

Exploring NHS Dental Services in Dudley borough *on a page.*

Getting an appointment

84% of survey respondents successfully booked an NHS dental appointment.

- People told us they were able to book routine appointments.
- People told us of long waits to access more urgent or specialist NHS dental treatment.

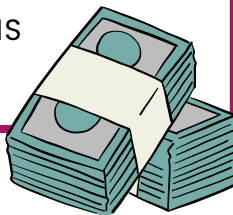
Physical access

42.5% of people who encountered physical barriers felt they were not treated with dignity and respect.

- Some dental practices are not accessible to wheelchair users.
- While some accessibility information is available on the NHS website, it can be made clearer.

Appointment times

- People told us they found it difficult to get appointments around work, caring or education commitments.
- Some people told us how their dental practice tailored their treatment to reduce the number of appointments and therefore time off work needed.
- Some practices only offer NHS treatment at certain times.



Costs

35% of respondents said cost prevented them from getting treatment.

- People told us that the cost of dental treatment forced them to make difficult decisions. With some people choosing not to get treatment and others going into debt.
- Some people told us their dental practice worked with them to complete treatment in fewer sessions to reduce both cost and time off work.

Communication

45% of people who requested communication support said it was provided.

- Communication support was not always offered or provided.
- People told us of feeling dismissed when asking for communication support.
- Improving communication can improve both clinical outcomes and the patient/provider relationship.
- Awareness and understanding of different communication needs is wanted by patients and community groups.

Fear and anxiety

42% of people experience fear or anxiety about visiting the dentist.

- Younger people are more likely to experience fear or anxiety about visiting the dentist.
- People told us of positive steps taken by their dentist to reduce anxiety.

Recommendations

- Be clear on services provided and the cost of treatment.
- Provide clear information on the times NHS services are available.
 - *Consider providing NHS appointments at a range of times.*
- Ensure up-to-date and accurate information is available on the NHS and practice websites.
- Actively ask patients if they have accessibility needs and ensure staff are trained to accommodate them.
- Co-produce a charter with dental services, organisations and patients to ensure consistency of care across the borough.

Read the full report

