

NHS Kent and Medway paper on dental services to Dover District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

15 April 2024

Report Purpose: To provide an update on the NHS Dentistry Provision.

To: Dover Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)

From: Louise Matthews, Deputy Director Primary Care Commissioning and Sukh Singh, Director of Primary and Community (Out of Hospital) Care, NHS Kent, and Medway

Introduction

Local members of Dover District Council have submitted several questions relating to the provision of NHS Dentistry in the district. This report provides response to those questions.

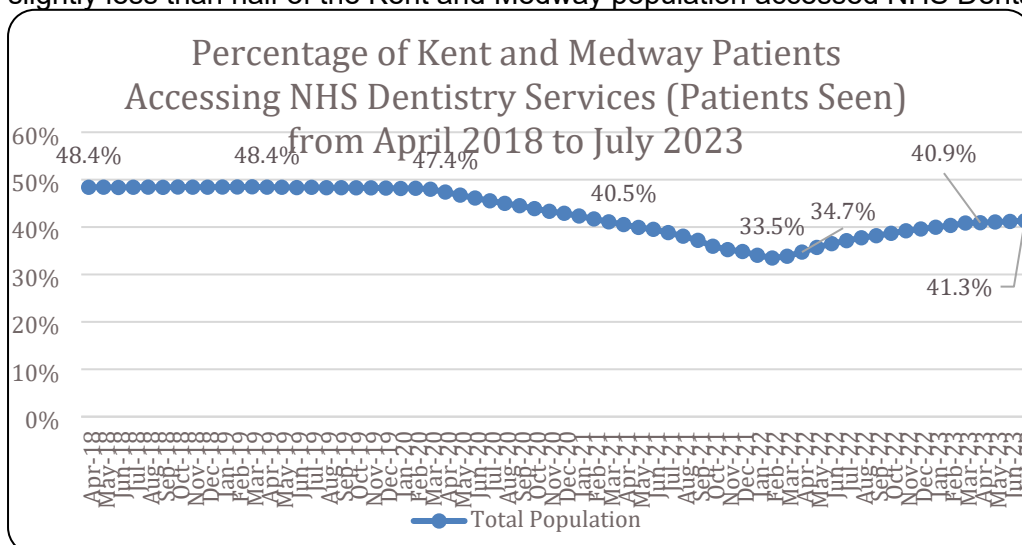
Q1. What proportion of the 1) adult, and 2) child population of the district is registered with a dentist as an NHS patient?

Patients are not registered with a dentist in the same way as they are with a GP because dental patients are not bound to a catchment area, nor can the ICB allocate a patient to a dentist in the same way they can a GP. The onus is on the patient to find an NHS dentist and they are not restricted by locality. Information on dentists accepting patients is available via <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Patients are only aligned to a dental practice for their course of treatment only and NICE guidance recommends an adjustable recall interval for adults ranging from a minimum of three months to a maximum of 24 months between recall appointments (dental check-ups). For children, the recommended recall interval is between 3 and 12 months.

Accessing NHS Dental Services

From the NHS perspective, dental access is measured by the number of individual patients seen by a NHS dentist, at least once in the most recent 24-month period. Between April 2018 and April 2020 slightly less than half of the Kent and Medway population accessed NHS Dental Services.



Between 2012-13 and 2022-23 the total number of dentists undertaking NHS dentistry in Kent and Medway rose from by 9.4% from 801 to 876, an increase of 75 dentists.

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the total number of dentists undertaking NHS dentistry in Kent and Medway fell by 2.1% from 895 to 876, a decrease of 19 dentists.

Q3. What proportion of the dental surgeries in the district are currently accepting new NHS patients?

As at 10 April 2024, by searching on the location “Dover” (<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>) there were three general dental practices accepting new patients, 30% of dental surgeries in the dover district

- AF Dental, 1-2 Biggin Street, Dover, Kent, CT16 1BD
- Dumbledore Dental Care Ltd, 27 BIGGIN STREET, Dover, Kent, CT16 1BU
- Mydentist, 9 Stanhope Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6AB

When availability allows, these dentists accept new patients if they are:

- Children aged 17 or under
- Adults 18 or over
- Adults entitled to free dental care
-

