

healthwatch

North Yorkshire



NHS Dentistry in North Yorkshire: A Review of Public Feedback 2020-2021

August 2021



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Forward

Dentistry has been a major concern for us and many other local Healthwatch organisations across Yorkshire and beyond. The lack of access to and availability of NHS dentists has severely affected the health and wellbeing of people across North Yorkshire, from Scarborough to Selby, to Craven to Harrogate. The impact of COVID-19 has only acted to exemplify a dental system already under enormous strain and challenge.

We feel it is now time to act - and to use the upcoming changes to NHS and social care reforms, specifically the emergence of integrated care systems (ICSs) to fuel this change.

We hear on a weekly basis the struggles of people and families unable to be seen by an NHS dentist, but also the desire by NHS dentists to see and treat their patients more effectively. We are pleased to have been able to work alongside local NHS dental commissioners to help facilitate patient engagement to ensure that services delivered in the future are patient centred.

Finally, a big thank you to all those people who have shared their experiences with us over the year, as without your voice this report and our ongoing work around dentistry provision wouldn't be possible.

Ashley Green, Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch North Yorkshire

COVID-19 has had a massive impact on how we can provide services. It means more time is required between patients - we have to leave the room empty between patients for a deep clean. The PPE that we wear is time-consuming to put on and take off, as well as been exhausting to work with.

The majority of NHS dentists are doing an excellent job and trying to see as many patients as they possibly can. However, the majority of NHS dentists are overworked, and suffering a lot of stress and anxiety, tiredness, and fatigue from their work.

COVID-19 has brought to the fore the issues within the NHS dental system which have been long known. NHS dentists want to provide NHS services, but we are constrained by the system. The funding system needs to be looked at, it needed to be looked at a long time ago, and COVID has made the situation significantly worse.

This report by Healthwatch North Yorkshire demonstrates the need for improvements in the number and availability of NHS dentists.

Zafran Majid, Dental Practice Manager

Executive Summary

NHS dentistry has been a major area of concern for the people of North Yorkshire over the past year. After the COVID vaccination programme, dentistry has been our most heard about subject over the past 12 months. This picture is replicated across the country, with Healthwatch England recently having released their review finding a twin crisis of accessibility and affordability.¹

This report includes a review of the 176 pieces of feedback and signpost requests we received regarding dentistry between 15 May 2020 and 14 May 2021, and the results of contacting all NHS dental practices in North Yorkshire that are listed on NHS choices.

Key findings:

- According to NHS England, there are only 77 NHS dental practices in North Yorkshire, providing for a population of 614,500.² One dental practice per 8,000 people.
- There is significant lack of clarity around which dental practices listed on NHS Choices are providing NHS treatment. 11 of the 71 dental practices listed on NHS Choices which we called told us they do not deliver NHS treatment.
- 70.5% of our contacts came from members of the public seeking help with finding a dental practice with space to register as a regular NHS patient.
- We found only two dental practices which would take on new adult patients for NHS treatment – and these had significant restrictions on who was allowed to register.
- Waiting lists for NHS dentistry can be as long as three years and can have over 1,000 people on them.
- The cost of private treatment is prohibitively expensive for those unable to access NHS dentistry, resulting in a large proportion of people not seeking treatment.
- 83.5% of our feedback about NHS dentistry has been negative.

¹ Healthwatch England. 2021. [What People Have Told us about NHS Dentistry: A Review of Our Evidence – January to March 2021.](#)

² North Yorkshire Partnerships. 2019. [North Yorkshire County Summary Profile.](#) p.2

- Waiting times for regular appointments have been significantly exacerbated during the pandemic due to closures, followed by an NHS instruction to prioritise emergency treatments and vulnerable groups after re-opening.

Our recommendations:

We call for greater involvement of the public in NHS dentistry. The voices of the public should play a greater role in shaping the delivery of services and be involved with developing public facing information to ensure it meets the needs of the local population.

Additionally, we feel the up-coming integrated care system reforms to health and social care should explore the possibility of taking on a greater role in commissioning NHS dentistry services.

Further to this, we fully endorse Healthwatch England's recommendations on dentistry³:

- There needs to be greater availability of NHS dentistry, in terms of increased access and affordability.
- Greater clarity in the information provided about NHS dentistry is needed, including improvements to NHS Choices website.
- Dental practices should proactively explore opportunities to support people's general health, providing advice on diet and lifestyle, and offer, where appropriate, signposting and referrals to other services.
- Current reforms of the way dentistry is commissioned and provided need to be radical and more rapid.

