

Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey;

July to September 2013

Introduction

1. Dental questions were originally added to the GP Patient Survey in January to March 2010, as the Department of Health wanted information on NHS dental access and demand for services based on people's reported experience.
2. The GP Patient Survey was chosen to capture this information as a portal to access the proportion of the population who do not use NHS dental services (or have not recently), to give a fuller picture of people's dental behaviour and experience.
3. This paper summarises the key findings of the July to September 2013 survey dental results and makes comparisons to the survey results from the same time the previous year (July to September 2012).
4. Due to revisions to the questionnaire and methodology in 2011/12 comparisons cannot be made to previous years. The July to September 2013 GP Patient Survey is the fourth publication since these changes were made.

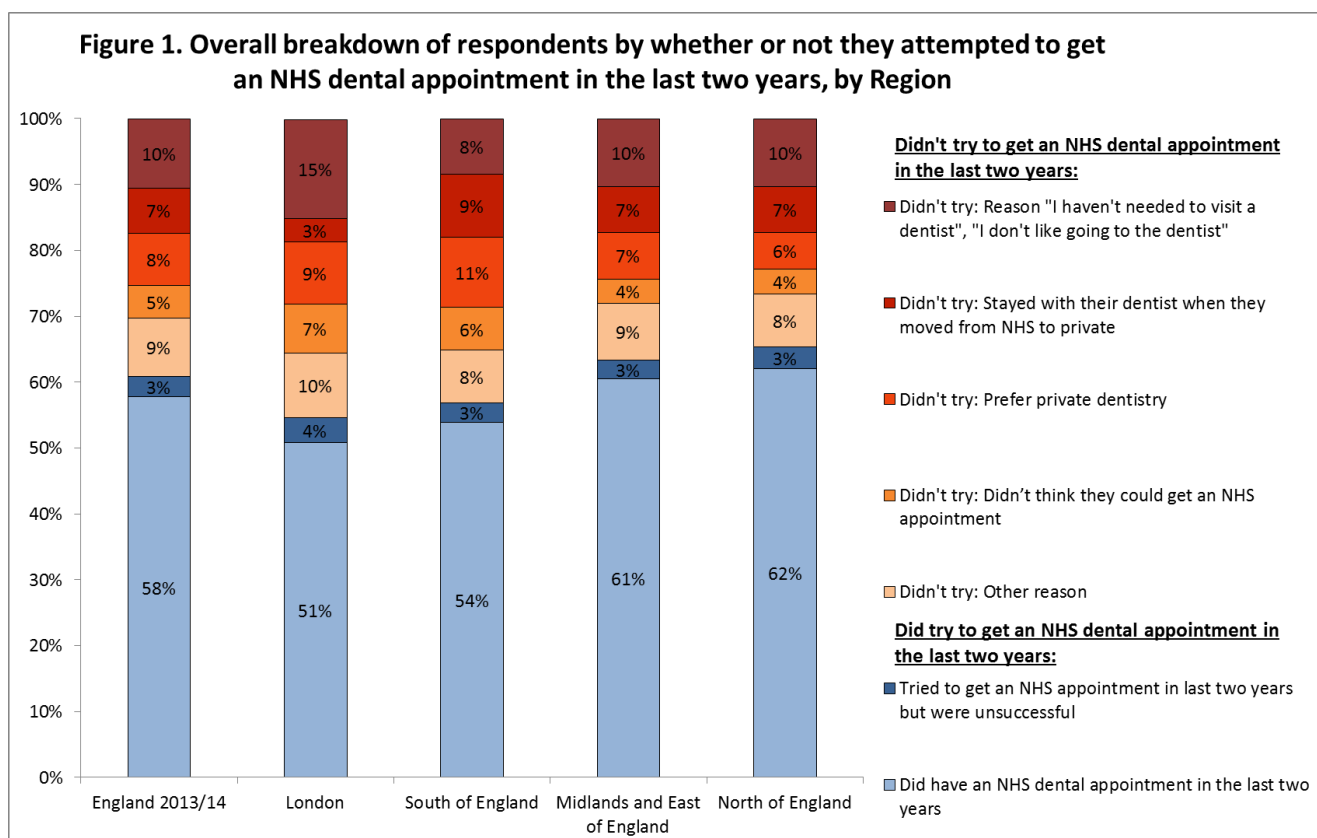
General Survey Information

5. The July to September 2013 GP patient survey questionnaires were sent to 1.3 million adult GP patients and 450,000 replies were received. This gave a response rate of 34%; a decrease of 0.8 percentage point compared to July to September 2012 results.
6. Further information on the GP Patient Survey and technical details regarding its collection and the weighting of the data, can be found on the GP Patient Survey Website at: <http://www.gp-patient.co.uk/results/>
7. The remainder of this publication relates to the additional analysis carried out on the dental section of this survey. Figures are given to the whole percentage, however percentage change is expressed at the decimal point, for accuracy.

Key Findings

Overall picture of respondents' dentistry usage

8. The following graph (figure 1) shows the overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour.



¹ Other reason includes: "I no longer have any natural teeth", "I haven't had time to visit a dentist", "I'm on a waiting list for an NHS dentist", "NHS dental care is too expensive", "Another reason".

- Nationally, just under three fifths (58%) of all respondents stated they had visited an NHS dentist in the last two years. Of the remaining, 10% didn't try to see an NHS dentist because they stated they "didn't need to go" or "don't like going" and 8% didn't try because they prefer private dentistry.