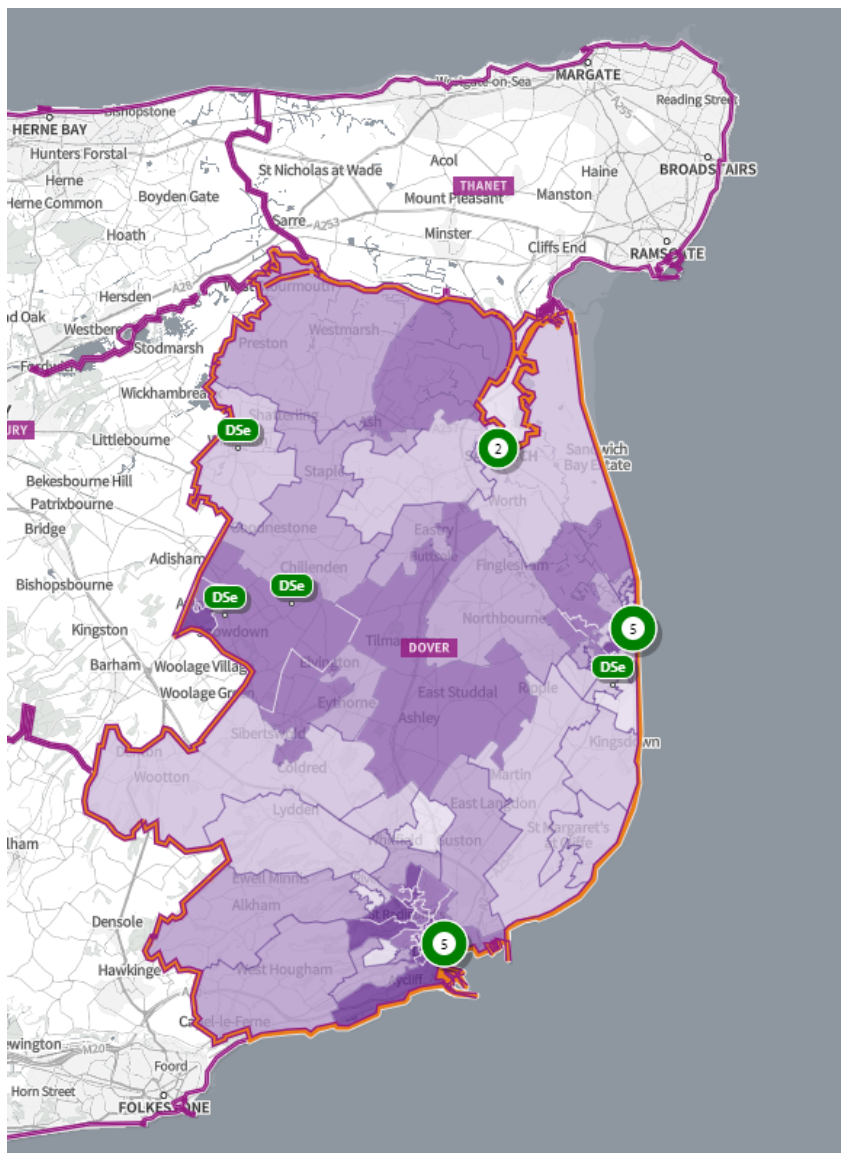
Information on NHS dental surgeries accepting new patients is available on the NHS.uk website <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist> Dental Providers are required to update their information on the NHS.uk website every quarter.

Kent and Medway	28-Mar-24	
Measure	No of Practices	% of Practices
The number and percentage of general dental practices that have confirmed through NHS Profile Manager that they are currently accepting new NHS patients for routine appointments.		
Accepting new NHS patients information (General dental practices)		
Number of general dental practices profiles	188	
Number of practices who have given a recent update on whether they're taking on new NHS patients	142	76%
Number of practices which are accepting at least one patient cohort	69	37%
Number of practices that are accepting children aged 17 or under	69	37%
Number of practices that are accepting adults 18 and over	34	18%
Number of practices that are accepting charge exempt adults	37	20%
Number of practices that are not accepting new patients	73	39%
Number of practices who have not given a recent update on whether they're taking on new NHS patients	46	24%
The number and percentage of dental practices that have confirmed during the current financial quarter through NHS Profile Manager their contact information, standard opening times, service information and facilities information.		
Quarterly profile updates (General dental and referral only practices)		
Number of NHS website dental practice profiles	208	
Number of dental practices that have confirmed their profile information this quarter	87	42%
Number of dental practices that have not confirmed their profile information this quarter	121	58%

Q4. Are there any areas of the district particularly well served, or under served by NHS dentistry?

A map of the general dental practices in the Dover area from the Shape Place tool has been provided in the report.

Dental providers in Dover are identified on the map below by green boxes labelled “DSe” (Dental Service) to indicate one provider, or a green circle with a number in the centre what shows how many providers are within that location. The purple shading reflects deprivation levels for the area with the deeper shades indicating higher levels of deprivation.



Q5. How does oral/dental health in the Dover district compare to the rest of Kent, and the rest of the country?

Local Authorities remain responsible for commissioning oral health promotion services. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) made upper tier and unitary authorities responsible for improving the health, including the oral health, of their populations from April 2013.

From 1 October 2015 the commissioning responsibility for the Healthy Child Programme for zero to five-year-olds transferred from NHS England to local government. This included the commissioning of health visitors, who lead and support delivery of preventive programmes for infants and children, including providing advice on oral health and on breastfeeding, reducing the risk of tooth decay. Local authorities are also required to provide or commission oral health surveys to facilitate:

- assessment and monitoring of oral health needs
- planning and evaluation of oral health promotion programmes
- planning and evaluation of the arrangements for the provision of dental services
- reporting and monitoring of the effects of any local water fluoridation schemes covering their area
- the dental data required for the single data list and the public health and NHS outcome frameworks.

Q6(i) How will the government's NHS dentistry recovery plan affect residents, and be delivered in the Dover district?