³ Healthwatch England. 2021. [What People Have Told us about NHS Dentistry: A Review of Our Evidence - January to March 2021.](#)

Dentistry: A Year in Focus

Dentistry has become a major area of concern for us at Healthwatch North Yorkshire. We receive frequent contacts from members of the public concerned about access, which has been our most common issue over the last 12 months, second to the vaccination programme. As a result, dentistry will be a key topic of our activities this coming year, and we felt it was timely to undertake an in-depth review of the dentistry feedback we have been gathering.

This review follows on from our monthly intelligence briefings conducted in October 2020 and February this year, and our COVID-19 in North Yorkshire briefing published in May. Over these reports, we have seen an increase in the volume and proportion of contacts regarding dentistry, and have monitored concerns.

19.2%

The proportion of public contact regarding dentistry



Pieces of dentistry feedback and signposting

Between 15 May 2020 and 14 May 2021, we recorded a total of 918 pieces of feedback and signposting. Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has dominated our activities over this period, with a huge surge in contact from members of the public seeking advice around the vaccination programme. Dentistry has been the second most common area that we have heard about, with 176 pieces of feedback and signposting recorded over this period, totalling 19.2% of our recorded contacts. This is an increase from 7.8% over the 12 months leading up to October 13th, demonstrating the increasing concern regarding dentistry among the public in North Yorkshire.

NHS dentistry was already an area of health and social care concern prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding contract for NHS dentistry has needed reform for several years in order to be able to meet the challenges it faces now and in the future.⁴ These include improving oral health outcomes, improving patient access and addressing inequalities, and ensuring that the dentistry provided is evidence based and includes preventative care.

The pandemic has only magnified the strain on the NHS dental system due to the high volume use of aerosol-generating procedures which increase the potential for the spread of COVID.⁵ Thus dental practices have had to implement rigorous and time-consuming infection protection and control measures to keep the dentists, staff, and ultimately patients, safe.

⁴ Westgarth, D. 2020. How Much Longer Does NHS Dentistry Have Left? British Dental Journal in Practice. 33 (5) pp. 12-15. Doi: [10.1038/s41404-020-0395-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41404-020-0395-7)

⁵ NHS England & NHS Improvement. 2021. Dental Update & Engagement, 10th May.

In March 2020, dental practices were closed due to the pandemic. When they opened again in June 2020, in recognition of the much more stringent infection prevention and control requirements, NHS dental practices were required to fulfil only 20% of their NHS contracts, and were instructed to prioritise emergency treatment. This was increased to 45% towards the end of last year, and since the end of April 2021 dentists have been required to fulfil 60% of their NHS contracts (as a minimum). This arrangement will be in place until September 30th, and it is unclear what the situation will be, come October. With reduced provision available, NHS dental practices have been instructed to prioritise emergency, on-going treatment, and hard to reach groups.

60%

The amount dental practices need to fulfil of their NHS contracts

70.5%

The proportion of contacts from members of the public seeking help with finding an NHS dentist

Unsurprisingly, reducing NHS dental provision by over half for over a year has had a major impact on the availability of appointments and treatments. 70.5% of our contacts have come from members of the public seeking help with finding a dental practice with space to register as a regular NHS patient.

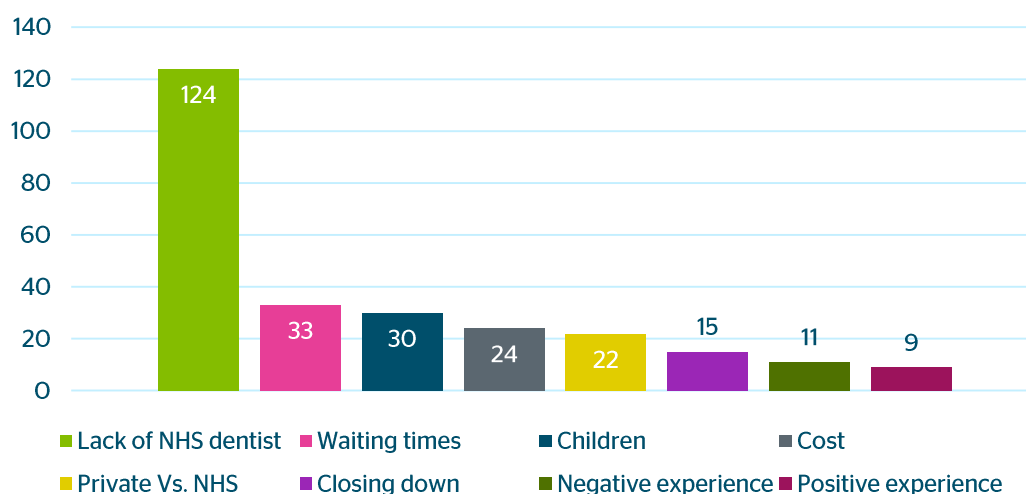
After not being able to access an NHS dentist, the next most common themes were: waiting times for NHS appointments; concerns around children's oral health, including a lack of access for pregnant persons; treatment costs; and being pushed towards private treatment.

