



healthwatch Dorset

Healthwatch Dorset is the local independent champion for health & social care services



We listen to what people like about local health services, and what could be improved. These views are then shared with the decision-making organisations, so together we can make a real difference.

We also help people find the information they need about health and care services.





Access to NHS Dentistry

NHS Dentistry is the top issue people contact us about, trying to find a dentist taking on new NHS patients or for urgent care.

“I am 24 weeks pregnant and have bleeding gums. I am being told of the importance of looking after my teeth during pregnancy but cannot find any dentists locally taking NHS patients.”

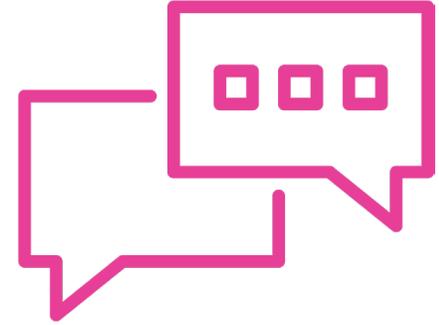
We share feedback about dentistry with NHS Dorset and NHS England South West. Our insights have informed commissioning, including a child-friendly dental pilot practice and an additional 100 urgent care appointments per week for people who do not have a regular dentist.



Local initiatives

By working with NHS Dorset we've been able to influence the focus for local initiatives including:

- Flexible and Rapid commissioning - focussing on Looked after Children and commissioning additional capacity in areas of deprivation.
- Working with AECC to develop the oral health institute
- Addressing the backlog of community/special care dentistry in secondary care settings
- Oral health education in schools and communities





Recommendations

It is still very difficult to find any dentists taking on new NHS patients in Dorset. We would like to see:

- A more rapid and radical national reform of how dentistry is commissioned and provided
- clearer information for the public on accessing NHS dentistry
- oral health packs for communities facing health inequalities
- the developing integrated neighbourhood teams link oral health to other key issues, such as weight management and smoking cessation.



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