- The distribution of the different responses varied across the regions, suggesting there are specific areas with the different Regions to focus on to improve access to NHS dental services.
- London has the highest proportion of those who have not tried to visit an NHS dental in the last 2 years for because they stated they "didn't need to go" or "don't like going (15% of all respondents), suggesting a lack of knowledge on oral health in this region is a particular issue.
- South of England has the largest proportion of those who stayed with their dentists when they moved from NHS to private (at 9% of all respondents) and also the highest proportion who prefer private dentistry (with 11% of all South of England respondents).
- North and Midlands and East of England have similar access trends, with a much higher use of NHS dental services than South of England and London (just over 60% of all respondents, compared to 54% of the South and 51% of London respondents).

Tried to get an NHS dental appointment

14. Just over three fifths (61%) of respondents tried to get an NHS appointment in the last two years, the maximum recall period recommended by NICE guidelines. This was a 0.5 percentage point increase compared to July to September 2012.
15. Demand for NHS dentistry services shows regional differences. The North of England has the highest level of demand, with just under two-thirds (65%) of respondents trying to get an appointment in the last two years. In comparison, London and the South of England have the lowest proportions, with just over half (55% and 57% respectively) of respondents trying to get an appointment in the last two years.

Successful in getting an NHS dental appointment

16. Of those that tried to get an appointment in the last two years, 93% were successful. The success rate (when excluding those who stated that they 'can't remember' whether they were successful) was 95%, an increase of 0.5 percentage point when compared to July to September 2012 survey responses.
17. Those respondents who stated that they had not been to the practice before were less successful, at 77%, compared with 97% who were successful when trying to make an appointment at a practice they had visited before.
18. Lower levels of success were also reported by younger adults (as shown in figure 2) and ethnic minorities (figure 3).

