

Submission to HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO
NHS DENTISTRY FROM Vicky Marriott, Chief Officer, Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and
South Gloucestershire

We collected and published evidence in 2021/22, where over 300 pieces of feedback, fell into 5 access problems; accessing any NHS dentist list, accessing an appointment to help to stop tooth pain, lack of access for people with no means for paying (impact on health inequalities), access to up-to-date information and the access to private-only pathways to care.

In 2022/23 these five issues are still in our feedback, in particular populations with existing health inequalities have become a predominant concern.

Type of activity	Sentiment	Category of service	Theme	Narrative	Location
Complaint, Request for Information	Negative	Quality of Care, Quality of treatment	Access to services, Discharge, Information providing	Patient's dentist has taken them off their NHS patients list as have not been since before the pandemic. They have checked around 40 dentists on a list on the NHS website and they all say they are not taking new NHS patients. Patient asked if, as it was emergency appointments only for a while, shouldn't they be taking former patients back?	My Dentist Beaconsfield Rd Weston Super Mare
Complaint, Point of view	Negative	Cost of services, Quality of Care	Access to services	Person tried to find an NHS dentist as they need a filling. According to the NHS website there are none accepting new patients in local area that they live or work. The only option they had was to book in with a private dentist which told them they needed 4 fillings which will cost £859. Patient says they ended up not getting the treatment done. Patient suggests people's teeth will just become bad over time as the cost of dentistry prevents people going.	NHS Dental Services
Concern, Request for Information	Negative	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services, Information providing	Patient moved to Weston-super-Mare in 2020 to work in the hospital during Covid. Contacted several NHS dentists to see if could join them and was told they were not taking anyone on. Has been having sensitivity and toothache but on contacting dentists was told they still are not taking anyone on. Patient said that the longer the problems are left the more damage is done and then it's harder to repair. They cannot afford private dental care.	NHS Dental Services
Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services, Information	Person has been calling dentists in the Portishead & surrounding areas and wanted advice how they might find one.	NHS Dental Services
Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services	Person moved to Portishead but cannot find an NHS dentist.	NHS Dental Services
Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services, Information	Person is pregnant & has swelling in their tooth and gum which is getting worse. Has contacted dentists but not taking NHS patients.	NHS Dental Services
Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services, Information	Person's husband is disabled and needs a dentist but cannot find a NHS dentists taking on new patients in Weston	NHS Dental Services

Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care, Service delivery, organisation, and staffing	Access to services, Information providing	Person moved to Weston recently. 77 years old and his wife 61 but they cannot find a dentist offering NHS treatment. Both had regular check-ups. They wanted help to find them a dentist.	NHS Dentist
Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care	Access to services, Information providing	Person had contacted 6 different dental practices in Weston-super -Mare without success, needing NHS, because they work part time.	NHS Dentist
Complaint	Negative	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services, Information	Person suggests you cannot get a dentist unless you can afford one. They have two chipped teeth and one tooth fell out, and others are wobbly and falling out one by one.	NHS Dentist
Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services	Person is unable to find an NHS dentist in Weston or the surrounding area.	NHS Dentist
Request for Information	Negative	Continuity of Care, Quality of Care	Access to services	Person unable to find an NHS dentist in Weston after trying twenty surgeries	NHS Dentist
Request for Information	Neutral	Quality of Care	Access to services, Information providing	Person moved to Nailsea from Worcestershire and cannot find an NHS dentist.	NHS Dental Services
Point of view, Request for Information	Mixed	Quality of Care	Access to services, Information providing	Person struggling to find nhs dental services having been removed from my dentist's books. Had appointments cancelled prior to lockdown. Now has an emergency and cannot get an appointment.	NHS Dentist
Request for Information	Neutral	Continuity of Care	Information providing	Person moved to Long Ashton and requested help to find an NHS dentist	NHS Dentist
Concern	Neutral	Other	Access to services	This is a dental query in South Gloucestershire from a single working parent.	NHS Dental in BS30
Concern	Neutral	Other	Access to services	The person is trying to find an NHS dentist near where they live - GL9 - for themselves and their child.	NHS Dental
Concern	Negative	Other	Access to services	Problems getting follow up NHS dental treatment in local surgery.	Oldland Dental Practice
Concern	Neutral	Other	Access to services	The person was seeking NHS dental services in the Yate area.	NHS Dental Yate area
Concern	Negative	Other	Access to services	The person cannot find NHS dental care within 1 hour's drive from their address in South Gloucestershire.	NHS Dental
Concern	Negative	Other	Access to services	Person can't get an NHS dental appointment for follow up dental treatment at their NHS dentist in Willsbridge, no dental surgery name given.	NHS Dental
	Negative	Access	Caller is looking for an NHS dentist and states, that he contacted HW a year ago but is still having trouble finding a dentist.		All NHS Dental
	Negative	Access, Costs	Caller says that the dental surgery said they were taking on new NHS patients would take her with their new independent dentist at NHS prices but that when she arrived, the x ray machine was not working, they had booked an upstairs room although they knew she needed wheelchair access, they made her pay upfront although she was exempt.		Bishopsworth Dental Practice