We have received a small number of contacts concerning services closing down (or withdrawing from providing NHS treatment), and feedback regarding negative and positive experiences of treatment.⁶



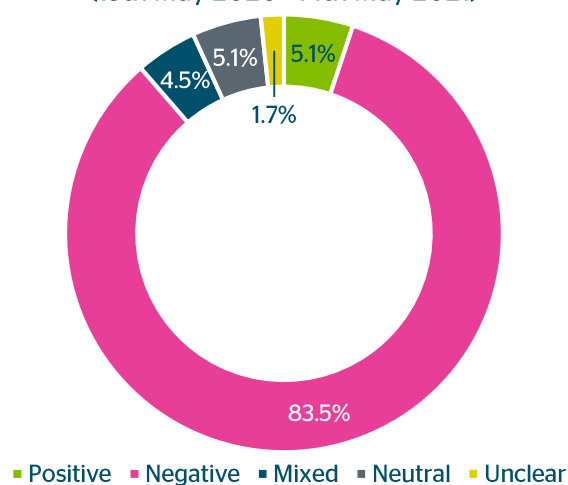
⁶ Themes are not mutually exclusive. Each piece of feedback and/or request for signposting can contain multiple themes.

Areas of concern within dental feedback



Given that most public feedback on dentistry has related to a lack of NHS dentists, waiting times, or cost, it is unsurprising that the vast majority (83.5%) of our feedback and/or signpost requests regarding dentistry have been negative.

Sentiment of Dentistry Feedback (15th May 2020 - 14th May 2021)



The dentistry problems that we have identified are by no means restricted to North Yorkshire, and are replicated across England. Many of our colleagues at other local Healthwatch are also hearing similar concerns from their local communities.⁷ Recently, Healthwatch England released their review finding a twin crisis of accessibility and affordability.⁸

⁷ Healthwatch Liverpool. 2021. [Access to Dental Care: Online Focus Group - Summary of Findings](#); Healthwatch Richmond upon Thames. 2021. [Dentistry Services During Coronavirus](#); Healthwatch Tower Hamlets. 2020. [Community insights on Dentistry in Tower Hamlets](#); Healthwatch Trafford. 2021. [Trouble Accessing a Dentist?](#); Healthwatch Wakefield. 2021. [Review of Feedback: Dental Services](#).

⁸ Healthwatch England. 2021. [What People Have Told us about NHS Dentistry: A Review of Our Evidence - January to March 2021](#). See also, Healthwatch England. 2021. [What People are Telling Us: A Summary July - September 2020](#).

Unfortunately, the problem relates to how NHS dentistry is funded. The activity based contract originally established in 2006 is no longer able to meet the demands of the public. The Department of Health and Social Care, in collaboration with NHS England, have been looking at dental contract reform since 2010.⁹ This year they have brought together key partners and stakeholders from across the dental community, including the British Dental Association, Primary Care Commissioning, Public Health England, the Care Quality Commission, and Healthwatch England to explore ways of reforming the dental system. Hopefully, this will prove fruitful for developing alternative funding models that increase availability of NHS dentistry.

We at Healthwatch North Yorkshire will continue to gather feedback from members of the public in North Yorkshire, and advocate for improvements. We are currently working with the NHS dental commissioners to help improve the provision of dentistry in Scarborough and the Robin Hood's Bay. Further to this, we are exploring local, regional, and national avenues for campaigning on this issue to seek the necessary changes required to ensure NHS dental access for all.



Healthwatch North Yorkshire would like to thank everyone who has contacted us, left feedback, or participated in our research and engagement activities. Our work is supported by the amazing efforts of our volunteers. We will continue to gather feedback and help support patients and the public across North Yorkshire.



