

Observation to Petition P002867
- Dental Provision in North Devon,
residents of the constituency of North Devon,
Selaine Saxby
observation date: 30/11/2023, observation provided by: Andrea
Leadsom (DHSC).

NHS England and Devon Integrated Care Board are aware of the particular challenges in North Devon and are working with local dentists to enable practices to take on more NHS patients.

NHS England recently procured additional primary care dental capacity in Devon which means an increase in access to dental services for those patients who do not currently have a dentist. A dedicated helpline has been developed for Devon and Cornwall to assist patients in finding an NHS dentist for routine care and arranging urgent NHS dental treatment for people who do not have a dentist. When places become available, they are allocated to those patients who are on the helpline's list.

The Access Dental Helpline also manages out of hours appointments for urgent care. They allocate appointments at the weekends and on bank holidays from clinics in Plymouth, Newton Abbot, Exeter and Barnstaple. NHS Devon has recently agreed an uplift in the helpline contract in reflection of the enhanced numbers of patients seeking advice and care. In Devon, 369,393 adults were seen by an NHS dentist in the 24 months up to 30 June 2023 in Devon Integrated Care Board (38% of the adult population). This is an increase of 10,444 (2.9%) when compared to the previous year.

NHS dentists are required to keep their NHS.UK profiles up to date so that patients can find a dentist more easily. Patients can approach any NHS dental practice and request care regardless of geographical location. If a patient's dental condition changes or deteriorates, they are advised to contact NHS 111 for assistance.

The Government is taking significant steps to improve access for dental patients across the country. In July 2022, we announced an initial package of dental system reform to ensure that dentists are more fairly rewarded for the NHS care that they deliver. However, we know that we must go further to address the remaining challenges facing NHS dentistry across the country. Our Dentistry Recovery Plan to recover and support NHS dentistry will be published shortly, to build upon the first package of reforms.

As set out in the [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#), we are going to increase dentistry training 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.