

Changes to NHS orthodontic services for children in England

Why is this happening?

Orthodontic practices providing treatment under the NHS need to have an agreement with the NHS to do this work. This agreement is called a Personal Dental Services (PDS) Agreement. This is a time limited arrangement and some of the current agreements come to an end on 31st March 2019. As a result, NHS England has to carry out a procurement process to award new agreements to provide orthodontic services. All bids put forward as part of this process are fully reviewed and assessed before the new agreements are awarded.

What does this mean if my child has been referred for an orthodontic assessment by my dentist?

If your child has an appointment for an orthodontic assessment before 31st March 2019 then this will take place as already arranged.

If your child is still awaiting an assessment then depending on waiting times they may need to be transferred to a new orthodontic provider. Should the orthodontic practice your child has been referred to no longer be providing NHS orthodontic services, your child will be transferred to a new orthodontic practice. You will be contacted by the new practice as we get closer to March 2019.

What does this mean if my child has already had the assessment but is now waiting for orthodontic treatment to start?

If your child has already been assessed and is on an NHS waiting list for orthodontic treatment, then they will continue to be on the NHS waiting list.

If braces have not been fitted by 31 March 2019 you will be transferred to a new orthodontic practice to receive treatment. In both cases, your existing and new orthodontist will work together to make the necessary arrangements to transfer your child's care and will keep you up to date with information on the transfer of your child's treatment.

My child is already having orthodontic treatment; will they need to change to a new orthodontist?

For most patients there may be no change and you will continue to be treated by your current orthodontist. This approach has been agreed and supported by the British Orthodontic Society and the British Dental Association.

If your child's current orthodontic practice is unsuccessful in the procurement process, they may decide not to continue any NHS treatment beyond 31st March 2019. In this case, it will be necessary to transfer to a new orthodontic practice.

Should this need to happen, the existing and new orthodontic practices will work together to make the transfer as smooth as possible, and will keep you informed about any changes.

There will be sufficient time for this handover and wherever possible you will be given a choice of where you would like your child to receive NHS treatment.

What happens if I cancel my child's appointment to have their braces fitted and it cannot be rearranged before the 1 April 2019?

In these circumstances your child would need to be transferred to the new provider.

How do I know that my child will receive the same quality of care and treatment from a new orthodontist?

All bids for orthodontic agreements are assessed to ensure that practices will provide consistent high quality of services and good outcomes for patients.

Will my child's treatment still be funded by the NHS?

NHS orthodontic treatment for children is funded by the NHS and there will be no change to the funding of treatment; so if your child is assessed as needing orthodontic treatment this will continue to be available on the NHS.

Who do I contact if I have any queries or questions that are not covered within this leaflet?

If you have a comment or concern about a dentist or orthodontist, in the first instance you should discuss your concerns with the practice. If your concerns cannot be resolved locally with the practice, you can contact NHS England using the details below.

NHS England
PO Box 16738
Redditch
B97 9PT

Telephone number: 0300 311 22 33

Email: england.contactus@nhs.net