On 7 February 2024, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced the dental recovery plan "Faster, simpler and fairer: our plan to recover and reform NHS dentistry". Although, nationally a £200 million investment fund is supporting the dental recovery plan only minimal new investment has been signalled and the expectation is that ICBs ensure dental budgets are ringfenced for 2024/25 to meet these commitments and improve dental access more broadly.

The plan sets out several approaches to improve dental access and is supported by number of local authorities led prevention initiatives as well as NHS led initiatives.

Public Health Promotion and Oral Health Initiatives for Children (Local Authority Led)

- Promotion of prevention initiatives to improve the oral health of pregnant mums, and guidance for parents about how to protect baby gums and milk teeth from decay.
- Promotion of Smile for Life good oral hygiene into the daily routines of infants and toddlers so that, by the time they reach primary school, every child sees daily toothbrushing as a part of their normal routine.
- deploy mobile dental teams into schools in under-served areas to provide advice and deliver preventative fluoride varnish treatments to children, strengthening their teeth and preventing tooth decay.
- consultation on expanding water fluoridation aimed at reducing the number of tooth extraction due to decay in most deprived areas.

NHS Led Initiatives

1) New National Minimum £28 UDA rate

- This announcement introduces a new national minimum UDA rate of £28 from 1 April 2024 for all dental providers.
- The ICB has 31 dental practices that currently receive a UDA rate below £28 and is expected to cover this financial uplift from within existing dental budgets.
- Two Dover dental practices had a UDA rate of £27.19 this has now been uplifted to £28 in line with the national minimum UDA rate.

2) New Patient Premium (NPP)

- The ICB has received an additional allocation of £199,000 for 2023/24 to support the role out of the NPP.
- This will be claimable for new patients who have not accessed NHS dentistry treatment over the last 2 years and will run for a 13-month period from 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- The NPP will be transacted as a Unit of Dental Activity (UDA) credit on completion of a course of treatment (£15 for a band 1 dental treatment, and £50 for band 2 and 3 treatments).
- The issuing of UDA credits is likely to mean that providers will deliver their contracted UDA activity more quickly and may require providers to “pace” their activity over the course of their financial year.
- As new patients will attract the NPP providers are likely to push existing patient recall intervals in line with NICE guidelines (up to 24 months for adults and up to 12 months for children). This may generate patient queries and complaints.
- The ICB will need to reach an early decision on whether to pay for overperformance of up to 10% contracted activity (allowable under the contract) during 2024/25. It has been signalled that NHS England will work with ICBs over the course of 2024 to 2025 to identify opportunities to support contractors to deliver additional capacity beyond their existing contractual requirements (up to 110%).
- All General Dental Practices operating in the Dover are signed up to the NPP.

3) Mobile Dental Vans

- The launch of a new dental van service to take dentists and surgeries to the most isolated under-served rural and coastal communities nationally where there are no dental practices.
- No identified areas are in Kent and Medway or the Southeast

4) ‘Golden Hello’ for Dentists

- Targeted funding to encourage dentists to work in areas which have historically been difficult to recruit to
- Offer of a £20,000 support package over a three-year period (payable instalments of £10K year 1, £5K year 2 and £5K year 3) requiring a commitment from the dentist to stay in that area delivering NHS work for at least 3 years.
- Its estimated this will support for 240 dentists nationally during the first year. It is unclear how this element of the plan will be funded, and further detail is awaited.

5) Streamlining and tackling bureaucracy, with a wider set of workforce reforms

- Reaffirms commitments to increase workforce capacity as set out in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan,
- as part of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, build a pipeline of new dentists for the future by expanding dental undergraduate training places by 40% to more than 1,100 per year by 2031 to 2032, with an initial 24% increase to 1,000 places by 2028 to 2029.
- consultation this spring on ‘tie-ins’ to NHS for dentist graduates.
- increase the number of dental therapists and other dental care professionals, through a 40% increase to more than 500 training places per year by 2031 to 2032.
- Promote therapist led models of care.
- make it easier for NHS practices to recruit overseas dentists who meet the UK’s highest regulatory standards.
- consultation during 2024 with the dental profession on reforming the contract with any changes phased in from 2025 onwards.
- Implement regulations to allow ICBs to rebase contracts where providers consistently underperform over three consecutive non-covid years enabling commissioners to reinvest in services. The same regulations are expected to include further detail on the supervision of Therapists and allow for Therapists to open a course of treatment.

Q6(ii) Are any 'dental vans' planned to be introduced in the Dover district?

No dental vans are to be introduced in the Dover district. They are being introduced nationally where there is no dental provision currently.

