

Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub Board

Dentistry Update – 23 November 2023

Public questions received:

1. How are you planning to increase access to NHS dental services?
2. Do dentists get paid enough to cover the costs of NHS dentistry?
3. Have you noticed, as I have, the number of people of 40+ years with poor teeth in and around the Bay?
4. What checks are made to identify throat and mouth cancer, especially by those more at risk eg long term smokers?
5. Do you consider 12 monthly dental checks for children to be adequate? Especially given the ongoing and increasing problems of tooth decay and obesity in children.
6. How many new places for NHS dental patients will there be with a lack of places for people currently and with so many new houses appearing?
7. How many people are on a waiting list for an NHS dental place?
8. How many emergency appointments are booked at Castle Circus and how many of these are children?
9. How will you encourage existing NHS providers to keep their provision? Mine have been toying with the idea of scrapping it which is worrying.
10. Can you force dentists to take on some NHS children?
11. Would be interesting to see how many locals have been forced to take nhs places quite far out of their counties...how can other parts of the country have excess places and us not enough? We are hardly densely populated (although this is rapidly changing without extra provisions for doctors/hospitals/schools/dentists/recreational spaces which I think is a recipe for disaster).
12. Can you tell me how long it will be before all the people on the current waiting list for an nhs dentist are allocated an nhs dentist please.
13. When will there be sufficient NHS dentists in the bay to accommodate new clients. I have tried since February and get told to contact Castle Circus who will allocate an ad hoc dentist as required.
14. I cannot get registered with an affordable dentist. I have only been able to get emergency appointments, when in severe pain for several days and have had to pay extortionate amounts, in the last 25 years.

15. Our Dentist went Private a few months ago . My husband and I now are without a dentist, through no fault of our own. What is being done to bring back NHS dental care to Torbay ?
16. When and exactly what action are you going to take to resolve the issue of nil availability to an NHS dentist in Torbay. I personally have been on a waiting list for 5 years with no access to the dentistry service that my tax and national insurance, which I have paid without a break for the last 41 years, is apparently funding so please tell me when might I be able to access a dentist and get a check up? I've worked for 41 years, I've paid upfront for that service, I can't afford to pay extortionate private rates from my salary. When do I get an NHS dentist? If there are NHS doctors GP,s available where are the dentists. Don't we pay our taxes for them?
17. I am extremely concerned by the lack of NHS dentistry provision throughout Torbay, I have worked for the last 30+ years, paid tax etc and now my dentist has gone private pushing the cost up for me, I have no choice but to stay with her because of the lack of NHS provision elsewhere. My daughter works so hard and managed to get a house and mortgage and the same has happened to her, causing unnecessary stress. We have to travel from Brixham to Torquay as it is just to see our dentist!
18. We have continuing new houses going up across the bay, bringing in more families but we don't have enough NHS provision for your local families as it is. Are more NHS dentists going to be appointed at all?
19. Comment: This is causing an awful lot of stress to families across Torbay, I know this because I run a family provision in Brixham and this is always a hot topic between families.
20. Why are there no nhs dentists available in Torbay?
21. Moved here 2 years ago. I tried multiple practices and not one takes new patients. Both of my children needed fillings. Nothing urgent, but had to give in and book them in privately. Result - next day checkup & treatment within a week. This is basic health care which according to the government is free for children, so why did it cost me £588?!
22. Understanding you can't discuss individual cases I would like to offer an example of our experience with dental provision and seek theirs views as to whether this would satisfy adequate care.

Myself and my two sons were registered with a local NHS practice in brixham and had been seen on an annual cycle. My children are now 4 and 11 respectively.

It had felt like it had been longer than 12 months since our last appointment so I called the surgery. They informed me it had been 18months since our last visit and that our dentist had left the practice and there were no staff to fill the patients left. Unless it was an emergency or we transferred to their private client list we were advised to find another practice. There are no other NHS practices in brixham and no available NHS dentists.

What level of consultation, care and support should my children expect regarding their dental health?

23. I have recently moved to this area from the midlands. While living there I attended an NHS dentist. I was shocked to discover that there are apparently no dentists in the whole of Devon taking on new NHS patients. Why is this?
24. Please can you tell me what the Council are doing to improve the availability of NHS dentistry to the people of Torbay. It is one of the worst areas in the Country for gaining access to NHS dentists.
25. Why are there no NHS Dentists available in Torbay?
26. My son is 23, working part time, on minimum wage, and after rent, council tax, food , clothing simply cannot afford private dental care. There are no NHS dentists here in Paignton or Torbay. This is totally unacceptable, so who will take responsibility for (a) his declining dental health? (b) fixing this problem?
27. My concern is the complete lack of NHS dentistry in Torbay. I have always had access to such until my local dentist declined after lockdown and said I had to go private with them. I was shocked to discover that it was impossible to find NHS alternatives. My research suggests that the NHS dentistry contract is not fit for purpose. Therefore most dentists are turning to private work. This is a political decision and not a financial one. The indirect cost to the country for adults and children with a lack of dental care exceeds implementation of a better contract. In my case benign mouth cancer was indicated. I am not sure how your public meeting can reverse this matter unless you are able to renegotiate the dentists contracts for the better. I hope my contribution helps.