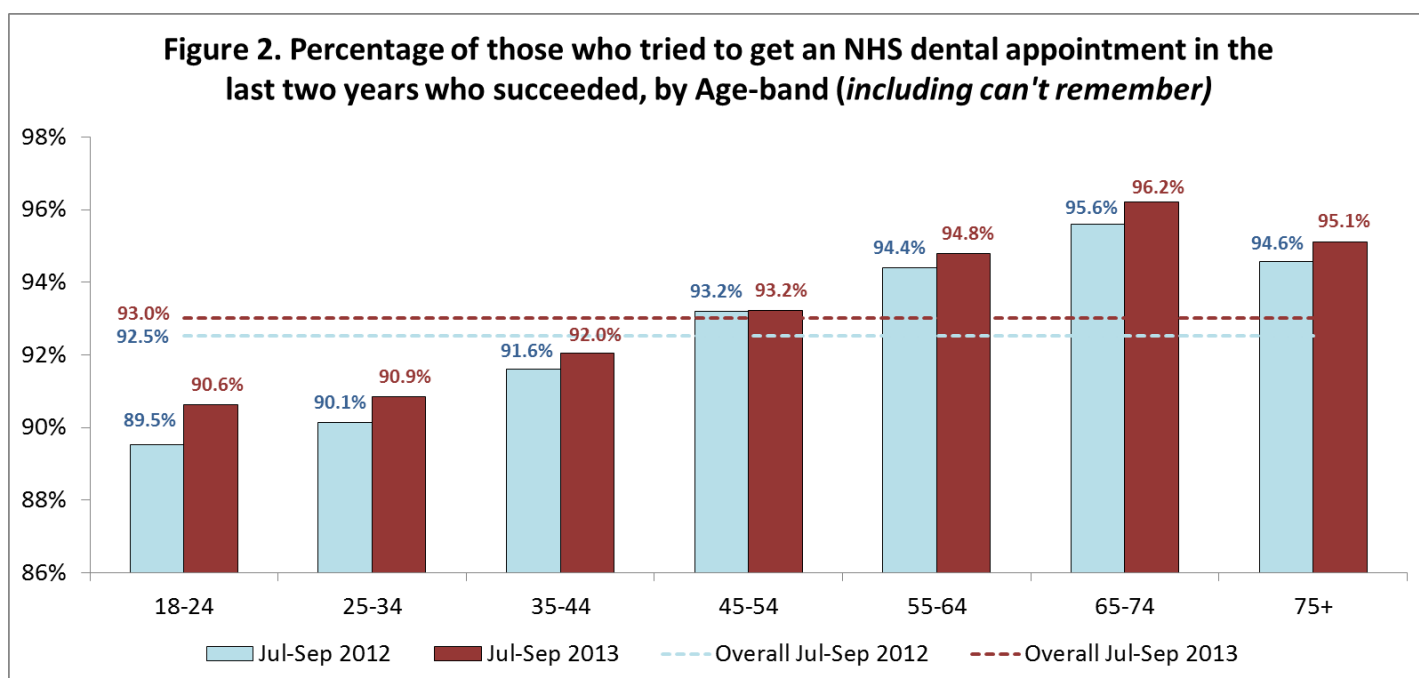
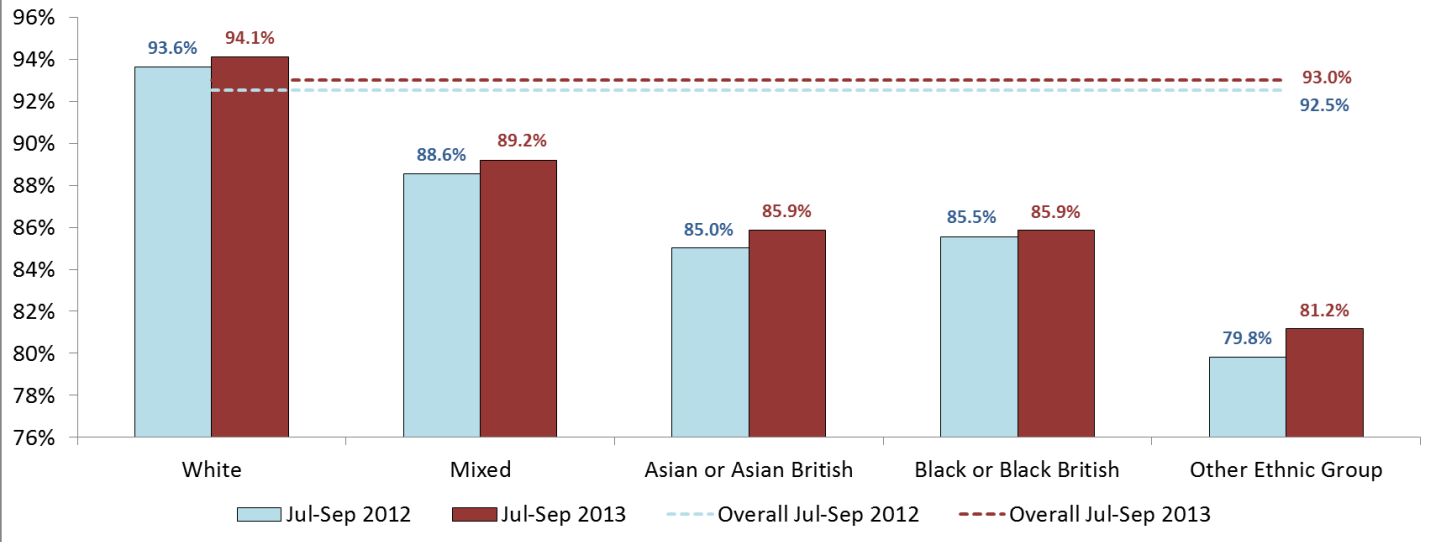


