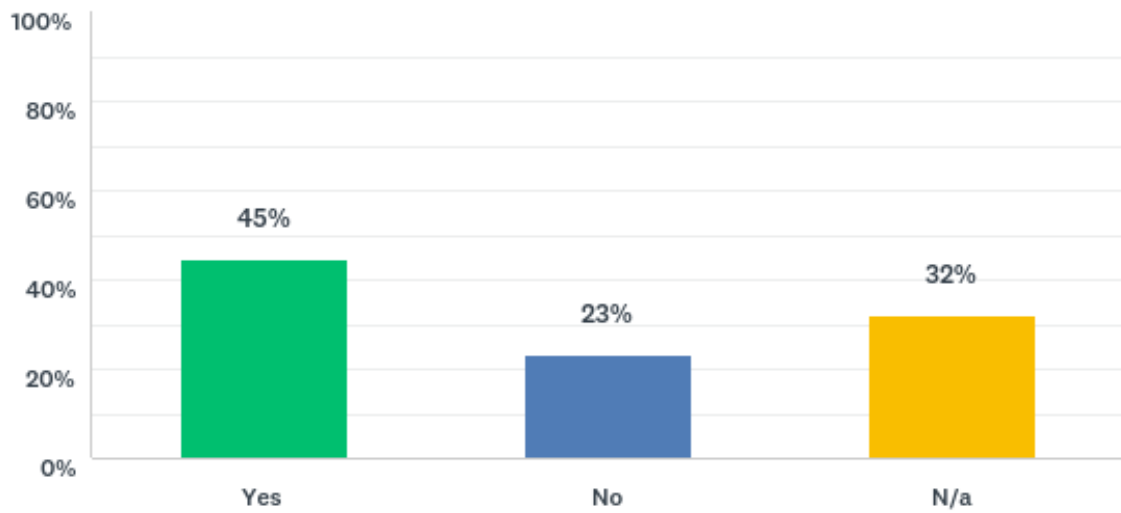
Q.13 Does your dentist display a list of dental charges in the waiting room or reception area? (324 respondents)



Q.14 Does your dentist clearly explain the costs of your treatment? (323 respondents)

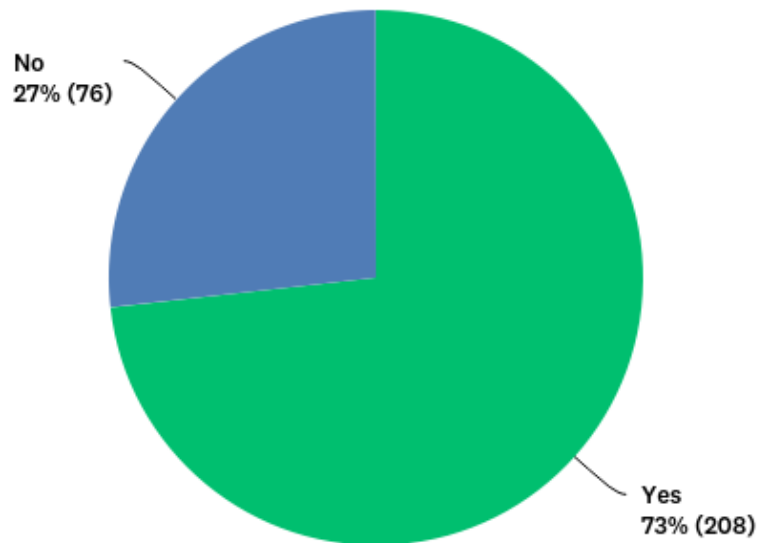


Q.15 Does your dentist provide you with a written plan, with costs, for treatment you need? (320 respondents)



Agreeing treatment plans and discussing options

Q.16 Do you and your dentist explore treatment options before agreeing your treatment plan? (284 respondents)



When asked whether their dentist explored treatment options with them before agreeing a treatment plan, almost three in four people replied yes.

One individual made the comment that:

- “Both dentists I have seen...have taken time explaining the treatment options and explained the financial aspects as well”

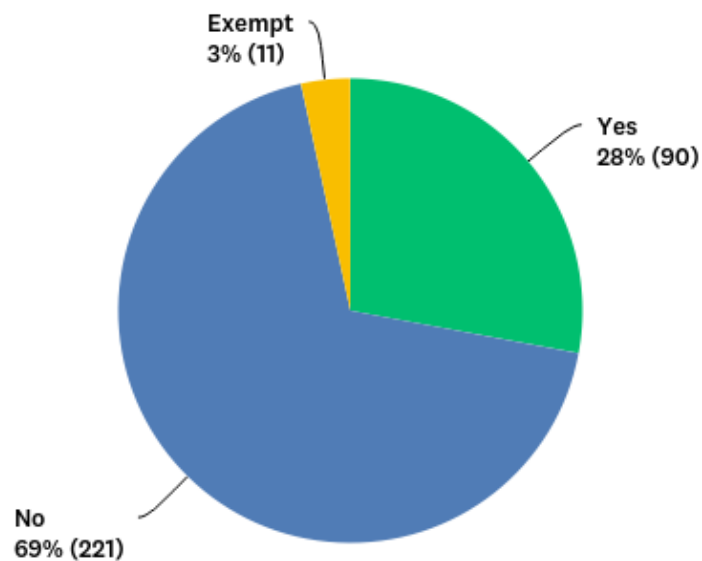
21 people made comments indicating confidence that discussion would happen if need be, for example:

- “So far I haven't had to have any major interventions but I'm sure I would be able to discuss options recommended”

Nine people added comments that suggested dissatisfaction, for example:

- “My dentist is only really interested in making money, often pushing expensive options”
- “Dentist refuses to give info. Just hesitates as if frightened of being sued”
- “Dentist not helping with an ongoing problem with no reason given except ‘we don't do that here’”

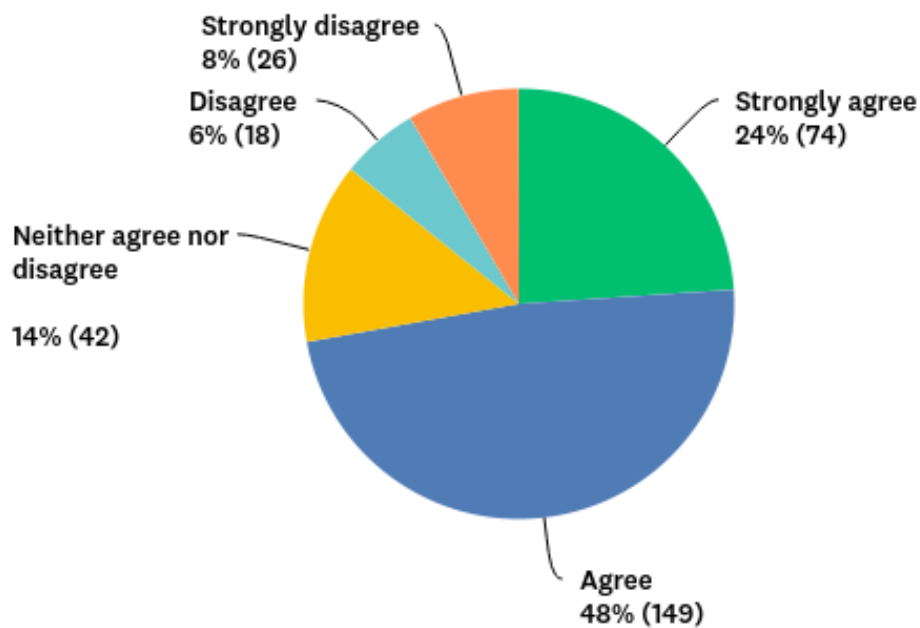
Q.17 Has the cost of dental services ever stopped you getting treatment? (322 respondents)



90 people, (28%) said that the cost of dental services had stopped them from getting treatment.