⁹ NHS. n.d. [Dental Contract Reform](#).

NHS Dental Provision in North Yorkshire



In addition to reviewing our feedback, we contacted every NHS dental practice within North Yorkshire that is listed on NHS Choices website.¹⁰

Our volunteers called 71 dental practices. They asked if the practice was taking on NHS patients at the moment, recorded if patients were being offered a place on a waiting list, and if so, asked how long the waiting list was and how many people were on it. They also recorded if they were proactively offered a private appointment. Finally, they asked the dental practices if they knew of any practices which were taking on NHS patients at the current time.

In undertaking this activity, our volunteers have replicated the experience that many members of the public in North Yorkshire face. NHS Choices is the website which NHS England and NHS Improvement’s literature directs the public to for finding an NHS dentist. It is after exhausting NHS Choices that members of the public are then directed to their local Healthwatch to seek help in finding an NHS dentist. Unfortunately, we have no greater insight than the NHS Choices website.

Of the 71 dental practices listed on NHS choices, 11 told our volunteers they were not NHS practices. Of the 60 dental practices we called that delivered NHS dental treated, 2 were orthodontic practices only, whilst 5 only provided NHS treatment for children.

District	Population ¹¹	Number of practices listed on NHS Choices	Number after removing non-NHS practices ¹²
Selby	89,100	9	5
Harrogate	160,500	19	16
Craven	56,800	8	6
Richmondshire	53,200	3	3
Hambleton	90,700	15	14
Ryedale	54,900	5	3
Scarborough	108,700	12	11
Total	614,500	71	58

Concerning lack of clarity

We found a concerning lack of clarity regarding the actual level of NHS dentist provision across North Yorkshire, with significant levels of inaccuracy and confusion identified.

77

NHS dental practices in North Yorkshire

¹⁰ As practices are listed by distance to a location, identification of within district boundaries was done manually, and therefore omissions or erroneous inclusions are possible.

¹¹ North Yorkshire Partnerships. 2019. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment district profiles. All available at: nypartnerships.org.uk/jsna

¹² This includes 2 orthodontic practices which would not take on regular NHS patients.

On contacting them, NHS England and NHS Improvement informed us that there are 77 dental practices delivering NHS dentistry in the North Yorkshire County Council area.¹³ This number is different from the number of practices we identified on the NHS Choices website (71) which is itself inaccurate, as demonstrated by our research, adding to the confusion.

Assuming the higher figure of 77 is correct, with a population of approximately 614,500, that would amount to only one dental practice per 8,000 people.



¹³ NHS England & NHS Improvement. 2021. *Email to Healthwatch North Yorkshire, 21st May*. This excludes the 19 NHS dental practices in York, bringing the number dental practices in the North Yorkshire region to 96.

Public Feedback

We have been contacted 176 times about dentistry by members of the public over the past 12 months. Unfortunately, the vast majority (83.5%) of these have been negative. This has been caused by a lack of access to dentistry, whether this is due to being unable to register as an NHS patient (124) or increased waiting times due to COVID-19 (33). In turn, there has been frustration about feelings of a 'two-tier' system of private and NHS (22), with people concerned around the costs of treatment (24) and concerns for children who cannot be seen (29).

We received only a small number of feedback regarding dental treatment. With 11 being negative and nine being positive.

Experiences of dental treatment

Given the severely reduced access to NHS dentistry in North Yorkshire, it is unsurprising that we have received very little feedback from people's actual experiences of treatment.

We have received nine pieces of positive feedback, with good provision of PPE, adequate infection prevention control measures, and supportive staff being key aspects of this feedback.

[Participant]: I had to go to the urgent dentist during lockdown and it was a really good set-up. I had to go to Harrogate which was a long way but it was ok. The entrance was a bit confusing and it was not well set up for someone like me who needs to use the lift.

They had tried to separate it so that staff and patients entered through different entrances, but the patient entrance only led to the stairs so I had to enter through the staffs' entrance. When I got inside the dental nurse said that I should have waited in the car park and not come upstairs yet. It was hard to tell what you were supposed to do.

But once I got into the dentist's room it was ok. There were less things out on the surfaces but it felt quite normal. Once the staff were inside they could not leave and they had to wait for another staff member to come to the door and to bring the items they needed.

It took a bit longer because of this. I think some people might have found this difficult but it was ok for me.

