

## NHS dental treatment in Wales

### How to find an NHS dentist

If you want NHS dental treatment, you first need to find out which dentists in your area have contracts with your Local Health Board to provide NHS treatment. You can then contact the practice to see if they can make an appointment for you or include you on their patient list.

You can do this by going to the NHS Direct Wales website at [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk) and clicking on Dentists, or by phoning **NHS Direct** – see under Further help. If you can't find an NHS dentist who is accepting new patients, ask NHS Direct if there's a **waiting list** in your area you can go on.

You don't need to register with a dentist to get NHS treatment but your dentist may keep a list of regular patients and provide ongoing treatment and care.

At the beginning, your dentist will agree with you whether your treatment will be under the NHS, or private, or a mixture of both. Under certain circumstances, your dentist may discontinue a course of treatment. This could happen, for example, if you don't cooperate with treatment or if you fail to turn up for lots of appointments. Where violence, or the threat of violence occurs, your dentist could discontinue treatment straight away, without any advance warning.

### What treatment can you get on the NHS

You're entitled to any treatment which you need to maintain your dental health. This could include the fitting of crowns, bridges and dentures. The dentist will give you a **treatment plan** after your check-up if you ask for it, which will show you what you need and the cost. There are three standard charges for a course of NHS dental treatment, depending on the treatment needed. These should be displayed in your dentist's waiting room. Some things, such as denture repairs, are free.

More details about NHS dental fees are available in a leaflet called HC12W Charges and Optical Voucher Values. You can get this on the Welsh Government website at <http://wales.gov.uk>.

Your dentist may offer to do part of the work on your treatment plan or additional treatment, privately. However, they should not pressure you into having treatment privately which is available on the NHS. If your dentist tries to do this, you should complain – see under Complaints.

Some treatment is not available on the NHS and can only be done privately, for example, white fillings in back teeth.

If you have been getting NHS treatment and need to start treatment for something that has to be done privately, you should be given a form to sign to say you agree to begin private treatment.

## Who can get free NHS dental treatment

You can get free dental treatment (including check-ups) if you:

- are under 18
- are under 19 and in full-time education
- are pregnant
- have given birth in the last twelve months
- are getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee credit part of Pension Credit.

You are entitled to free check-ups if you are under 25, or 60 or over. Also, some people on a low income, including some people getting tax credits, can get free NHS dental treatment or treatment at a reduced cost.

## Can you change your dentist?

You can go to a different dentist at any time. You should let your dentist know and cancel any appointments. If you want to change dentists during a course of treatment, you may have to pay the first dentist for the treatment to date. It is always sensible to find a second dentist in advance who is prepared to complete a course of treatment already started by another dentist.

## Can your dentist charge you for not keeping or cancelling an appointment?

A dentist is not entitled to charge you for cancelling an appointment. However, if you fail to turn up or cancel lots of appointments, they may decide not to treat you.

## Emergency treatment

Local Health Boards are responsible for providing out-of-hours emergency dental treatment. You will usually have to phone an emergency helpline first. There is a set fee for urgent and out-of-hours treatment.

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

Toothache, no matter how bad, is not classed as a dental emergency. If you would like advice on pain relief telephone the All Wales Dental Helpline on 0845 6010128 or contact your dentist.

## Complaints about dentists

If you want to make a complaint about the care or service provided by an NHS dentist or dental practice, you should first contact the practice, preferably in writing, to raise the issue. If you do not want to deal with the practice directly, you can contact the complaints manager at your Local Health Board instead – see under Further help. Your local Community Health Council can offer advice when making a complaint – see under Further help.

If you want to complain about private dental services, you can contact the Dental Complaints Service. It has been set up to help private dental patients and dental professionals resolve complaints. You can contact them by telephone on 08456 120540 or complete a form on their website at [www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.dentalcomplaints.org.uk).

## Further help

### Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Bureaux give free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to help you solve problems. To find your nearest CAB, including those that give advice by e-mail, click on [nearest CAB](#), or look under C in your phone book.

### NHS Direct Wales

Tel: 0845 4647

Website: [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

**Local Health Boards** are responsible for delivering dental services in their area. You can get contact details for your Local Health Board from NHS Direct Wales.

**Community Health Councils** can advise you about complaints about NHS dental services. You can find out how to contact your Community Health Council by ringing the Board of Community Health Councils in Wales on 0845 644 7814 or online at [www.communityhealthcouncils.org.uk](http://www.communityhealthcouncils.org.uk)

**The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales** can investigate complaints about dental services in Wales. You can get details of this service by ringing 01656 641 150 or online at [www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk).

## Other information on Adviceguide which might help

- NHS services in Wales
- NHS charges and optical voucher values
- NHS and local authority social services complaints
- How to use an ombudsman in Wales
- NHS complaints in Wales

**This fact sheet is produced by [Citizens Advice](#), an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. It is intended to provide general information only and should not be taken as a full statement of the law. The information applies to Wales only.**

**This fact sheet was last updated on 21 February 2011. The content is checked regularly for any changes. If it is some time since you obtained this fact sheet, please contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau to check if it is still correct. Or visit our website - [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) - where you can download an up-to-date copy.**