

**Written evidence submitted by Jan Cuerden (DTY0036)**

I sat in the waiting room of my dentist last summer and listened to the phone calls the receptionists were making as they rang around parents whose children had a forthcoming appointment to explain to parents that their children could no longer be seen at that surgery under the NHS, as planned. The receptionists were not hopeful for parents looking to register at an NHS surgery and could supply no information. From then on, receptionists expected parents would need to pay – yet another unexpected expenditure for a family budget.

I asked the receptionists how this situation had arisen. The receptionists explained to me that there was a requirement for all potential NHS dentists to complete a year with a qualified NHS dentist being mentored before they could be considered as a qualified NHS dentist. As there was very little reward for mentoring, very few NHS dentists were willing to provide this training. In consequence, we now have fewer NHS dentists and presumably, this current requirement for mentoring will further reduce possibilities of mentoring.

The surgery had been unable to employ NHS dentists and managers had little alternative but to make the decision to become a private service for all their patients – no more NHS. The steady, creeping privatisation was witnessed first-hand and it was sickening to think of the added financial pressure to these families or, of course, poorer dental care for children.

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When I first travelled outside of Europe some decades ago, I was shocked at the number of people with poor teeth - teeth blackened, chipped and missing. This is now the new “norm” where I live in the UK. We have all heard of people pulling their own teeth as they cannot afford an appointment. When people smile, I witness daily the impact of privatised dental health services in the form of rotted and decayed teeth. This is a sad reflection on the fifth richest country in the world. Privatisation of the NHS Dental Service is not working to look after the working population.

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It does not need to be like this – it’s that simple. Why should one of the most fundamental factors of the health and well-being of British people be subjected to shareholders profits? Please renationalise NHS Dentist and reverse the decline and availability of NHS dentists.

**Jan 2023**