[Their personal assistant]: The really good thing was that the dentist at the hub had spoken to [participant's] own dentist before-hand to find out what they needed to know about [participant].

- Focus group with community group, September 2020, anonymous, Skipton

We received slightly more negative feedback, with 11 pieces. Nine of these are in relation to poor quality treatment or service.

I have an NHS dentist, but in July I needed treatment. I asked for a bridge, but I was told I couldn't have this under NHS treatment, and was given a plate instead. The work required a tooth being pulled out, but the plate has caused another tooth to fall out, so I'm now missing two teeth at the front of my mouth!

[The dental practice] want to do the minimum...

I was meant to go in January, but that's been delayed because of COVID.

- Telephone, May 2021, 50-64 year-old woman, Scarborough

As COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease, and dentists are able to see more people for regular treatment (rather than predominantly emergency treatment), we will hope to see an increase in the public's feedback regarding treatment.

Lack of NHS dentists

The majority (124) of the feedback we received involved the lack of NHS dentistry provision. Large numbers of people called us asking for help in finding an NHS dentist that they could register with.

1,000

people on the longest waiting list we identified
(currently closed to further patients)

I was knocked off my road bike a week ago and went face first into a steel lamp post, I've knocked my four upper front teeth out, chipped my upper canine teeth and chipped and loosened most of bottom front teeth.

I went to A&E and was advised to find a dentist as soon as possible, I've had no luck. My regular dentist retired last year and I've been unable to register anywhere, I wore braces for three years and did have perfect straight teeth with no cavities and usually only needed a checkup in the past, can you recommend anywhere where I can get some help, I've been managing on painkillers since.

- Email, April 2021, 25 to 49 year-old man, Scarborough

After we called the 71 dental practices in North Yorkshire that were listed on NHS choices, we were told that only two were taking on NHS patients at the current time.

However, these two practices are not available for the majority of people living in North Yorkshire. Gargrave Dental Practice in Craven was only taking on patients from their village in the Skipton area, whilst Hampsteads in Hambleton were only offering places to patients exempt from paying for NHS treatment. This means that for most people in North Yorkshire, there is not a single dental practice in North Yorkshire that will currently see them as new NHS patient.

When we did our first one-year review of dentistry feedback back in October, we heard that people would be offered a place on a waiting list when asking to be seen as an NHS patient. However, since then we are hearing more than ever that this option is not being offered to people.

3 years

Longest waiting list by length of
wait (still open to further patients)

Only 10 of the practices we contacted offered a place on a waiting list for NHS treatment. Five of these did not know, or were unable to say, how long their waiting lists were. Two said at least one year, another told us 18 months, whilst two said their waiting list was an estimated three years.

With a lack of dental practices taking on new NHS patients at the current time, this makes it very difficult for those who move into (or around) North Yorkshire to access NHS dental care. We heard from one person living in Selby who travels to Peterborough to receive treatment as they have been unable to register locally despite having lived in the county for one and a half years (email, December 2020,

anonymous, Selby). In another enquiry, a caller told us they would travel to Cornwall to get treatment if required as they had been instructed to receive dental treatment after a diagnosis of osteoporosis (telephone, May 2021, 50 to 64 year-old woman, Pickering).

Waiting times

For those who are registered as an NHS dental patient, their access to services is not much better. We have heard from 33 people informing us of long waiting times to be seen, this includes being seen for regular appointments, delayed ongoing treatment, and hearing of long waits to be seen for emergency treatment.



The majority of the feedback (from 26 people) related to long waits for regular appointments.

All my check-ups have been cancelled, I'm pregnant and wanted to keep on top of my dental health but not been allowed an appointment all the way through the pandemic. Yet my husband's dentist is a few miles from mine and he's been going to appointments and getting his reminders. Both NHS.

- Telephone, December 2020, anonymous, Settle

We have received five pieces of feedback regarding long delays for ongoing treatment as a result of COVID-19.

I needed an emergency filling at the beginning of first lockdown. I was offered a temporary DIY kit which worked for all of 2 days. I called to see if they were open to fix it yet and was told I'm near the top of the list so will be called in as soon as possible. Weeks go by. I finally got my appointment, only to find that they still can't fix it because they can't use all equipment without the correct PPE. God knows how many months later and I've still only got a temporary fix.

