

Supplementary written evidence submitted by the Department of Health and Social Care (DTY0104)

Thank you for taking our oral evidence for the Health and Social Care Committee Inquiry on Dentistry on 25 April 2023. As agreed, I am now writing to provide the outstanding information on some of the areas of NHS dental services that I and NHS England discussed with the Committee. I apologise for the delay in this response reaching you, due to an administrative oversight.

Data on dental activity

NHS Digital publishes Dental Statistics for England. The latest annual report brings together information on NHS dental activity in England for the 12-month period to 31 March 2022 (including clinical treatments and dental workforce) and information on the number of patients seen by an NHS dentist up to 30 June 2022. This is available from the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-dental-statistics/2021-22-annual-report>

The latest report shows that 24,272 dentists performed NHS activity during 2021-22, which is an increase of 539 from the previous year. We do not hold data on the number of part-time or full-time equivalent dentists.

Other data that may be of interest are:

- 16.4m adults were seen by an NHS Dentist in the 24-months up to 30 June 2022, which is a 9.7 per cent decrease to the previous 24-month period;
- 5.6m children were seen by an NHS dentist in the 12 months up to 30 June 2022, which is a 41.6 per cent increase compared to the previous year;
- 26.4m courses of treatment were delivered in 2021-22, which is an increase of 120.0 per cent compared to the previous year.

NHSE have also now published the management information I referred to at the evidence session, which is available here: [Primary-Care-Dental supplementary-data.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

Support for Military Veterans and their families to access NHS Dentistry

We do not hold data on the number of veterans and their family members accessing NHS dentistry.

The Defence Medical Service (DMS) provides healthcare (including dentistry) to Service Personnel to ensure that the maximum possible number of Service Personnel are medically fit for the tasks required of them in service to our country. DHSC officials have met with DMS to discuss the provision of dental care to service personnel families and continue to discuss how to improve the provision of dental care to the armed forces community

The NHS Dental Plan

Our plan for NHS dentistry, which will be published shortly, will announce reforms to improve access to NHS dental care across England for patients of all ages. It will include several areas requiring further action to support and recover activity in NHS dentistry, such as how to incentivise NHS dentists to deliver more NHS care.

Our plan for NHS dentistry will build upon the first package of reforms of July 2022, which included changes to the banding of treatments and the introduction of a minimum Units of Dental Activity value.

The NHS Workforce Plan

To support the NHS workforce, we commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term plan for the NHS workforce for the next 15 years to ensure that we have the right numbers of staff with the right skills to transform and deliver high quality services that are fit for the future. This plan was published recently and includes projections for the number of dentists and the wider dental workforce that will be required at 5, 10 and 15 years' time, and the mix of staff required. The plan announced that we are going to increase dentistry places by 40% so that there are over 1,100 places by 2031/32. To support this ambition, we will expand places 24% by 2028/29, taking the overall number that year to 1,000 places. We are also going to increase training places for dental therapists and hygiene professionals to more than 500 by 2031/32.

The plan also set out the actions and reforms required to reduce supply gaps and improve retention, and is available here: [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

I trust that the above further supports the Committee with its work, and I look forward to the publication of the Report of the Inquiry in due course.

Yours Sincerely



NEIL O'BRIEN MP

July 2023