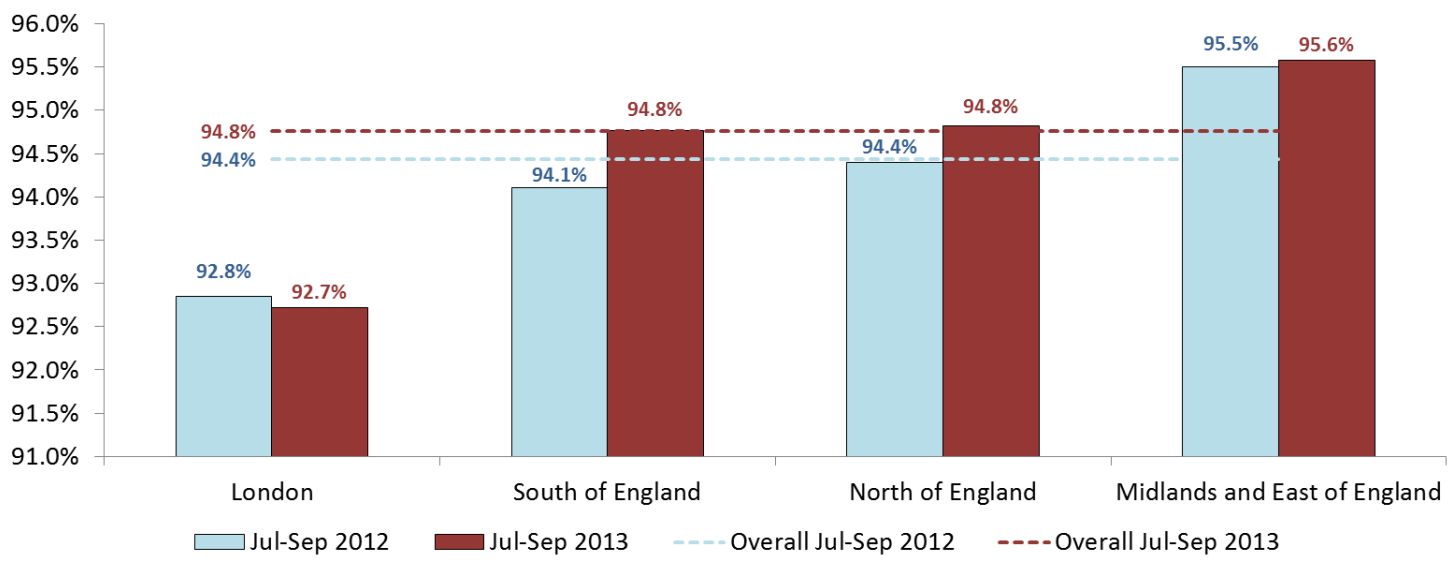
Figure 3. Percentage of those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years who succeeded, by Ethnicity (including can't remember)