- Email, December 2020, anonymous, Harrogate

Children's oral health

Children's oral health has been an increasing area of concern over this review. We have recorded 29 pieces of contact regarding access to treatment for children (and pregnant mothers), with all but five having been received in 2021.

I have been trying to obtain an NHS dentist for my 10 year old daughter, myself and my husband. The whole of the Ripon/Harrogate/Boroughbridge/Bedale area has no availability for NHS patients. One dentist in Knaresborough said they could add us to a list that had a 3 year wait for an appointment! Another told me that the only way that my daughter could be seen would be if myself and my husband took a private place at a cost of £75 for an initial consultation each! This is disgraceful and holding people to ransom for their children to be able to access basic dental treatment!

Whilst I do not need to see a dentist it is imperative that children have access to NHS dentists whilst growing.

- Website feedback, April 2021, anonymous, Harrogate

Dental decay can cause pain, sleepless nights, days off school,¹⁴ and is the top cause of childhood hospital admission for five to nine-year-olds.¹⁵

I live in Scarborough and recently my dentist practice has closed its doors. Both myself and my child are now without an NHS dentist.

I will go without as I can't afford private treatment, but my child should be entitled to dental care, as he is covered until the age of 18 but nowhere will take him on.

I have trawled the NHS website and rang every dentist for miles around without any success.

We are going to end up with a serious problem to our young people's teeth, I for one find it ludicrous that dentists are not forced to see children, don't we have a duty of care to look after our young ones?

- Email, March 2021, anonymous, Scarborough

We have also heard of pregnant mothers who have been unable to access free NHS dental treatment. Hormonal changes during pregnancy can make gums more vulnerable to plaque, leading to inflammation and bleeding, sometimes known as pregnancy gingivitis or gum disease.¹⁶ Pregnant mothers are entitled to free NHS dental treatment during pregnancy and for 12 months after their baby is born.¹⁷

Private vs NHS

In our contacts by members of the public, we have seen a frustration that people call a practice looking for an NHS appointment, only to be told there is no availability but they could be seen as a private patient. This has been described to us as a 'two tier system'.

My NHS dentist's website is clear that they are seeing DenPlan [private] patients but they are not seeing NHS patients except for emergencies. I am concerned that NHS patients have been abandoned. It isn't clear to me why it is safe to see paying customers but no effort is yet being made to contact NHS patients.

- Email, December 2020, anonymous, Harrogate

Of the NHS dental practices we called, nine offered private treatment unprompted to our callers. This is only around one-eighth of the NHS practices we called. This would indicate that NHS dental practices are not trying to capitalise on the current situation of reduced NHS availability.

Most dental practices that provide NHS treatments also hold private lists. The NHS is able, and has been, directing practices to prioritise certain treatments for NHS care. However, practices can prioritise as they wish for their private lists. Therefore, we have a situation where a dental practice cannot provide a regular appointment for NHS patients (to prioritise for emergency treatment and vulnerable groups), but they have space on their private lists for regular treatments.

¹⁴ PHE. 2017. [Health Matters: Tackling Child Dental Health Issues at a Local Level](#).

¹⁵ LGA. 2016. [Tackling Poor Oral Health in Children: Local Government's Public Health Role](#).

¹⁶ NHS. 2019. [Bleeding Gums](#).

¹⁷ NHS. 2018. [Health Things You Should Know in Pregnancy](#).



Treatment costs

Without access to regular NHS dental treatment, people are pushed towards private treatment which can cost significantly more than similar treatments on the NHS. 24 of our contacts have raised concerns about the cost of private treatment.

Person rang to complain about not being able to get a dental appointment as new NHS patient. They had contacted 15 dentists listed on the NHS Choices website and was highly upset that none was able to accept a new NHS patient. However, most dental practices have available appointments on a private basis. The caller felt practices were strongly suggesting to arrange a private appointment. Variation of prices for an initial consultation is £75-£95. Price range of the actual works is starting from £750.

- Telephone, December 2020, anonymous, Skipton

The option of receiving private treatment is just not possible for the poorest among society. Of the 24 contacts who told us they could not afford to pay for private treatment, six told us they had treatment plans quoted at over £1,000. One caller told us that they would need to spend over £7,000 if they went private, due to having complex needs.

There is strong messaging coming from NHS England that emergency provision should be available to those that need it. However, as noted in the *Waiting times* section, there can be difficulty in accessing this. It can also be expensive for the necessary follow-up treatment without access to NHS dentistry.