Questions 18 to 22 asked respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with specific statements.

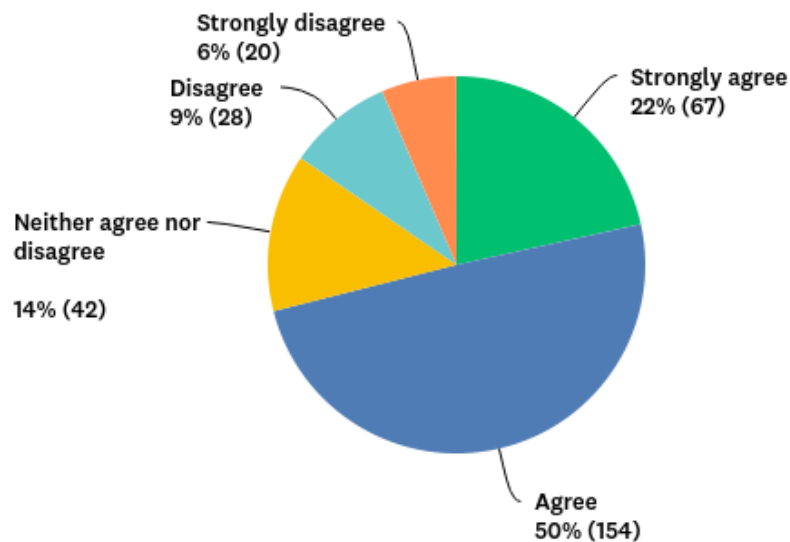
Q.18 I can get appointments with my dentist when I need them (309 respondents)



72% of those who answered this question said they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

A minority (14%) said they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Q.19 When I ring to make an appointment, it is easy to get through
(311 respondents)

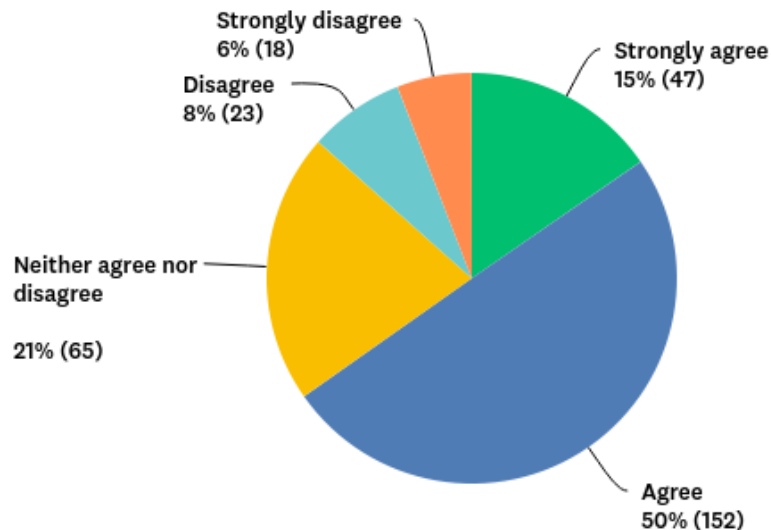


71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
14% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Comments included:

- “Often the line is engaged”
- “Email seems to work best”
- “Understandably busy when the practice opens but easy to get through at other times”
- “I had to ring several times”
- “They ring back if I can’t get through”

Q.20 My dentist offers a wide range of appointment times (305 respondents)



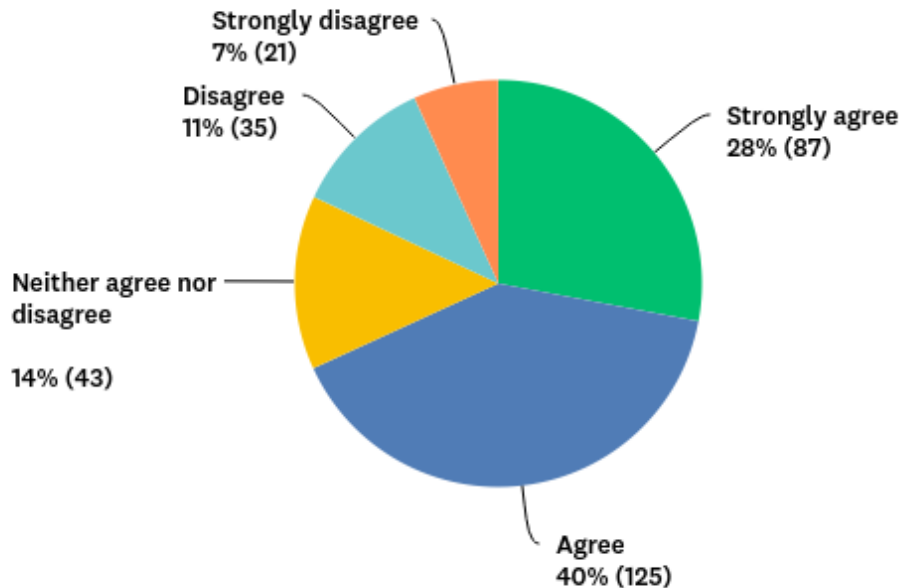
65% of people said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'My dentist offers a wide range of appointment times'.

18% of people said they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Comments included:

- "It is very difficult to get an appointment which is after school"
- "Only offer appointments during working hours"
- "Wish they did evening or weekend appointments"
- "Have been offered several appointment slots & can choose which best suits me"
- "Could be more flexible with later opening times for those who work full time"

Q.21 My dentist is in a convenient location for me (311 respondents)



68% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'My dentist is in a convenient location for me'.

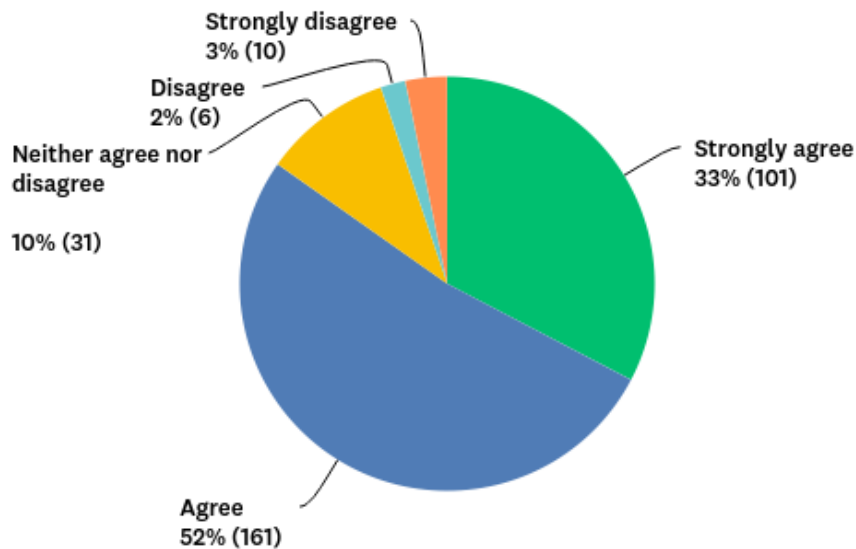
18% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In the comments, parking was said to be a problem. People also reported having to travel far to access an NHS dentist.

Comments included:

- "It isn't that close and we have to pay for parking as it is in the centre of York"
- "It's within walking distance"
- "Have to drive 15 miles"
- "There is a dentist in my village but no NHS places...we have to drive 20 mins to get to dentist when there is one we could walk to"
- "It's not as close as I would like, at busy times a lot of traffic to get through"

Q.22 The reception staff are friendly and helpful (309 respondents)



85% said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'The reception staff are friendly and helpful'.