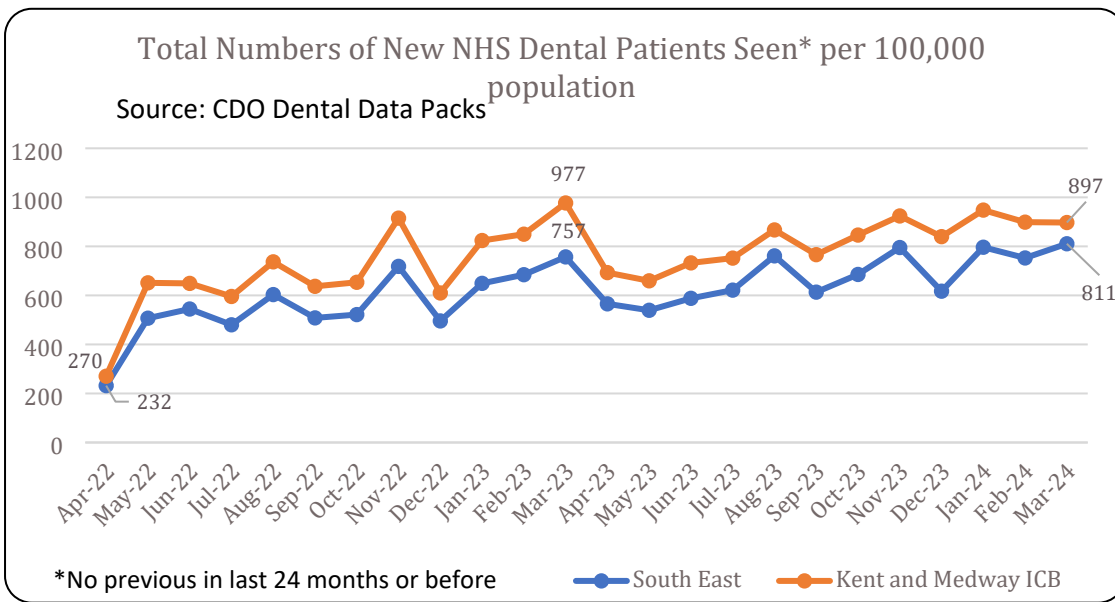
Q7. How many NHS patients have been removed from dentistry lists since 2020 and how many new registrations have there been since then?

Patients are not registered with a dentist in the same way as they are with a GP because dental patients are not bound to a catchment area, nor can the ICB allocate a patient to a dentist in the same way they can a GP. The onus is on the patient to find an NHS dentist and they are not restricted by locality. Information on dentists accepting patients is available via <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Patients are only aligned to a dental practice for their course of treatment only and NICE guidance recommends an adjustable recall interval for adults ranging from a minimum of three months to a maximum of 24 months between recall appointments (dental check-ups). For children, the recommended recall interval is between 3 and 12 months.

New Patients Seen

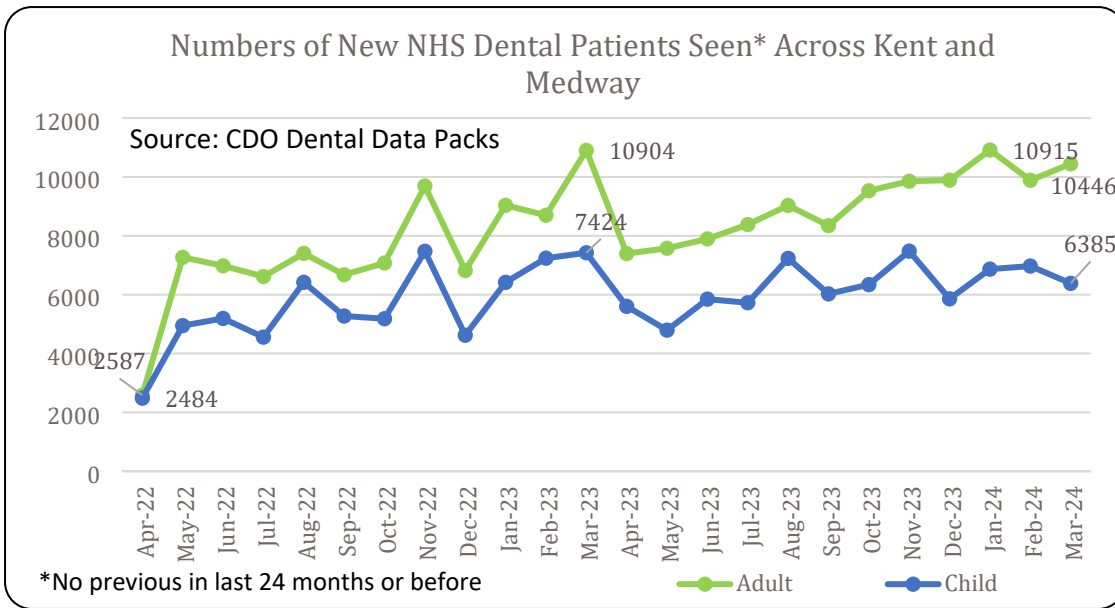
New NHS Dental patients seen are defined as number of patients who have not received NHS dental care in the previous 24 months



Between April 2022 and March 2024

- The total number of New NHS dental patients seen per 100,000 population in Kent and Medway continues to exceed the Southeast position
- The total numbers of new NHS dental patients seen increased from 270 per 100,000 population to 897 per 100,000.
- The total number of new NHS patients seen has risen from 5071 to 16,831 new patients seen.

Approximately 60% of new patients seen are adults and 40% are children



Q8. How many people present at hospitals with dental emergencies? Of these, what % are children?

We do not currently have access to data on the number of people presenting at hospitals with dental emergencies.