Regional breakdown of Success Rate

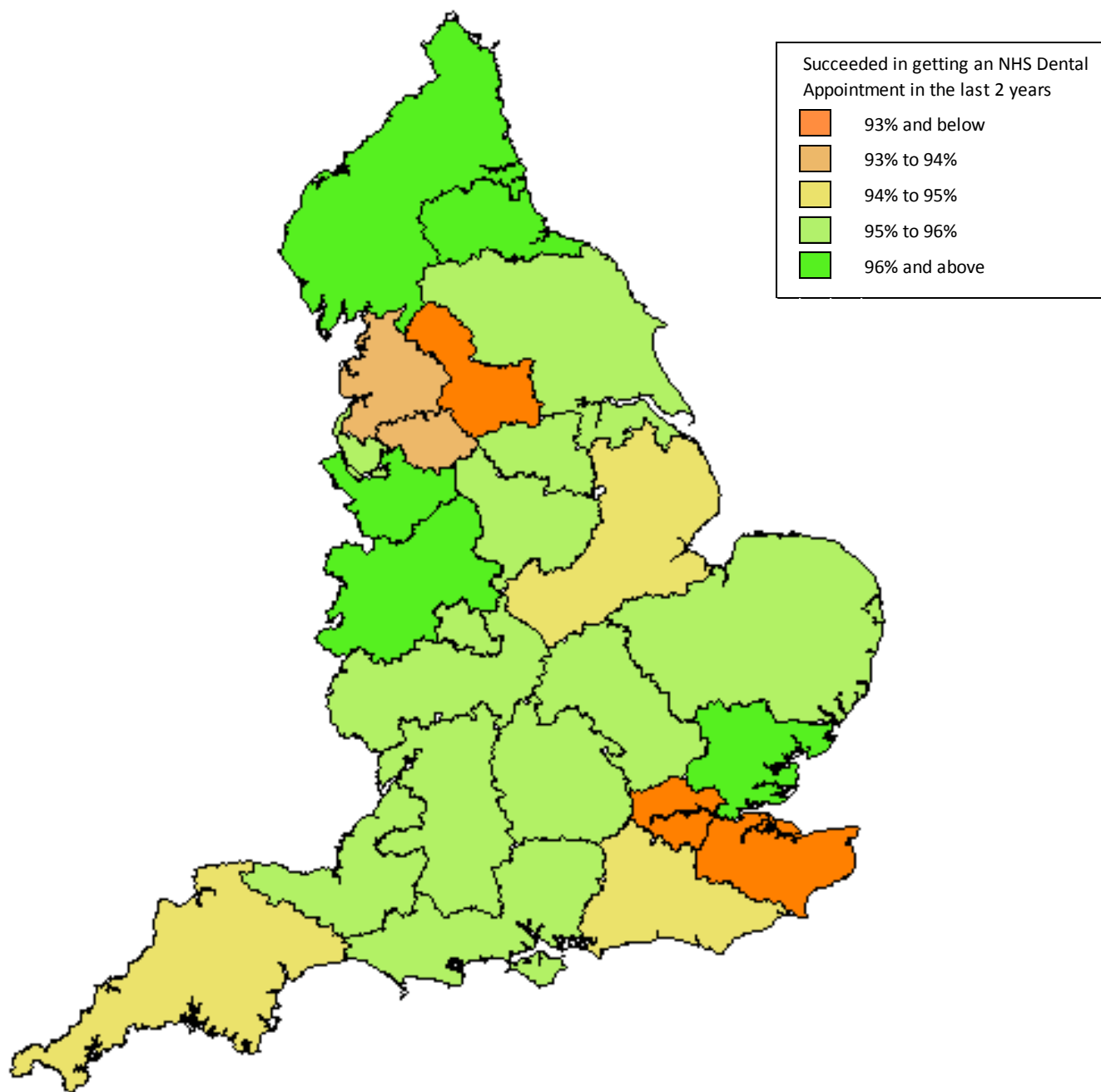
19. Figure 4 shows that the Region with the highest success rate for the 24-month measure was the Midlands and East of England (96%). London has the lowest success rate (93%) of all the Regions; however London's demographic makeup contains a high proportion of younger adults and ethnic minorities which contributed to this figure. The South of England has shown a notable increase, and overall the success rate across the country has increased, but by less than 1 percentage point.