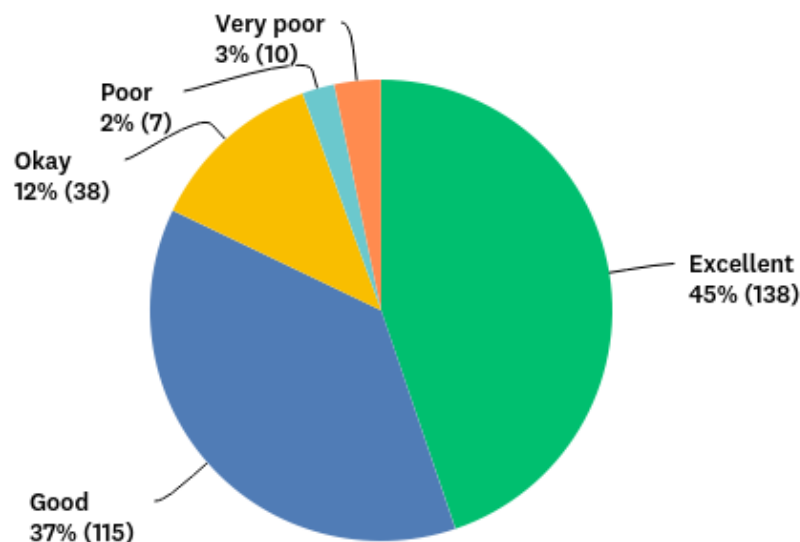
A small minority (5%) said they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Comments reflected that this could vary depending on the staff member.

Comments included:

- "Alright"
- "They vary – some are lovely, some are a nightmare"
- "Depends on which receptionist you get"
- "They are OK"

Q.23 Thinking about your most recent appointment with your dentist, how would you rate your experience (308 respondents)



People were asked to rate their most recent appointment with their dentist.

The majority (82%) rated their experience excellent or good. 6% rated it as poor or very poor.

Positive comments included:

- “My most recent appointment was excellent. I was anxious about my procedure and the staff at ... listened to my worries, talked me through what would happen and helped me to relax.”
- “Lady dentist and really nice”

Comments about poor experiences included:

- “...always trying to persuade me to have cosmetic treatments and book the hygienist at £50 a go which I just can't afford”
- “He does not explain the treatment, appears to be rough, no thoughts of my discomfort”

- “The initial assessment I had (when seen as an emergency case) was very good, but I needed a tooth extraction urgently and had to wait over 4 months in pain...”

Most people’s recent experience of a dental appointment had been good or excellent. However, a significant minority of experiences are poor.

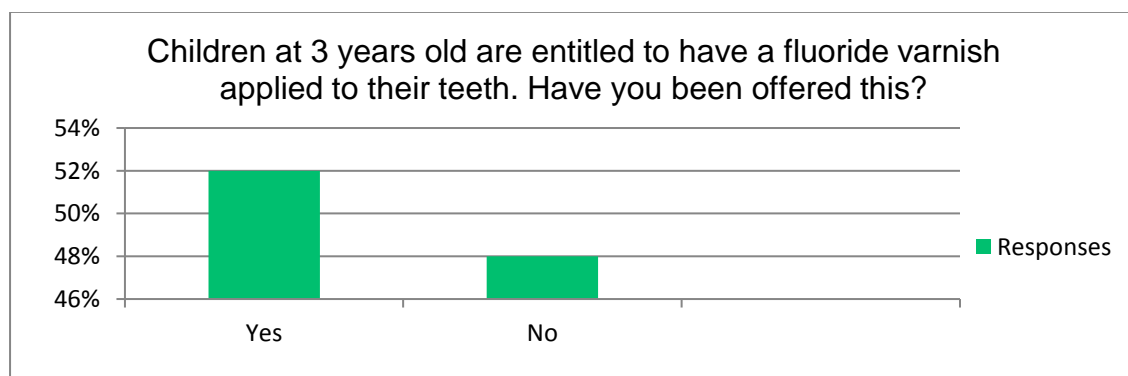
Questions about children and families

Q.24 Do you have any children under 18? (327 respondents)

89 respondents (27% of those who answered the question) stated that they had children under 18.

Q.25 Children at 3 years old are entitled to have a fluoride varnish applied to their teeth. Have you been offered this? (102 respondents)

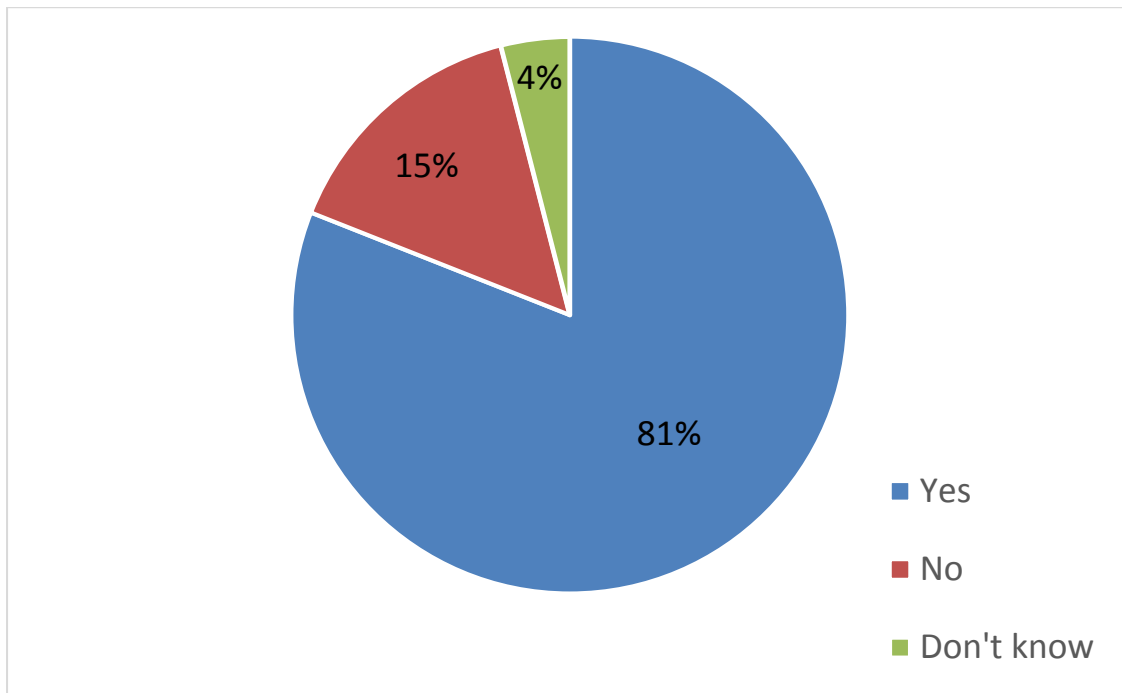
Parents of children under 18 were then asked if they had been offered fluoride varnish for their children at age three.



35% (36 out of 102 respondents) said this was not relevant to their family.

Of the remaining 67 respondents who this was relevant to, just over half (52%) had been offered this for their children.

Q.26 Have you been given advice on how to care for your family's oral health? (106 respondents)



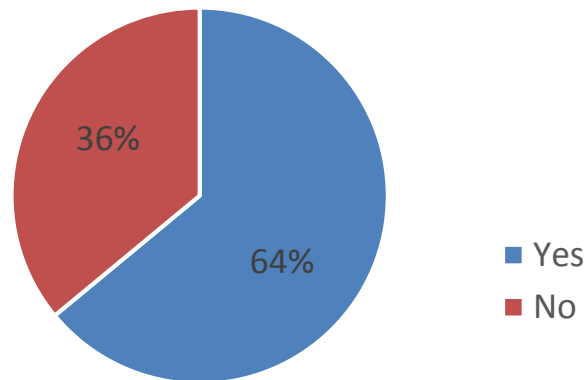
Once removing those who stated it was not applicable, 81% of parents (70 of 86) had been offered advice on how to care for their family's oral health. 15% (13 out of 86), had not been offered any advice.