Q9. How do you measure the number of NHS dentists in an area, given that some dentists have all NHS patients, some have some NHS plus some private, and some have only private patients?

The Annual National Dental Statistics provides information at a Kent and Medway level on the number of dentists undertaking NHS dentistry. This information has been provided above as an answer to Q2.

Dentists can hold both private and NHS dental contracts at the same time. In a survey of Kent and Medway Dental Practitioners undertaken jointly by NHS Kent and Medway and the Kent Local Dental Committee in 2023, 8 out of 10 respondents said they offered private dental practice alongside their NHS dental contract and half of respondents said that 70% or more of their dental service they provided was private dentistry offered alongside NHS dentistry.

When asked why private dental practice was a more attractive option 30% of respondents said it offered better pay and benefits, 26% said it offered more opportunities to develop skills, 20% said it offered better opportunities for career progression and 9% said it gave opportunities for on-the-job coaching and mentoring. A further 14% gave other answers that included ‘the UDA system means treating some patients at a financial loss’, ‘the current NHS contract is not fit for purpose’, private dentistry gave the opportunity to offer treatments not available on the NHS, being able to spend more time with patients and delivering tailored care.

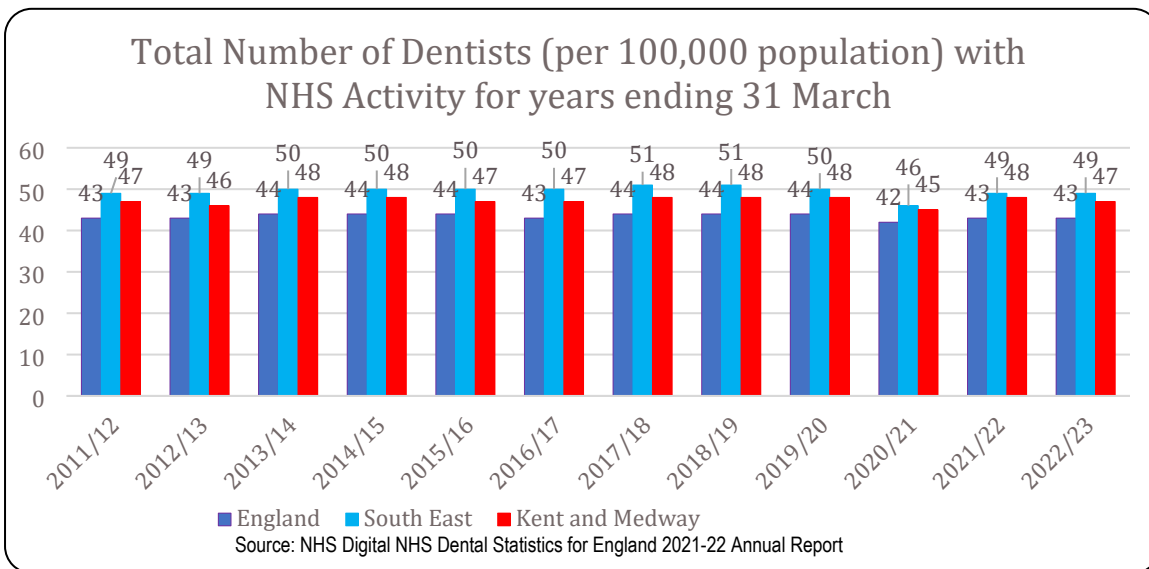
Q10. Given the size of the population in Dover District (in 2022, a bit over 117,000). How many NHS dentists should there be? So, what is the shortfall?

There is no national benchmark on the number of dentists per head of population.

Q11. How does the number of NHS dentists in Dover District compare with the UK average, and other districts in the South-East?

Q12. How does the average no of patients per NHS dentist in Dover District, compare to other England districts?

Dentists per 100,000 population



As at 2022-23 the number of dentists per 100,000 population undertaking NHS dentistry in Kent and Medway was 47, this was marginally less than the position for the southeast but higher than for England. This has remained static since 2011/12

Q13. Can you tell us about local children’s dental services? (that is preschool, primary aged and secondary aged).

- **What preventative services do you run for children? Is there a school dental service?**
- **If a child is found to need the attention of a dentist what happens if they don’t have an NHS dentist?**
- **How many NHS dentists are regularly treating and checking children’s teeth locally?**
- **What %age of children in Dover District get seen regularly by a dentist?**

Local Authorities remain responsible for commissioning oral health promotion services. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) made upper tier and unitary authorities responsible for improving the health, including the oral health, of their populations from April 2013.

From 1 October 2015 the commissioning responsibility for the Healthy Child Programme for zero to five-year-olds transferred from NHS England to local government. This included the commissioning

of health visitors, who lead and support delivery of preventive programmes for infants and children, including providing advice on oral health and on breastfeeding, reducing the risk of tooth decay. Local authorities are also required to provide or commission oral health surveys.