Negative	Access	Resident states that he has had terrible toothache for weeks and has tried in vain to find an NHS dentist. He states his toothache is getting worse and worse and the pain is no longer managed by codeine or ibuprofen. He has called 111 and been advised it is not severe enough to go to A&E. NHS website states most emergency dentists require a referral.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller has been searching for a dentist for over 12 months and is now feeling desperate, he reports trying every practice in Bristol	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller states that she needs an NHS dentist, as her back teeth have broken, she says most of dentists nearby are not taking new NHS patients.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	The individual is calling on behalf of friend who are recently hosting a Ukrainian family within their house. This family cannot access any dentist and are struggling with their dental health.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	Resident states that she and her husband are having a major problem with finding NHS dental services. They are registered as NHS patients at a practice but have been told that the practice is moving away from having NHS patients and moving patients onto private dental plans. Her husband had a check-up this week, was told he needs root canal treatment and a crown but was charged for an NHS check-up and given a private treatment plan at the cost of £1,500. She says they cannot afford that, and neither can they find any NHS dentists accepting patients in the area. His tooth cannot go untreated indefinitely, but she feels like they have no choice.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller is terribly upset , needs root canal treatment very soon otherwise it will lead to an extraction- she is 22 years old. She has visited the emergency department twice already after trying to find an NHS dentist several times and the only thing they can provide is pain relief and a filling which is not a permanent solution. They are adamant that she cannot receive the treatment as an emergency service, however not being able to register with an NHS dentist means that it's impossible to get the treatment at all. She's been prescribed antidepressants.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	Caller cannot find an NHS dentist. He has written to his MP but received only a generic response, has also complained to the NHS ombudsman but has had no response. He feels a national campaign needs to be launched.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller states that he is having serious jaw pain and rang 111, who told him to call the emergency dentist line. He has been on hold for 20 minutes with no sign of being answered. He feels desperate and is asking for help or advice.	NHS Dental

Negative	Access Costs	Caller states he needs an NHS dentist. He has called 111 who he says simply do not answer the phone or when he gets through the call is disconnected. He has also looked at websites, called practices and NHS England. He is in receipt of sickness benefit and does not know what else he can do to get some help.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	This individual is unable to find and register with an NHS dentist after moving house. They emailed their previous dentist to ask if they transfer their patients but have yet to heard back. This individual wears a mouthguard at night. They have fed back that they were lucky enough to not have teeth problems when going through chemotherapy 2 years ago.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	Caller states that she moved to the area in August 2021 and ever since cannot find an NHS dentist anyway that is accepting new patients. Her partner needs to see a dentist before it is an emergency. She is a student, her husband works part time, they can't afford private treatment.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller reports that her dentist has told her that because she let it go too long for an appointment, she has now been struck off and she is unable find another dentist anywhere.	My Dentist Gloucester Rd
Negative	Access	Caller is looking for an NHS dental practice taking on new patients for her son, 15 years old, and needs a brace. She has tried all Bristol areas, but they are not taking any at present.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	Caller reports he recently had a issue with an abscess caused by teeth decay and his teeth need extraction but there are no places in Bristol accepting NHS patients currently. He says private treatment would be £800 which is unaffordable, especially with the cost of living up as well. He has been forced to wait daily for hours for a phone appointment via dental emergency helpline.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	The resident is experiencing extremely distressing dental pain and problems with gum disease. She is depressed and although has managed to complete one emergency dental visit the problems remain and are worsening. She has written a detailed and distressing explanation.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller reports that she has suffered with a tooth problem since last October. She contacted the 111 service and they have supplied her with contact numbers of dentists, but a dentist wont take her on as an NHS patient. She is 66 and struggles with the tooth pain. She does not think it's an urgent matter, but it makes her anxious not knowing when it might be addressed.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	Resident states that he needs to get root canal work and a crown. He was on the NHS dentistry waiting list for 2.5 years. The tooth is also chipped and cracked on	All NHS Dental