Figure 4. Success rate in getting an NHS Dental Appointment in the last 2 years (excluding can't remember)



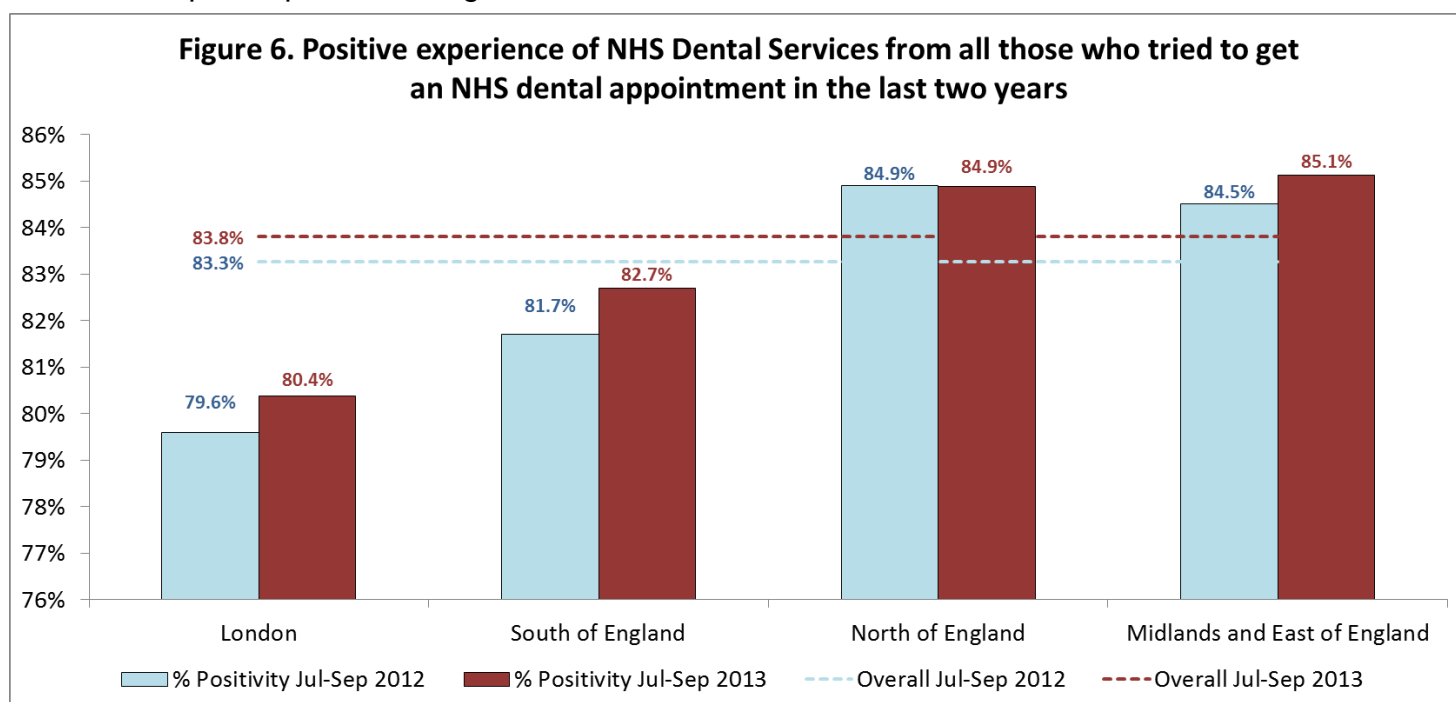
20. At Area Team level success rate ranged from 92% in West Yorkshire to 97% in Cheshire, Warrington and Wirral. Figure 5 shows geographically the range of success rates at Area team level.