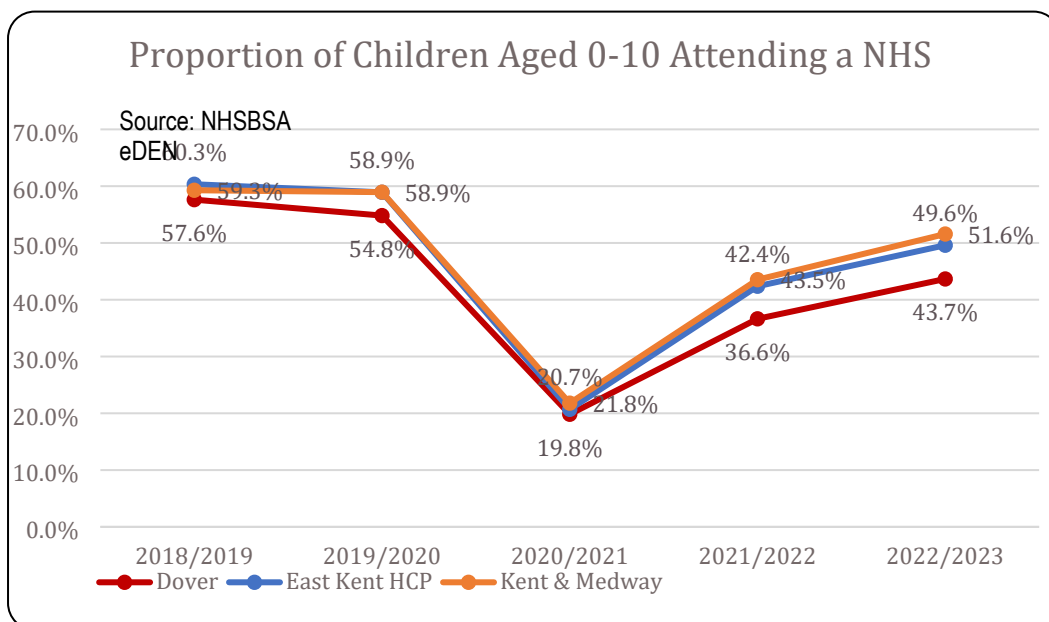
The Dental Recovery Plan set outs proposals for Public Health Promotion and Oral Health Initiatives for Children more details are provide in the answer to Q6(i).

If a patient needs a dentist those dentists accepting NHS patients can be found by searching <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist> further information is provided in the answer to Q3.

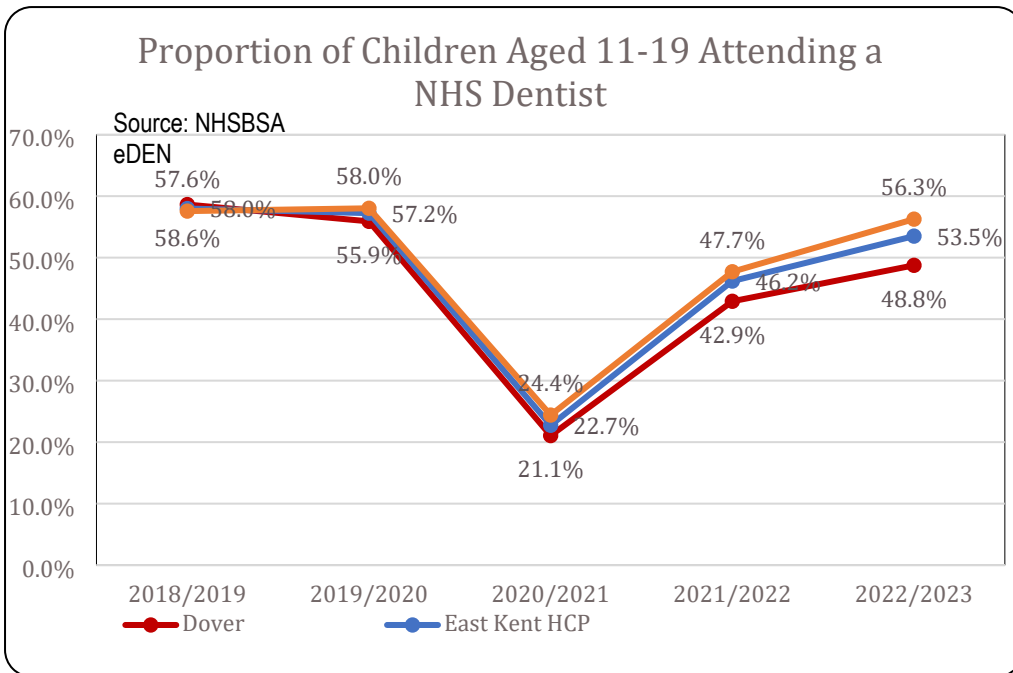
There are 10 NHS Mandatory Dental Service (MDS) contracts across Dover, some contracts cover multiple sites .

Children Attending a Dentist 0–10-year olds

Across Kent and Medway, the proportion of 0-10-year-olds attending a NHS Dentist was 59.3% in 2018/19 falling to 21.8% in 2020/21 and rising back up to 51.6% in 2022/23. For Dover local authority area, the position was slightly lower at 57.6% in 2018/19 falling to 19.8% in 2020/21 and raising back up to 43.7% in 2022/23.