		the filling. He's been told the root canal has become re-infected. They really emphasised the need to get the work done soon and quoted about £1750. Caller cannot afford this and cannot find an NHS scheme.	
Negative	Access Costs	Caller states that she wishes to voice her concern on the unavailability of NHS dental care in Bristol. She has not been to the dentist in around 7 years. She now requires dental work and has at least one visible hole in a tooth which sometimes causes pain, and the overall health is deteriorating due to no professional care over the years. There are no dental practices taking on new NHS patients and she has been told the waiting list is around 4 years.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	The caller states that she is at a loss and getting desperate. She is looking to find a dental practice in Bristol taking on NHS patients but is struggling to find one	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	Resident states that he cannot find an NHS dentist within 30-mile radius. He cannot afford private treatment. He says you must wait until in pain and call 111 and another tooth gone so he now has only have one tooth left on bottom. Soon he thinks he will be on a liquid diet.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller states that she spoke to HW just over a year ago regarding the issues with registering as an NHS patient in England. She put herself on the waiting list for the dentists as we suggested however 13 months on, but is asking for help finding any dentist accepting NHS patients now.	All NHS Dental
Mixed	Access Waiting times	Appointments are readily available, all staff are very pleasant, the service provides efficient and up-to-date technology, the environment feels professional, and the Surgery adhered strictly to Covid-19 guidelines. But patients must arrive extremely early due to there being no parking spaces so those visiting must find a space on the street, patients also must wait outside in cold, wet conditions	Easton Dental Practice
Negative	Access	Caller reports that he and partner still unable to register with a dental clinic that accepts NHS patients. He contacted HW a year ago and has still had no luck. He has a loose tooth (with bone loss as well) and really would like to get registered and consult it with a dentist.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	This individual and their family have moved from Hong Kong and are struggling to find an accepting NHS Dentist.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	Caller reports that she had to cancel a dentist appointment today as she was not feeling well enough to leave the house. She only missed 1 other appointment which was unaware had been booked. She is autistic and a registered disabled person who is	All NHS Dental

		clinically vulnerable and facing health inequalities. She is left wondering about the legality under an NHS contract.	
Negative	Access	This individual contacted us as they have recently began hosting a Ukrainian Refugee. Want information on how to help access a GP, and other support services that available to help.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	This individual has bleeding gums and receding teeth, making it impossible to eat food on one side of their mouth, so they are having to chew their food on one side of their mouth. They did have a dentist 5 years ago, however, they did not go in 2 years, so they were kicked off.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller states that he cannot find a dentist taking NHS patients in the Bristol or Bath area. He has not been to a dentist in over 4 years and his teeth are starting to hurt	All NHS Dental
Negative	Quality of care Quality of treatment	The caller reports that a poorly executed root canal treatment as an NHS patient in January 2022 left part of an instrument in the canal. The caller says she was removing shards of tooth enamel and amalgam filling from between her teeth and out of her gum. Within two weeks she needed emergency treatment and was told to expect repeated infections under the tooth. The appointment was exceedingly painful, and another emergency appointment was needed. The caller is angry about the pain she is in and the fact that the NHS dentist suggested she has it remedied by a private dentist.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	The callers' states that he is having a problem in finding a dental clinic for his family after moving to Bristol in 2021. The family have refugee status. The older child is diagnosed with ADHD and has special educational needs. Since moving to Bristol he is unable to find a free NHS Dental clinic and cannot use private services due to the financial situation of the family.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	The caller states that he wants to register with an NHS dentist in Bristol. He has searched but is struggling to find a dentist. He is a student at the University of Bristol.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Unknown issue with access to NHS dentistry.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	The resident reports she was de-registered from her dental surgery during coronavirus lockdown. However, she was not informed. Since then, she can only find NHS dental surgeries who will treat her privately, which she cannot afford. She has broken teeth, needs fillings.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	The caller is concerned because herself and her 2 children received letters saying the dental practice, they have been with for 12 years, is going private. She cannot afford this in a cost-of-living crisis. She has been ringing around local surgeries but none are taking NHS patients	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	Caller is an NHS dental patient for 26 years. She has	All NHS Dental