Figure 5. Percentage of respondents who tried to, and succeeded in getting, an NHS Dental appointment in the last two years, at Area Team level, July to September 2013 (excluding can't remember)



Overall Experience of NHS dental services

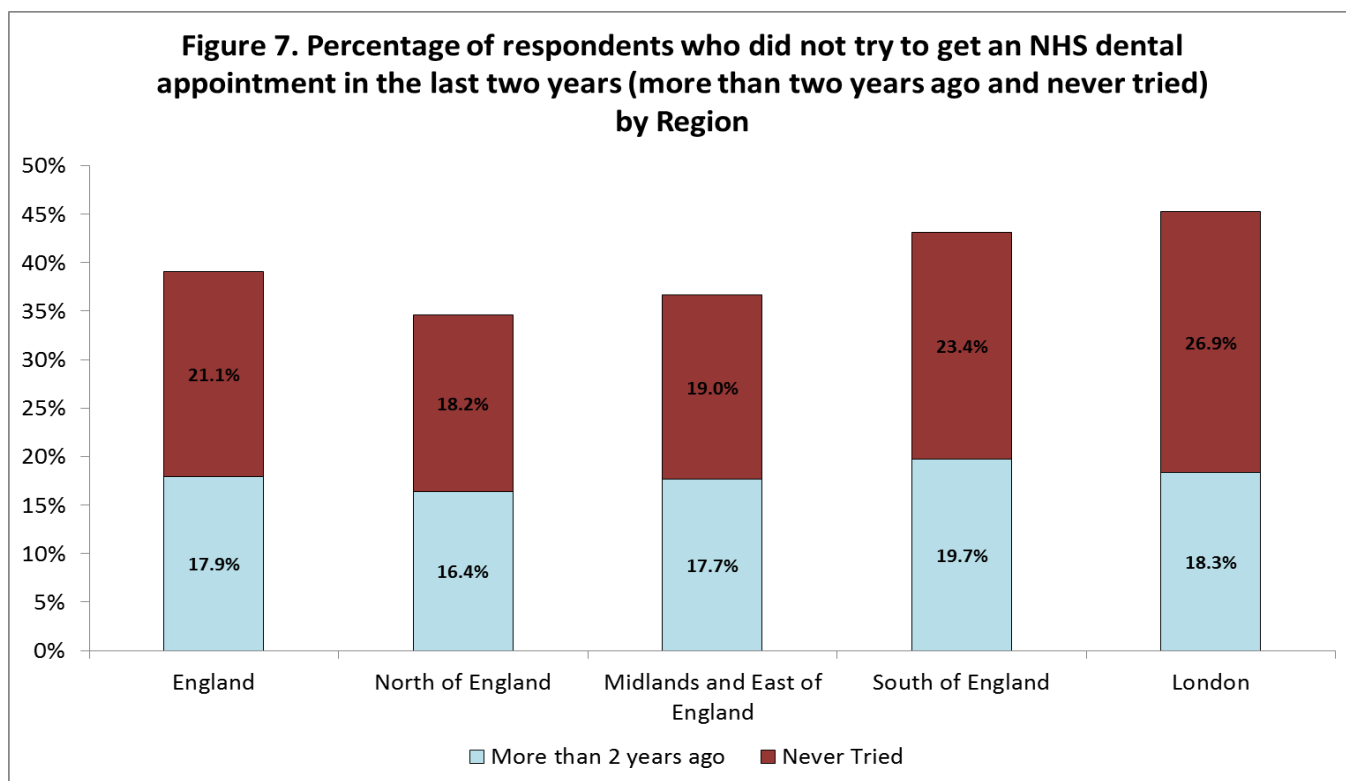
21. 84% of respondents who tried to get an appointment in the last two years rated their NHS dental experience as positive, an increase of 0.5 percentage points compared to July to September 2012.
22. 48% stated they had a very good experience, 0.7% point higher than the responses from the same period last year. Of the remaining responses 36% stated a fairly good experience, 9% of respondents stated it was neither good nor poor, and fairly poor and very poor had a 4% and 3% share of the total respectively.
23. As figure 6 below shows, at Region level the North of England and Midlands and East of England had the highest positive patient experience, at 85%, whilst London had the lowest (with 80%).
24. Patient experience is influenced by whether patients were successful in getting an appointment. Nationally, those who were successful in getting an appointment rated their patient experience as 88% positive, compared to only 20% of those who were unsuccessful. This in part explains the regional differences seen.