Q.27 How many people are in your household? (115 respondents)

Of the 115 people who answered this question, 90% (103 out of 115) said that they had a household of 4 people or fewer.

Q.28 Do you all go to the same dentist? (114 respondents)

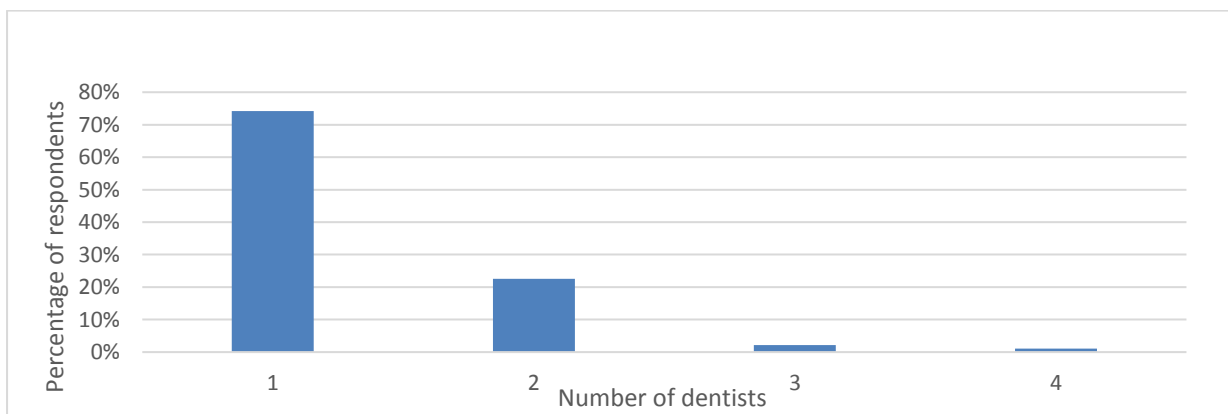
10% of the people who answered this question reported that ‘none of us has a dentist’



Of those who answered yes or no to this question, 36% said that no everyone in the household have the same dentist. Almost two thirds (64%) said that they did all go to the same dentist.

Q.29 How many dentists do you go to? (93 respondents)

The majority of those who answered this question went to the same dentist (74%). 3% said they went to more than 2 dentists.



One comment states that: “The children are on a different one that wasn’t taking on NHS adults”.

Q.30 Are you happy with this? (111 respondents)

People were then asked if they were happy with their family's arrangements for visiting a dentist.

69% said that they were. 23% said they were not.

Comments included:

- "It's okay but all at one would make more sense"
- "Would like all the family at the same one that is close to our house and is NHS"

Q.31 Do you have any comments about dental access for families? (41 respondents)

There were 5 positive comments, and 23 negative comments

Generally the comments about dental access for families were largely negative, and reflected particular difficulties for parents who could not themselves afford private treatment.

Examples of positive comments:

- "Practice has been helpful in getting both children's appointments together"
- "We are long term patients at this practice, don't know what it would be like if we weren't"

Examples of negative comments:

- "No I'm in desperate need for a dentist for me and my 3 children"
- "It's crazy having to wait nearly 4 years for an NHS dentist. And private is so expensive, my son goes private as he needed a dentist as he's 4 years old."
- "I am a Safeguarding lead within a primary school and a requirement for vulnerable families is to be registered at a dentist."

This is practically impossible for families as very few accessible dentists accept NHS patients. These families cannot afford private care and as a result are penalised by social care for not fulfilling this criteria. This situation is dire!

- “They should allow families to attend one dentist”
- “Please make it more accessible”

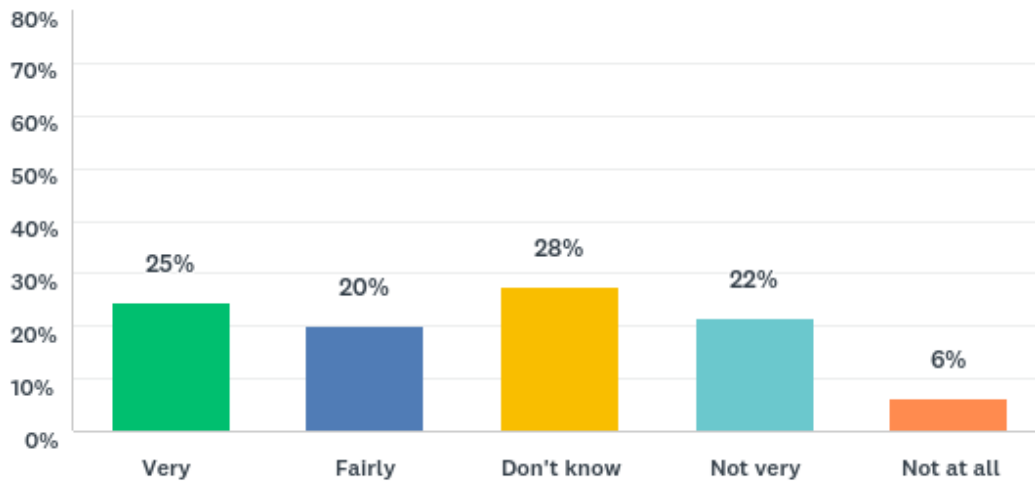
5 of the negative comments specifically mentioned differences in access for children and their parents

- “Very difficult to find adult NHS places”
- “NHS care for children is easy if you are willing as an adult to sign up for private treatment”
- “Children have NHS for free but it doesn't set a good example for the kids if the parents cannot attend due to lack of funds”

Q.32 Do you consider yourself a disabled person or have any access issues? (310 respondents)

Of those who answered this question, 39 (13%) said that they considered themselves to be a disabled person or have access issues.

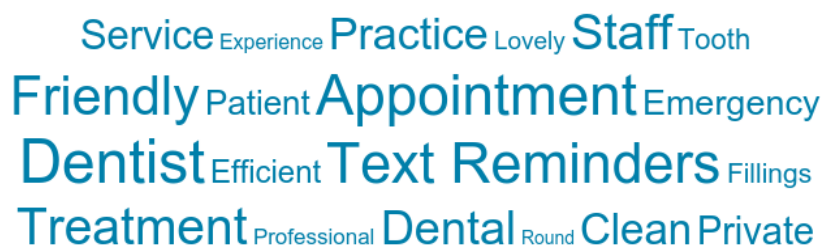
Q.33 How accessible is your dental practice e.g. automatic doors, lifts, ramps, hearing loops? (65 respondents)



Of the 65 people who answered this question, 45% (29 out of 65) said that their dental practice is fairly or very accessible. 28% (18 out of 65) said that it was not very or not at all accessible.

Q.34 Are there any things your dental practice does really well, that you think other practices could learn from? (109 respondents)

Word Cloud of comments from Q.34



Comments from this question can be grouped into 6 main areas. These have been noted below, with examples of the comments people have made about their dental practice.

Personable and person-centred treatment:

“friendly”; “likeable”; “puts me at ease”; “person-centred”; “relaxed and not rushed”; “patient”; “reassures a nervous patient”; “kind”; “caring”; “cheerful”; “courteous”; “talk everything through with you”; “explained procedures”; “listen”; good with families/children; understanding of medical conditions; “they know how to communicate with people who have disabilities”

Appointments:

“range of ways to book”; “online appointments”; “can leave message to be phoned back”; “text and email reminders”; “good range of appointment times”; “flexibility of access – arranging times suitable for individual circumstances”; “short notice treatment”; “quick service”; “emergency appointments are easy to get”; “efficient”; “punctual”.

Treatment and advice:

“fluoride varnish”; “brushing and teeth cleaning techniques”; “regular hygienist appointments”; “top quality equipment/records”; “advanced tech”

Physical access:

Negative comments on 3 storey building; “high spiral staircase”; “steep steps”; “both upstairs and downstairs surgeries”; “modern building”.