	Costs	always attended appointments and been a good patient. A letter from the dentist says they are now going private, and to stay with the practice she will therefore have to go private. She says the chances of her getting another NHS dentist are zero to none. She asks if she has any rights over the situation.	
Negative	Access	The resident reports his NHS dentist went private. The nearest NHS one is in Tewkesbury, a 50-minute drive away. Says this government does not care about the NHS or for ordinary people.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	The resident is distressed and states that she is unable to find an NHS dentist anywhere in the area. She has some complex care needs, longstanding mental health issues and is on antidepressants, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and has fibromyalgia.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	The caller needs an NHS dentist and states he has limited mobility from Multiple Sclerosis and use a Zimmer Frame to leave home, but is mostly housebound and therefore requires a dentist close to home. He has Trigeminal Neuralgia which complicates the dental needs as most of this year he's had limited ability to open his mouth. Talking, eating and drinking have been sometimes not possible, despite maximum doses of anti-epileptic medication and opioids. He had surgery (for the fourth time) for Trigeminal Neuralgia this June. The right side of his face is now numb, but a full dental check-up is needed. He needs to find an NHS dentist locally.	All NHS Dental
Mixed	Access	Callers mother has dementia and has been unable to find an NHS dentist after having moved to Bristol to be closer to family. A kind dentist where most of the family are registered, and further away, agreed on an exceptional basis, to take his mum as an NHS patient, in August.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Costs	The resident reports that he is unable to find an NHS dentist anywhere for his mum who has dementia. His mum is unable to get registered with a dentist, despite having some issues that need to be addressed although not currently in pain, so cannot use emergency dental treatment route. He adds that the current situation is a complete disgrace.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	A FURTHER 26 REQUESTS FOR DENTAL ACCESS WHERE CITIZENS REPORTED CALLING NUMEROUS SURGERIES, USING THE SEARCH WEBSITE, CALLING NHS111 AND BEING UNABLE TO REGISTER WITH OR SEE, AN NHS DENTIST– A TOTAL OF 69 NEGATIVE FEEDBACK RESPONSES CONCERNING DENTAL SERVICES RECORDED IN THIS QUARTER	All NHS dental
Negative	Access	The resident is experiencing extremely distressing dental pain and problems with gum disease. She is depressed and	All NHS Dental

		although has managed to complete one emergency dental visit the problems remain and are worsening. She has written a detailed and distressing explanation.	
Negative	Access Costs	Caller reports that she had to cancel a dentist appointment today as she was not feeling well enough to leave the house. She only missed 1 other appointment which was unaware had been booked. She is autistic and a registered disabled person who is clinically vulnerable and facing health inequalities. She is left wondering about the legality under an NHS contract.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access Support	The caller's son has ADHD and hasn't seen a dentist since 2018 and he needs to. He has very bad tooth decay and need loads of filling and has got a crowned mouth and his teeth are badly damaged and broken which affect his everyday life. He dropped out of college because when he eats, he is in pain and his breath smells bad, but fears the dentist and needs putting to sleep, for the work to be done. Caller has phoned 111 but cannot access an NHS dentist who will do it.	Wells Road Dental Practice
Negative	Access Costs Communication	The caller states that she was informed that her dental practitioner was leaving and that she no longer was able to access NHS treatment. She was offered a private consultations. She has subsequently attempted to find another NHS dentist but without success within Bristol or surrounding areas. She had a filling 'fall out' and although is not currently experiencing bad pain she anticipates this will ultimately occur in the fullness of time. She has osteoporosis and takes other medications, this is contraindicatory of invasive dental work. She can't pay for private treatment on a regular basis but needs to see someone before her dental health deteriorates more.	My dentist Knowle
Negative	Access	The resident is enquiring on behalf of his father who has lost his false teeth and is having trouble eating solid food. He is housebound with diabetes and is in a wheelchair following the amputation of both legs. He is no longer registered with his previous dentist and would need a home visit for treatment.	All NHS Dental
Negative	Access	The caller needs an NHS dentist and states he has limited mobility from Multiple Sclerosis and use a Zimmer Frame to leave home, but is mostly housebound and therefore requires a dentist close to home. He has Trigeminal Neuralgia which complicates the dental needs as most of this year he's had limited ability to open his mouth. Talking, eating and drinking have been sometimes not possible, despite maximum doses of anti-epileptic medication and opioids. He had surgery (for the fourth time) for Trigeminal Neuralgia this June. The right side of his face is now numb, but a full dental check-up is needed. His needs to find an NHS dentist locally.	All NHS Dental
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		complex care needs, longstanding mental health issues and is on antidepressants, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and has fibromyalgia.	
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