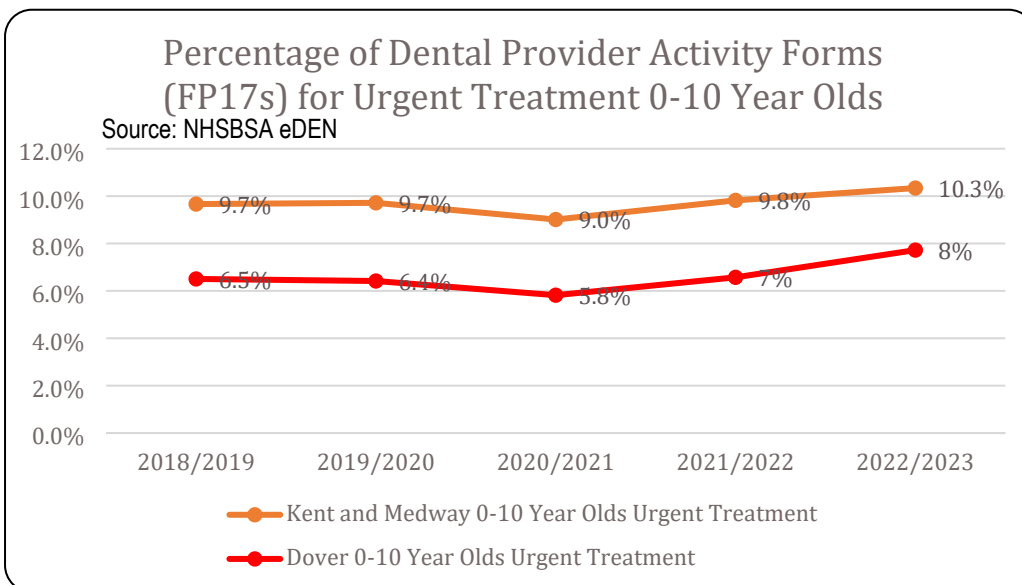
Children Attending a Dentist 11- 19 Year Olds



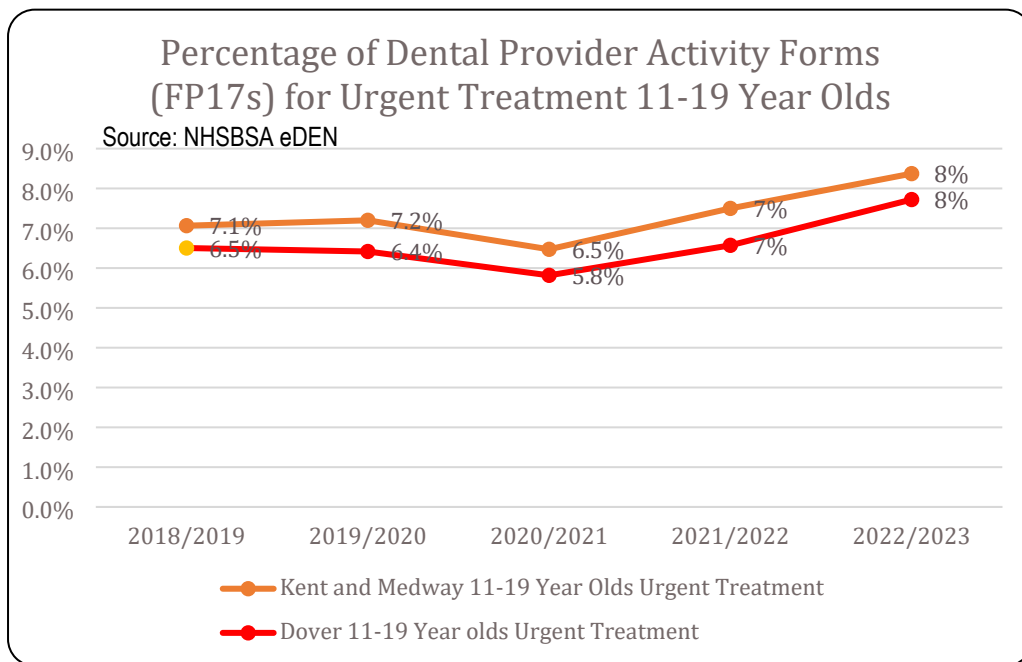
Across Kent and Medway, the proportion of 11-19-year olds attending a NHS Dentist was 57.6% in 2018/19 falling to 22.9% in 2020/21 and rising back up to 56.3% in 2022/23. For Dover local authority area, the position was slightly lower at 58.6% in 2018/19 falling to 21.1% in 2020/21 and raising back up to 48.8% in 2022/23.

Q14. Do you have figures on children seen by local hospitals for emergency dental treatment? I believe it is the highest reason for children attending A&E, is this correct?

We do not currently have access to data on the number of people presenting at hospitals with dental emergencies. We can ascertain from dental claim forms how many children received urgent treatment.



In 2022/23, across Kent and Medway, just over 10% of claim forms were for band 1 urgent treatment in 0-10-year olds and 8% of claim forms were for band 1 urgent treatment in 11-19-year olds. For Dover this was 8% for both age groups



Q15. My concern as a DDC councillor, is the long-term consequences of the number of children with poor teeth, and what this is storing up for the future of their dental health , and also the impact on hospitals. Please will you comment on this.