Caller rang about their partner. They have a hole in their tooth. Rang 111 to arrange an emergency appointment because of the pain - took a week and a half to get an appointment.

The dentist charged £90, and gave antibiotics. Told them to come back two days later for further treatment, bill to be £1,600. Tried finding NHS dentists elsewhere, none anywhere. Partner can't pay that as unemployed for past 6 months.
- Telephone, April 2021, anonymous, Harrogate

Practices closures

Over the one-year period under review, we have heard from 15 members of the public about dental practices stopping NHS treatment. We are aware of four practices which have either closed or stopped providing NHS dental treatment - one in Ryedale, one in Scarborough, and two in Selby. The reasons for these vary: contract withdrawn by the NHS; the practice closing down entirely; and, returning of their NHS contract. Such closures can cause significant problems for those that were in the middle of treatments that were put on hold because of the pandemic.

Caller rang saying they've been told by their dentist that the practice is closing. Prior to lockdown, they had had their front tooth removed, and were going to replace it. 'Been walking around with a gap in my mouth since.' He's on benefits, no way can pay for private.
- Telephone, March 2021, 50 to 64 year-old man, Scarborough

Whatever the reason, the result is the same with people and families losing access to their regular NHS dental treatment. In these cases, it is common practice, that where possible NHS commissioners try to source emergency provision to replace the service for those who have lost it. Unfortunately, due to the nature of NHS dental contracts, there is no way to ensure that those who lose their regular NHS dental coverage are given priority with the replacement provision.

The sentiment that comes through from people when their local NHS dental practice closes down, is the lack of support that they receive in finding alternative treatment.

I have just received a generic NHS England letter to tell me that my NHS dentist has closed. The letter just says to use the NHS 'Find a Service' function which I have tried using but the closest place it came up with was in Bournemouth. I tried putting in things closer to home and the closed practice is still shown on there.

I have tried ringing round a number of different practices but they are not taking on new patients or there is a 2 year waiting list.

We are a family of 5, with 3 elderly parents and we are all now without a dental practice. I want to know why it has closed so suddenly. We have been attending twice a year for some time now.

- Telephone, October 2020, anonymous, Ryedale

We have been working closely with the NHS dental commissioners at NHS England and NHS Improvement, and over the past few months we have been helping them with their public engagement for the procurement of long-term NHS dental treatment in Scarborough and emergency coverage in the Robin Hood's Bay area. We hope to continue to help NHS England and NHS Improvement to use the voice of patients and the public in North Yorkshire to ensure services meet the needs of the people of North Yorkshire.

Action Taken by Healthwatch North Yorkshire

What we have done so far

- Met with regional NHS dental commissioners, to help secure NHS dental provision for people who have lost their NHS dental coverage as a result of their practice closing.
- Produced summary intelligence briefings for dental commissioners and relevant stakeholders.
- Undertook public engagement (via focus groups and surveys) in Scarborough and Robin Hoods Bay to seek the views of the public concerning future dentistry services, in partnership with NHS England & NHS Improvement.
- Provided insight into dentistry issues via our last two COVID-19 public feedback reports to key stakeholders, including North Yorkshire County Council.
- Contributed dental intelligence to Healthwatch England to support their ongoing work and campaigning.
- Provided public feedback and insight into dentistry issues to West Yorkshire & Harrogate Health & Care Partnership.
- Provided support to members of the public in trying to find an NHS dentist, helping them access treatment where possible in the current climate.
- Highlighted the concerns of the public about dentistry with regional media such as BBC Radio York, This is the Coast, and YorkshireLive.

Next steps

- We will continue to proactively collect feedback from the people of North Yorkshire about NHS dentistry, and monitor developments.
- Work with NHS dental commissioners to ensure the voice of people in North Yorkshire is included in decision making.
- Continue to work with NHS England & NHS Improvement on engagement activities to support the provision and procurement of dental services across Scarborough district and Robin Hoods Bay. We will also seek opportunities to deliver similar support across North Yorkshire.
- Continue to feed into regional and national Healthwatch activities to keep dentistry on the public agenda.

healthwatch

North Yorkshire

Healthwatch North Yorkshire is an independent charity commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council to carry out statutory duties.

The Healthwatch Network was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.



Share your views with us

If you have a query about a health and social care service, or need help with where you can go to access further support, get in touch. Don't struggle alone. Healthwatch is here for you.

Website: www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk

Telephone: 01904 552687

Email: admin@hwny.co.uk



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