Environment:

“clean”; “bright”; “nice” “lovely”; “good hygiene”; “plays classical music”.

Costs:

“low cost check-ups”; “no monthly payment plan”; “only NHS charges for small white fillings”; “free toothpaste samples”; “take credit card”; “promote dental plan”

Q.35 Is there anything else you want to tell us about your dentist?
(115 respondents)

Word Cloud of comments from Q.35

Wish Life Appointment Understanding Waiting Forms
Excellent Clockhouse are Great Practice
Expensive NHS Access Dentist Supportive
Private Booking Patient Lovely Service Impressed
Happy Pleased Friendly Professional

There were twice as many positive comments compared to negative comments (54 positive; 27 negative).

A lot of people expressed satisfaction with the personal and professional qualities of the dentist. They also said the quality of treatment was good.

Comments included:

- “Impressed”
- “Friendly”
- “Lovely practice – very clean and nice staff”
- “For the first time in my life I am relaxed about going”
- “Very good dentist. They are very polite and explain what they do”
- “A very good and reliable team who are very supportive and knowledgeable”
- “First rate practice”

The main themes from the negative comments were: high dental treatment costs; impact of privatisation on NHS care; perceived drops in standards and changes in practice associated with takeover by large companies.

Comments included:

- “Expensive”
- “Over booking of appointments”
- “The ability to speak to someone at the surgery has got a lot harder since being taken over by the private company. They do not seem to offer the same personalised service as previously.”
- “The expense and loss of so many teeth could easily have been avoided with a better system from the former PCT”

Several negative points were also made in comments to previous questions, such as waits for appointments, over booking, phone not being answered, unfriendly or poor reception, not seeing the same dentist each time, no automatic door.

Conclusion – A problem of quantity not quality

The Healthwatch York Accessing NHS Dentistry survey confirms findings from national reports about issues with access to dentistry. In essence, the problems being experienced boil down to a lack of quantity, not quality.

A significant number of survey respondents experienced problems accessing NHS dentistry. It is not easy enough for people to find an NHS dentist here in York. The main way that people seemed to be able to get an NHS dentist was by ringing around different dental practices in the area until they found a practice accepting NHS patients. They cannot rely on NHS Choices being up to date.

However, once they find an NHS dentist most people have positive experiences and are happy with the quality of treatment they receive.

Whilst some of the answers to questions are small numbers, individuals' experiences are still significant. For example, in Q.4, 30 people reported that they had been waiting over a year, and 19 had been waiting over 2 years to get an NHS dentist. In Q.17, 90 people (28% of those who answered the question) found that the cost of treatment was too high to be able to get the treatment they needed.

Other important findings include the number of ways people have tried to find an NHS dentist, suggesting that none of the current methods available are effective in successfully helping individuals to find an NHS dentist.

Our findings indicate that there need to be some big improvements in enabling individuals to access NHS dentistry. We make a number of suggestions which may help in our 'Recommendations' section.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Recommended to
1. Urgently review availability of NHS dentistry in York. Consider options to increase the availability of NHS dentistry.	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber
2. Consider options for improving student access to dentistry.	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber Public Health England (PHE)
3. Re-introduce a waiting list system for people seeking an NHS dentist, to guarantee fair and timely access.	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber
4. Monitor the waiting list to make sure levels of dental activity in York are sufficient	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber
5. Consider what dental provision will be needed to keep pace with York's continuing growth	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber
6. Consider ways to improve whole family access to dentistry	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber PHE
7. Consider ways to better provide families with advice about caring for teeth	PHE
8. Advise parents to register their child with a dentist even if they cannot access a dentist themselves. Encourage them to share their experiences with us to monitor the situation	PHE
9. Consider ways of increasing awareness of and promote access to community dentists with all the relevant client groups through increased awareness within the workforce	Children's Workforce Strategy Group, City of York Council (CYC) Adult Workforce Strategy Group, CYC

	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber
10. Encourage the provider to work with the Healthwatch York readability panel to improve existing publicity materials on community dentistry	NHS England North Yorkshire and Humber Harrogate NHS Foundation Trust

Responses from Stakeholder Organisations

City of York Council

“City of York Council Public Health will lead the development of a local Oral Health Advisory Group (OHAG) which will bring the key partners together to focus on taking forward improvements for oral health in the city's residents. The OHAG will produce an Oral Health Improvement Strategy and action plan that can be approved by the City of York Council Health and Wellbeing Board.”

NHS England

Response number relates to the recommendation number.

1. As mentioned in the report the Yorkshire and Humber Commissioning team, supported by clinicians, has reviewed how we can improve dental access and has developed a strategy that has divided Yorkshire and Humber in to commissioning areas and an assessment of areas of highest need has been made. This has now been applied across the whole of Yorkshire and Humber. As the funding is limited, this initially will be invested in the 20 areas with the lowest overall score, i.e. those with the highest need for additional activity. York central and its surrounding areas (e.g. Malton) is currently within the highest 15% of areas so does not qualify for additional funding at this time, but as more funding becomes available the intention is to expand the fund to other areas in line with need. The report indicates that there are issues for patients wishing to access urgent dental care out of hours via 111 – further investigation

of this has highlighted that there has been an error in the information that has been held by the 111 service. There are services available within the York area for urgent care so this error will be corrected as soon as possible.

2. There are practices that are close to the University sites that have previously had capacity to see the students but are not specifically commissioned to provide that service. This will be reviewed as part of the commissioning plans for Yorkshire and the Humber dental team.
3. North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust had previously held a waiting list for patients wishing to access a dental practice. This facility was not transferred to NHS England. NHS England local teams do not routinely collate information on the number of NHS dentists accepting new patients or how many have a waiting list as this can change daily for each practice based on local circumstances. Many NHS dental providers already do have a mechanism in place to offer patients the chance to be placed on a waiting list if they do not have spare capacity at the time to take them on as a NHS patient. Unlike in GP practices, NHS dentists do not have registered NHS patients as patients are able to access NHS dentistry anywhere in England.
4. As there is no centrally held waiting list it is more difficult to monitor the demand for dental services. As part of the review of access to dental services Yorkshire and Humber will explore the possibility of collecting data about practice waiting lists to assist with the commissioning of dental services.
5. Yorkshire and Humber are seeing a lot of proposed housing development in many areas but as the funding for dental services does not increase in line with the population in an area it is not always possible to commission the services to follow this increase. Public Health England have undertaken an Oral Health Needs Assessment in 2015 and this will be updated on a regular basis which will keep Yorkshire and Humber informed of the changes that have taken place.

6. In order to address concerns about family and child oral health, there are currently a number of children's oral health initiatives which are in place both within the Yorkshire & Humber region as well as nationally. These initiatives are Starting Well and In Practice Prevention.

Starting Well

NHS England has commenced a new programme called Starting Well in Yorkshire & Humber with 2 areas Wakefield and Hull identified for trialling the initial programme.

Dental practices in these areas are commissioned to focus on improving their approach to preventing tooth decay in children. As part of the Starting Well programme some of these practices are also being commissioned to develop outreach work in their local communities and to work with the Early Years workforce for the benefit of hard to reach groups. If this initial pilot shows promising signs of improving oral health in their child's population then the intention is to identify further areas within Yorkshire & Humber to take on the programme.

Starting Well Core

This initiative is a development on the initial Starting Well programme and is aimed at children up to 2 years of age to encourage families to adopt life style changes that will support the maintenance of oral health. This will include diet and tooth brushing advice among other measures. This programme is to be implemented during 2018/19.

In Practice Preventive (IPP) Practices

This is a local commissioning initiative in Yorkshire and Humber and is aimed to improve the oral health of children up to the age of 16. There is currently one practice in York taking part. This commissioning arrangement when fully developed will sit within the Starting Well brand as a common clinical offer under a common contractual agreement.

