

### **How do I find a dentist?**

The easiest way to find an NHS dentist near you is to search online for dental practices near your postcode. This will show you all dental practices in the area, not only those providing NHS dental services.

To find practices which do offer NHS dental services the best place to look is on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

There are no area restrictions on accessing NHS dental services. You can visit a practice wherever is most convenient to you.

### **What is the difference between NHS or private availability?**

Practices may not be able to offer you an immediate NHS appointment but will be able to offer an appointment at some point. Practices may instead be able to offer an appointment privately at shorter notice. This is because the NHS does not own or run the practice, but contracts the practice to deliver a specific amount of NHS care in an area. The amount of care provided on the NHS is limited to a yearly amount, which is spread as evenly as possible throughout the year. The number of available appointments for NHS care varies from practice to practice and most will also provide private care. NHS appointments may get booked up quickly which can leave only private appointments available for quick access.

### **Do I need to register with a dental practice?**

There is no registration at an NHS dental practice, but the term is still often used as it is one that people are familiar with. If you go to a practice regularly and make an appointment after your last appointment the practice will consider you a regular patient. If you haven't been to that practice for several years the practice may not consider you one of their patients. When you attend a practice for the first time you will have to fill in some forms. This is not an NHS registration form. The information helps the dentist understand your needs and what treatments may be suitable.

When you leave the practice you should make another appointment in the timeframe recommended. If you do not then the practice may consider the relationship to have ended.

### **What is the difference between NHS and private treatments?**

It should be clear to you when you make an appointment whether your appointment is as an NHS patient or as a private patient. If it is not clear, please ask.

The NHS contracts dentists to provide all treatments that are clinically necessary for the maintenance of good oral health. Your dentist will discuss your clinical requirements with you and explain which treatments are available under the NHS and which are available privately only.

There are different levels of complexity of some treatments and practices may refer more complex cases to colleagues with specific contracts to deliver these more complex treatments.

More information about what dental treatments are available on the NHS are available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/what-dental-services-are-available-on-the-nhs/>

### **What are the NHS costs and exemptions from charges available?**

Most people have to pay NHS dental charges. These charges are set by the NHS every year. There are three possible charges you could pay for NHS primary dental care,

depending on what treatment you have. More detail about NHS Charge for primary care dentistry are available on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/dental-costs/understanding-nhs-dental-charges>

The dental practice website should also have information about NHS charges, and any private charges for private services they offer.

To check if you are eligible for exemption from NHS primary care dental charges you can use this online tool: <https://services.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/check-my-nhs-exemption/start>

The NHS website also has a list of people who do not have to pay NHS primary care dental charges: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/dental-costs/get-help-with-dental-costs>

Practices will not be able to advise you on your exemption status.

### **How do I get dental care at home?**

A general dental practice, a high street dental practice, will not be able to provide home visits on the NHS<sup>1</sup>. Practices are unable to provide NHS care outside of the practice setting. They may provide home visits privately, however.

If a home visit is required because the patient is unable to leave their home they will be able to access care from the Community Dental Services. These can be accessed following a referral from a dental practice. This is also the case for residents of care homes, and the care home should be able to arrange a visit from the Community Dental Services.

### **Access for babies and very young children**

It is advised that new parents take their newborn to a dentist for their first check-up before their first birthday to receive preventive advice from a very young age and improve dental health. The Dental Check by One website has further information about this and also about how this initiative has been affected by the current pandemic:

<https://dentalcheckbyone.co.uk>.

### **Further information:**

The NHS BSA has further information for patients about NHS dental services:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/information-patients>

The Oral Health Foundation has information about oral health for patients:

<https://www.dentalhealth.org>

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<sup>1</sup> There are a small number of practices with NHS contracts allowing them to do so but these are rare and have very limited capacity.