Local Authorities remain responsible for the promotion of oral health. We have recently engaged with Kent Public Health Team to explore the possibilities of undertaking some joint work aligning oral health profiles and dental needs assessments and are keen to see more information on dental health included in the joint strategic needs assessment.

Q16. Why are so many dentists leaving the NHS to do private work?... I watched Countryfile on BBC1 TV on Sunday 16 March. They quoted the British Dental Association , that there is a crisis in dental care and 1 in 4 people have unmet dental care needs.

The two main reasons given by dental providers that choose to hand back their dental contract is 1) that the national general dental contract is not fit for purpose and 2) the lack of available suitability skilled workforce.

Q17. In 2005/6 a new Dental Contract was introduced with Units of Dental Activity (Bands 1, 2 and 3). Many dentists did not renew their NHS contract which I believe has led us to the current position of poor dental health in the UK. Are

there any plans to change the contract to a fee per procedure? or other changes e.g. to what it was before 2005?

As part of the dental recovery plan announcement the government has indicated that during 2024 they will undertake consultation with the dental profession on reforming the contract with any changes phased in from 2025 onwards.

Q18. On 1st April 2024 the costs to patients went up 8.5%, Band One being £26.80.(In April 2014 that figure was £18.50, so a 45% increase) If everything on that band was completed it would take an hour to complete and, therefore, dentists do not have the time. Some tasks will be put off requiring the patient to attend again, therefore, delaying treatment and an additional £26.80. Is the Dental Service monitoring all NHS dentists to ensure this does not happen?

With effect from 1 April 2024, a band 1 course of treatment costs £26.80. This can include an examination, diagnosis (including X-rays), advice on how to prevent future problems, a scale and polish if clinically needed, and preventative care such as the application of fluoride varnish or fissure sealant if appropriate. Not everything that is listed as a band 1 treatment will be carried out at every appointment, what is necessary is a clinical decision in line with National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines on dental recall intervals. For adults this ranges from a minimum of three months to a maximum of 24 months between recall appointments (dental check-ups). For children, the recommended recall interval is between 3 and 12 months.

We do not routinely monitor clinical decisions to treat and recall intervals decided upon. We respond to any patient complaint raised.

For further information on NHS dental band charges, please see <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/what-is-included-in-each-nhs-dental-band-charge/>

Q19. From April 2024 Band 2, costs £73.50, and includes Band One treatment plus up to three fillings, root canals, extractions. (in April 2014 this was £50.50, a 45% increase). There is no incentive to preserve teeth. It is less time consuming for the dentist to do an extraction, thus affecting patients' long term dental health. Is the Dental Service monitoring all NHS dentists to ensure this does not happen?

With effect from 1 April 2024, a band 2 course of treatment costs £73.50. This can include band 1 treatment plus any further treatment such as fillings, root canal work or removal of teeth but not more complex items covered by Band 3.

Since November 2022, as a result of dental contract reform band 2 treatment has been split into a number of subcategories attracting differing UDA rates

- Permanent fillings and the number of affected teeth in a course of treatment
- Extractions and the number of affected teeth in a course of treatment
- Endodontics - molar on permanent teeth
- Endodontics - non-molar on permanent teeth

Not everything that is listed as a band 2 treatment will be carried out at every appointment, what is necessary is a clinical decision in line with National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

(NICE) guidelines on dental recall intervals. For adults this ranges from a minimum of three months to a maximum of 24 months between recall appointments (dental check-ups). For children, the recommended recall interval is between 3 and 12 months.

We do not routinely monitor clinical decisions to treat and recall intervals decided upon. We respond to any patient complaint raised.

For further information on NHS dental band charges, please see <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/what-is-included-in-each-nhs-dental-band-charge/>

Q20. For a dental emergency, people are referred to a hospital A&E by 111. How many dentists are employed at our local hospitals? Is there an out-of-hours emergency service? Can you explain please.

We do not have access to data on the number of people referred to hospitals by dental emergencies.

We do not have details of how many dentists are employed by local hospitals.

We commission an out of hours emergency dental service. The Out of Hours service is dental emergencies and urgent symptoms – (haemorrhaging/bleeding from the mouth; trauma - following a recent accident or injury; severe facial swelling - affecting the airway or eye; and sudden onset of acute pain not relieved by over-the counter pain killers.

This is accessed by contacting **Dentaline on 01634 890300** on Monday to Saturday 6 -10.55 pm and Sundays and Bank holidays 8.30am to 1.25 pm. An assessment, or advice will be offered, and an appointment arranged for that session if necessary.

Q21. In Feb this year a dental recovery plan was announced by the government. How do you see this affecting Dover District residents? What can you do about increasing the number of local dentists? Can we request a mobile service?

The answers to this question have been provided above at Q6(i) and Q6(ii)

Conclusion

We recognise further work is needed to continue to address the challenges in accessing NHS dental services and we are committed to working with our key stakeholders and system partners to make best use of our existing provision and bring forward innovative solutions.