7. Yorkshire and Humber will work with the Public Health team in City of York Council to support initiatives that will provide advice on caring for teeth and the above initiatives will start to support this work.

8. As the Yorkshire and Humber Access to dental services work develops this will be communicated to CYC so their services where appropriate are able to sign post patients to available services.

How to access NHS dentistry

According to NHS England, “everyone should be able to access good-quality NHS dental services”. As people are not bound to a catchment area like they are when finding a GP, they can “simply find a dental practice that's convenient for you, whether it's near your home or work, and phone them to see if there are any appointments available”.

Steps to take to find an NHS dentist:

1. Find out about local dental practices in your area

You can do this by looking on NHS Choices or the Healthwatch York website. Both of these should provide details of the dental practices in your local area.

2. See which dental practices are currently taking on NHS patients

You can do this by looking at NHS Choices, which provide you with details of the most up-to-date information the practice has provided them with.

It is worth bearing in mind that sometimes this might not be accurate. Dental practices which say they are taking on NHS patients may not be, and dental practices which say they aren't taking on NHS patients may be doing so.

3. Ring your chosen dental practice to find out if they are taking on new NHS patients, and if they have any NHS appointments available.

If your first choice isn't taking on NHS patients at the time, they may offer for you to be put on a waiting list. Although this may be a long waiting list, it could be worthwhile being on it whilst still looking for another dental practice.

Continue to contact dental practices to ask if they are taking on NHS patients and have appointments available.

What to do if you still can't find a dentist:

- If after contacting several dental practices you still can't find a dentist accepting NHS patients, you should call NHS England's Customer Contact Centre on 0300 311 2233.
- You can also try calling 111 who may be able to help find an NHS dental practice for you
- If NHS England has been unable to help you find a dentist and you want to raise your concerns about this, contact them on:
 - email: england.contactus@nhs.net
 - phone: 0300 311 2233
 - visit the NHS England website: www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us

If you're still not satisfied with NHS England's response, you can take your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: www.ombudsman.org.uk

- Contact Healthwatch York to tell them your experiences of trying to find an NHS dentist. This may help people find an NHS dentist more easily in the future.

Emergency or out of hours dentistry

NHS England provide the following advice about getting dental treatment in an emergency or when your normal dental practice is closed.

If you need dental treatment in an emergency

- Call your dentist: some practices offer appointments at short notice
- If you don't have a dentist, find one using [NHS 111](#)

- Look up urgent care services that provide dental treatment here: www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Urgent-Care/LocationSearch/0

If you need to see a dentist out of hours

- Call your dentist: their answerphone may advise where to get out-of-hours treatment
- Call NHS 111 to find an out-of-hours dental service near you

Don't contact your GP, as they won't be able to offer emergency or out-of-hours dental care.

If you're in pain while waiting to see a dentist, take painkillers. NHS 111 can also offer other self-care advice.

How much will I be charged?

An urgent dental treatment will cost £20.60 – see NHS dental charges explained here: www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/nhs-dental-band-charges.aspx?CategoryID=74

If you're entitled to free NHS dental care, you should be able to claim back the cost of any treatment.

Ensure you keep all receipts. For more information, see [Help with dental costs](#).

If you're asked to come back for further treatment, this will be considered to be a separate course of non-urgent treatment.

You'll have to pay the relevant charge for the new course of treatment.

Ask the dentist what the treatment will cost or whether you can have a [treatment plan](#).

When to go to hospital

Only go to [accident and emergency \(A&E\)](#) in serious circumstances, such as:

- Severe pain
- Heavy bleeding
- Injuries to the face, mouth, or teeth

If you're not sure whether you should go to A&E, contact NHS 111, who will be able to advise you. Find out [when to dial 999](#).

Ten Top Tips for getting the most out of your dental appointment

www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/10-top-tips-get-most-out-your-dental-appointment

Healthwatch England has provided some useful tips for making the most out of your dental appointment

1. Prepare for your appointment

Have you been experiencing any dental pain, or other problems with your mouth or teeth? Let your dentist know.

2. Tell your dentist if you're feeling anxious

Many people feel nervous about going to the dentist, but if you're anxious then help is available. Talk to your dentist about your fears and take a look at this guide:

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/dentalhealth/Pages/Fearofthedentist.aspx

3. NHS or private care?

Do you know whether you're being seen as an NHS or private patient? Most high street dental practices provide both types of care. If you need treatment, make sure you understand how much it will cost before you commit to it. There are [three standard charges](#) for NHS treatment.

- Band 1: £20.60 (for things like: a clinical examination; X-rays; emergency treatment)
- Band 2: £56.30 (for things like: removing teeth (extraction); root canal treatment)
- Band 3: £244.30 (for things like: bridges – a fixed replacement for a missing tooth or teeth crowns – a type of cap that completely covers your real tooth; dentures)

More information about NHS treatment charges can be found here:
www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/nhs-dental-band-charges.aspx?CategoryID=74

4. Are you eligible for free NHS treatment?

Some people are entitled to free or partial help to pay for NHS dental care. To find out if you're eligible for help with your health costs, take a look to see if you meet the NHS' criteria here:

www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Dentalcosts.aspx

5. Ask your dentist for a treatment plan

You might be charged more for some dental treatment, such as fillings, removing teeth and more complex procedures. These usually fall into NHS charges for band 2 and 3. If your dentist recommends this type of treatment, you should be given a personal dental treatment plan. This will list all the treatments you are having on the NHS and what you should expect to pay. Your dentist should also discuss any alternative private treatment with you and give you the cost in writing before you commit to it.

6. Follow the advice your dentist gives you

During your appointment, your dentist should give you advice on how to take care of your teeth to avoid gum disease and tooth decay.

7. Not clear on the treatment plan? Ask again

Make sure you fully understand your treatment and any after care before you leave the room. If you don't, then don't be afraid to ask your dentist to go through the plan again. Find out who you can contact if you have any questions after your appointment.

8. Find out when you need to return for your next check up

Your dentist should advise you when they'll need to see you next. You can expect to return between three months to two years depending on

how healthy your teeth and gums are. However, children under 18 are recommended to see the dentist at least once a year.

9. Do you have a disability, impairment or sensory loss?

Legally, if your treatment is partially or fully funded by the NHS your dentist should make sure that you are given information that you can easily read or understand to make sure your needs are met. Find out more about the Accessible Information Standard here:

www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/

10. Unhappy? Find out how to make a complaint

It's usually best to speak to the dental surgery first to try and resolve the issue. If you're still unhappy about your care, ask for a copy of the complaints procedure from your dentist.

Need more advice?

[NHS Choices \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) has a range of information on using dental services, including:

- [Emergency care](#)
- [How to find an NHS dentist?](#)
- [Funding your treatment](#)
- [Your rights](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Full report: ‘What did people tell us in our work plan survey?’

The Healthwatch York work plan survey gave people a choice of three topics for us to explore in 2017. We asked those who responded to the survey to put a tick against the topic they would like us to focus on, and to tell us briefly in their own words why they chose that topic.

Most votes (57 out of 153) went to the topic: ‘Looking at how easy it is to register with a dentist, make appointments, and get NHS treatment in York’, summarised as ‘Access to dentistry’.

36 of the 57 people who chose access to dentistry explained why they made that choice. Of the 36, 19 people cited a *personal* experience relating to dentistry in York.

The reasons for choosing access to dentistry fell into four main groups:

- Personal experience of getting a dentist
- Beliefs or awareness about the difficulty generally faced in getting a dentist
- Consequences of limited access to and availability of NHS dentistry
- Universal rights of access to NHS dentistry and health and wellbeing

Personal experience of difficulty getting a dentist

It appears from personal experiences reported that the difficulty of getting a dentist is acute for people who have moved to York. Most comments referred to finding an NHS dentist in York.

People told us:

- ‘I’ve had problems getting registered with a dentist here in York’

- ‘difficulty accessing NHS dentist when moving to the area’
- ‘very difficult to get a dentist when we arrived in York’
- ‘we found it impossible to access an NHS dentist in York’
- ‘I have been unable to find a NHS dentist in York’
- ‘when [relative] came to live with us I found I could not register her with an NHS dentist’

Some people were frustrated at the lack of availability of NHS dentists in York: ‘we have now lived in [area of York] for over two years, we cannot find an NHS dentist anywhere! ... NHS dentists’ availability is absolutely dreadful I myself am in desperate need of a dentist.’

People told us of being denied treatment:

- ‘[they] refused treatment although they have NHS patients’
- ‘the NHS dentist I had previously seen was unwilling to see me’

There is some reported success in finding NHS dentists outside York but visiting was inconvenient or impractical because of a lack of a car.

A disability-related problem is getting an emergency dentist appointment when the only course is to call in the early morning: ‘York’s lack of dental hospital and its having so few emergency dentists should be a concern to many’.

Beliefs or awareness about the difficulty generally faced in getting a dentist

People told us that they believed or knew that finding a dentist is ‘very difficult’, ‘often difficult’, ‘difficult’, ‘a difficulty’, ‘hard’ ‘so hard’ and ‘much more difficult these days’.

Almost all comments referred to NHS dentists. Perceptions ranged from 'I think that people find it hard to find an NHS dentist' to a definite 'waiting lists are full'.

There were strong views that 'too many people are unable to register with an NHS dentist in York' and 'the lack of NHS dentists in York is appalling'.

Consequences of limited access to and availability of NHS dentistry

People told of the impact on their dental health when they could not access an NHS dentist. No NHS dentist meant no treatment when 'in desperate need' without money to go privately.

People told us about the consequences for them of having registered with a private dentist because they could not find an NHS dentist. They cut down on visits, did not go 'as often as I'd like, or should', and said they missed essential follow-up treatments because they could not afford them.

There were comments relating to the impact on children's dental health, for example, concern about when parents who cannot access a dentist for themselves don't see 'good oral hygiene as an ordinary part of life'. Other comments included: it is 'tragic' admitting children to hospital to have teeth removed. Media reports of high levels of tooth decay among children is one reason given for a focus on access to dentistry.

Some people said that 'lots of NHS dentists taking on private patients' impacts badly on the quality of NHS services. People reported experiencing a deterioration in the NHS service after a practice began taking on private patients also.

Universal rights of access to NHS dentistry and health and wellbeing

People said the topic of access to dental services is ‘very important’ and ‘really important’. People indicated that it was worth exploring because dentists ‘are more universally of interest’ and ‘everyone needs a dentist’.

Rights and fairness of access were raised: ‘it would be good to insist that all patients have a right to an NHS dentist’; and ‘not everyone is fortunate’ in having an excellent NHS dentist in York. ‘Dental services are very important to health and wellbeing so we should all be able to get treatment under the NHS.’ People get to feel better with ‘a really good NHS dentist’. There was also a call to ‘increase access to Community Dental Services for children with special needs’.

A further issue is equality of treatment for people who do not pay for NHS treatment. This was raised by a non-paying patient who was allocated a dentist who had ‘just qualified’, and believed they experienced inadequate treatment.

Appendix 2: Full Report: ‘Survey of dentists’ websites in York’

Background

Dental professionals in the United Kingdom are regulated by the General Dental Council (GDC). The GDC produces general guidance on advertising for dentists.²⁸

The elements of this guidance that were considered in the survey of websites were:

- It must be made clear in advertisements and other practice publicity whether the practice is NHS, mixed or wholly private.
- The website should give:
 - i. the name and geographic address at which the dental service is provided
 - ii. contact details of the dental service, including e-mail address and telephone number
 - iii. the GDC’s address and other contact details, or a link to the GDC website
 - iv. details of the practice’s complaints procedure and information about who patients may contact if they are not satisfied with the response (namely the relevant NHS (or equivalent) body for NHS treatment and the Dental Complaints Service for private treatment)
 - v. the date the website was last updated

We also looked at opening hours, fees, and the availability of choice about the gender of dentists. The survey was carried out during the period 12-20 August 2017.

²⁸ [https://www.gdc-uk.org/api/files/Guidance%20on%20advertising%20\(Sept%202013\).pdf](https://www.gdc-uk.org/api/files/Guidance%20on%20advertising%20(Sept%202013).pdf)

The data

40 practices were listed on the Healthwatch York website. 27 websites were included in the survey. Of these websites, one reflected 3 of the listed practices and another reflected 2. These groups were essentially the same clinical personnel operating across different surgeries, and so the 27 websites reflected 30 of the 40 listed practices.

There were 10 practices not covered in the survey. These either offered specialist services only, such as orthodontics, implants or cosmetic services, but not general dentistry, seemed to no longer be operating, or, didn't appear to have a website.

Results

GDC recommended information

Private and NHS dentistry

Of the 27 websites, 18 described their practice as wholly private, 8 were mixed and 1 was unclear.

Of the 8 practices who described themselves as mixed, only 2 stated that they were currently accepting new NHS patients. One further practice would accept children only (apparently of existing patients). A further 2 operated a waiting system should vacancies for new NHS patients arise.

All were accepting new private patients, except one that was accepting no new patients at all.

Contact details

All 27 websites gave their practice address (or addresses) and telephone number, and 20 gave an email address. Of those who did not

give an email address, some gave a contact form that could be used online.

Link to the GDC

A minority, (13 out of 27) gave an address or link for the GDC. Only 2 of the 8 mixed practices did so.

Complaints

Only 15 out of 27 (5 of 8 mixed) had details of a complaints procedure. All but one of these 15 gave details of where patients could go if they were not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

None of the websites gave a precise date when the website was last updated, although some were clearly more up to date than others. Year of creation of the website was often given but this does not indicate precisely how up to date the content is.

Other information of relevance to patients:

Opening hours

Most websites (25 out of 27) listed opening hours. A minority (11) had at least one late evening (surgery open after 6.00pm). Only 1 had regular Saturday opening but 8 offered Saturday appointments by arrangement.

Emergency Appointments

20 websites mentioned the availability of emergency appointments. In only 8 of these was it made explicit that such appointments were available to patients not registered with the practice. In these cases charges were specified.

Fees

20 practices listed up to date private fees, and often also gave details of payment plans. 5 out of 8 of the mixed practices gave NHS fees.

The dental team

Most websites included introductions to the staff, along with the required GDC registration numbers.

- Mixed practices tended to have larger numbers of staff.
- 45% of dentists were female. There were 4 practices with no female dentist, and 2 with no male dentist.
- Almost all hygienists, dental nurses, technicians, receptionists and other administrative staff were female.
- 13% of dentists qualified in EU countries, although almost half of these were in one practice.

Procedures

Many sites gave details of procedures offered by the practice such as dental implants, tooth whitening, cosmetic dentistry and sedation. No analysis has been made of this information, but clearly it is of use to patients.

Summary and Overview

Most dental practices in York had websites and, in general, (though not universally) the websites were easy to navigate and provided useful information for patients about the location of the practice, the dental team, how to make contact, fees, opening hours, the procedures available, and whether it was possible to get emergency appointments. All of the websites complied with GDC guidelines in giving their address and telephone number, but a minority did not give an email address. Only around half of websites gave an address or link to the GDC. A substantial minority did not give details of a complaints procedure, or information about the independent organisations to whom dissatisfied patients could complain. To omit this information is not in accordance

with GDC guidelines. Giving quotes from patient feedback on the website is not a substitute.

Investigation of CQC lists in October 2017 uncovered one further dentist in York not listed on the Healthwatch website. The website for this practice was limited. It did not state explicitly whether the practice was private or mixed but from the description it appeared to be private. No fees were given. There was no link to the GDC website, nor any details of a complaints procedure.

Practices with late evening opening, or Saturday appointments by arrangement could be found but they were in the minority. Most, but not all, private practices gave up to date lists of pay as you go fees and varying amounts of detail about payment plans.

It is clear that access to NHS dentistry in York is extremely limited, although not wholly non-existent (if the information on websites is correct). As websites rarely, if ever, gave the date when they were most recently updated it is difficult to assess whether information is current.

Appendix 3: Access to NHS dental services – successfully obtained a dental appointment 2015/16 data for England, Public Health England

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/comm-assets/data#page/3/gid/1000031/pat/6/par/E12000003/ati/102/are/E06000014/iid/92785/age/1/sx/4>

Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment (2015/16)			
	Area	Count	Value (%) (Ranked lowest to highest)
	England	217,159	94.7
1	City of London	20	83.3
2	Isles of Scilly	10	84.9
3	Camden	693	86.3
4	North Lincolnshire	615	88.4
5	Newham	1,016	88.4
6	Bradford	2,061	88.7
7	Tower Hamlets	825	88.9
8	Blackburn with Darwen	533	89.3
9	Leicester	1,289	89.9
10	Derby	957	90.1
11	Waltham Forest	891	90.2
12	Redbridge	1,022	90.3
13	Brighton and Hove	1,115	90.4
14	Manchester	1,971	90.5
15	Bolton	1,166	90.8
16	Haringey	899	90.8
17	Kensington and Chelsea	420	90.8
18	Isle of Wight	581	91.1
19	Brent	1,096	91.5
20	Hackney	907	91.7
21	Enfield	1,107	92.2
22	Peterborough	650	92.3
23	Barking and Dagenham	678	92.3

Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment (2015/16)			
	Area	Count	Value (%) (Ranked lowest to highest)
24	York	883	92.5
25	Milton Keynes	816	92.6
26	Slough	474	92.7
27	Tameside	961	92.7
28	Cumbria	1,869	92.7
29	Medway	983	92.8
30	Reading	552	92.8
31	Salford	986	92.8
32	Rutland	117	92.9
33	Bristol	1,811	92.9
34	Bury	759	92.9
35	Hounslow	949	92.9
36	Wandsworth	1,110	92.9
37	Barnet	1,214	93.0
38	Telford and Wrekin	691	93.1
39	Ealing	1,312	93.1
40	Central Bedfordshire	1,147	93.2
41	Oldham	908	93.2
42	Leeds	3,276	93.2
43	Croydon	1,307	93.2
44	Cornwall	2,248	93.3
45	Rochdale	860	93.4
46	Kingston upon Thames	625	93.4
47	Islington	762	93.5
48	Calderdale	918	93.7
49	Kent	5,194	93.7
50	Lincolnshire	3,070	93.7
51	Plymouth	1,053	93.8
52	Greenwich	870	93.8
53	Birmingham	4,201	93.9
54	Kirklees	1,817	93.9

Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment (2015/16)			
	Area	Count	Value (%) (Ranked lowest to highest)
55	Bromley	1,064	93.9
56	Lambeth	1,270	93.9
57	Westminster	671	93.9
58	Blackpool	583	94.0
59	Northamptonshire	3,094	94.0
60	North Yorkshire	2,395	94.0
61	West Sussex	3,008	94.0
62	Bath and North East Somers...	650	94.1
63	Richmond upon Thames	604	94.1
64	Harrow	846	94.2
65	Derbyshire	3,294	94.2
66	Surrey	3,779	94.2
67	Wakefield	1,535	94.3
68	Hammersmith and Fulham	630	94.3
69	Dorset	1,718	94.3
70	Southwark	1,108	94.4
71	North East Lincolnshire	654	94.5
72	Cambridgeshire	2,613	94.5
73	Bracknell Forest	428	94.7
74	Portsmouth	714	94.7
75	Lancashire	4,872	94.7
76	Shropshire	1,239	94.8
77	Wiltshire	1,687	94.8
78	Liverpool	1,964	94.8
79	Solihull	901	94.8
80	Hillingdon	1,028	94.8
81	Merton	687	94.8
82	Bournemouth	793	94.9
83	Newcastle upon Tyne	1,282	94.9
84	Walsall	1,027	94.9
85	Nottingham	1,336	95.0

Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment (2015/16)			
	Area	Count	Value (%) (Ranked lowest to highest)
86	Sefton	1,365	95.0
87	Lewisham	1,117	95.0
88	East Sussex	2,158	95.1
89	Norfolk	3,918	95.1
90	Poole	577	95.2
91	Bexley	861	95.3
92	Sutton	720	95.3
93	Stockport	1,347	95.4
94	Knowsley	679	95.4
95	Havering	994	95.4
96	East Riding of Yorkshire	1,477	95.5
97	Luton	801	95.5
98	Thurrock	613	95.5
99	Southampton	963	95.5
100	Cheshire East	1,634	95.5
101	Bedford	698	95.5
102	Devon	3,209	95.6
103	Stockton-on-Tees	930	95.8
104	Warrington	942	95.8
105	Windsor and Maidenhead	529	95.8
106	Sheffield	2,614	95.8
107	Hampshire	5,248	95.8
108	Nottinghamshire	3,514	95.8
109	Warwickshire	2,465	95.8
110	Hertfordshire	4,514	95.9
111	Oxfordshire	2,503	95.9
112	North Somerset	867	96.0
113	Trafford	950	96.0
114	Wirral	1,519	96.0
115	West Berkshire	581	96.1
116	Gloucestershire	2,023	96.2

Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment (2015/16)			
	Area	Count	Value (%) (Ranked lowest to highest)
117	Torbay	596	96.3
118	Wokingham	579	96.3
119	Sandwell	1,272	96.4
120	Herefordshire	799	96.5
121	Suffolk	3,188	96.5
122	Darlington	480	96.6
123	Kingston upon Hull	1,121	96.7
124	Cheshire West and Chester	1,543	96.7
125	County Durham	2,348	96.8
126	Barnsley	1,069	96.8
127	Essex	6,372	96.8
128	Staffordshire	3,700	96.8
129	Stoke-on-Trent	1,137	96.9
130	South Gloucestershire	1,281	97.0
131	Swindon	758	97.0
132	Wigan	1,501	97.0
133	Rotherham	1,204	97.0
134	Leicestershire	2,875	97.0
135	Worcestershire	2,393	97.0
136	Somerset	2,420	97.1
137	North Tyneside	892	97.2
138	Sunderland	1,273	97.2
139	Buckinghamshire	1,798	97.2
140	Halton	632	97.3
141	Doncaster	1,416	97.3
142	South Tyneside	717	97.3
143	Wolverhampton	1,137	97.3
144	Middlesbrough	698	97.4
145	St. Helens	848	97.4
146	Southend-on-Sea	727	97.5
147	Hartlepool	438	97.6

Access to NHS dental services - successfully obtained a dental appointment (2015/16)			
	Area	Count	Value (%) (Ranked lowest to highest)
148	Redcar and Cleveland	659	97.7
149	Coventry	1,422	97.7
150	Northumberland	1,422	97.8
151	Dudley	1,422	97.8
152	Gateshead	945	98.8
153	Bedfordshire CC	-	-

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York CVS

Healthwatch York is a project at York CVS. York CVS works with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in York. York CVS aims to help these groups do their best for their communities, and people who take part in their activities or use their services.

This report

This report is available to download from the Healthwatch York website: www.healthwatchyork.co.uk

Paper copies are available from the Healthwatch York office.

If you would like this report in any other format, please contact the Healthwatch York office.