Did not try to get an NHS dental appointment

25. Just under two fifths (39%) of adults who responded to the survey had not tried to get an appointment with an NHS dentist in the last two years (figure 7). Over one-fifth (21%) of all respondents had never tried to get an NHS dental appointment, while 18% of respondents last tried over two years ago.
26. Regionally, the largest proportions of respondents who have not tried to make an NHS dental appointment in the last two years were seen in London and the southern area teams. Thames Valley Area Team had the highest proportion, with 28% of all respondents. In comparison, South Yorkshire and Merseyside, in the north, had the lowest proportions, with only 15% of respondents not attempting to get an NHS appointment in the last two years.

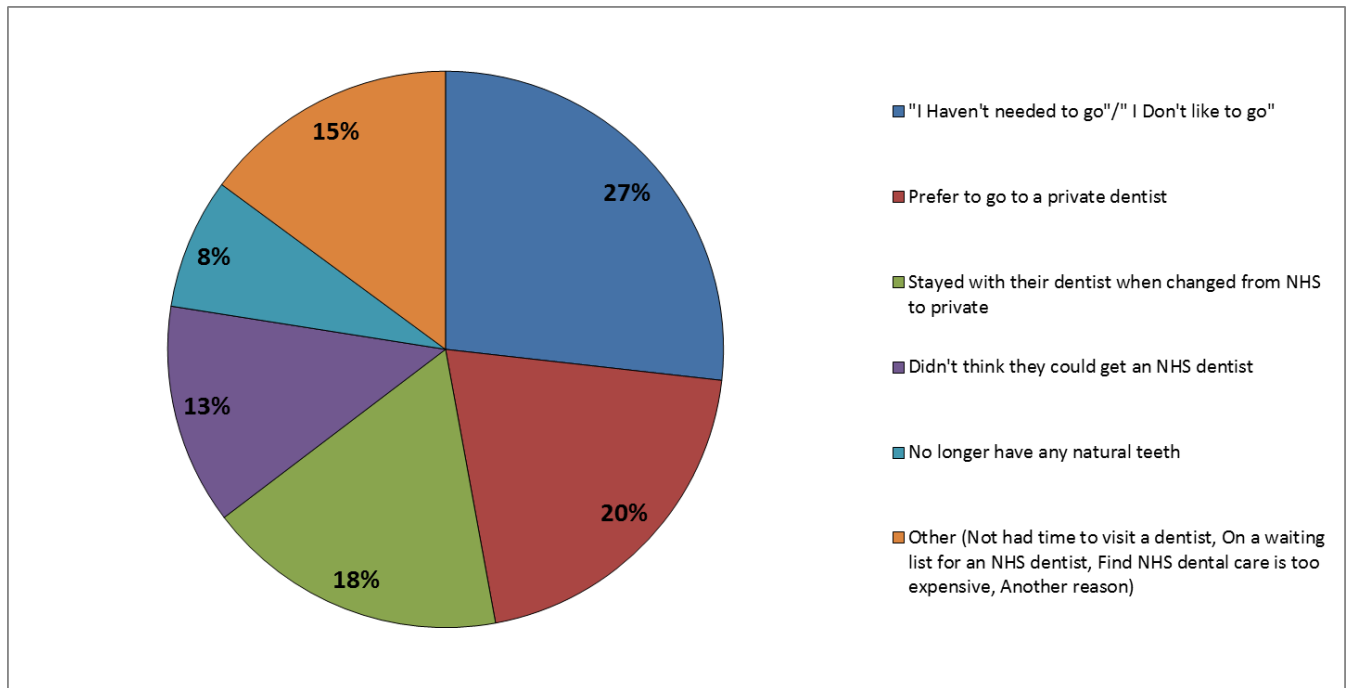
27. For the respondents who have never tried to get an NHS dental appointment, London and South of England had the highest proportions, accounting for roughly a quarter of respondents for each Region (27% and 23% respectively).



Reasons for not trying to get an appointment

28. Like results from the previous year, the most common explanation as to why respondents had not tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years was because they chose not to visit a dentist, with over a quarter of the respondents giving the response “I don’t like to go” or “I haven’t needed to go”.

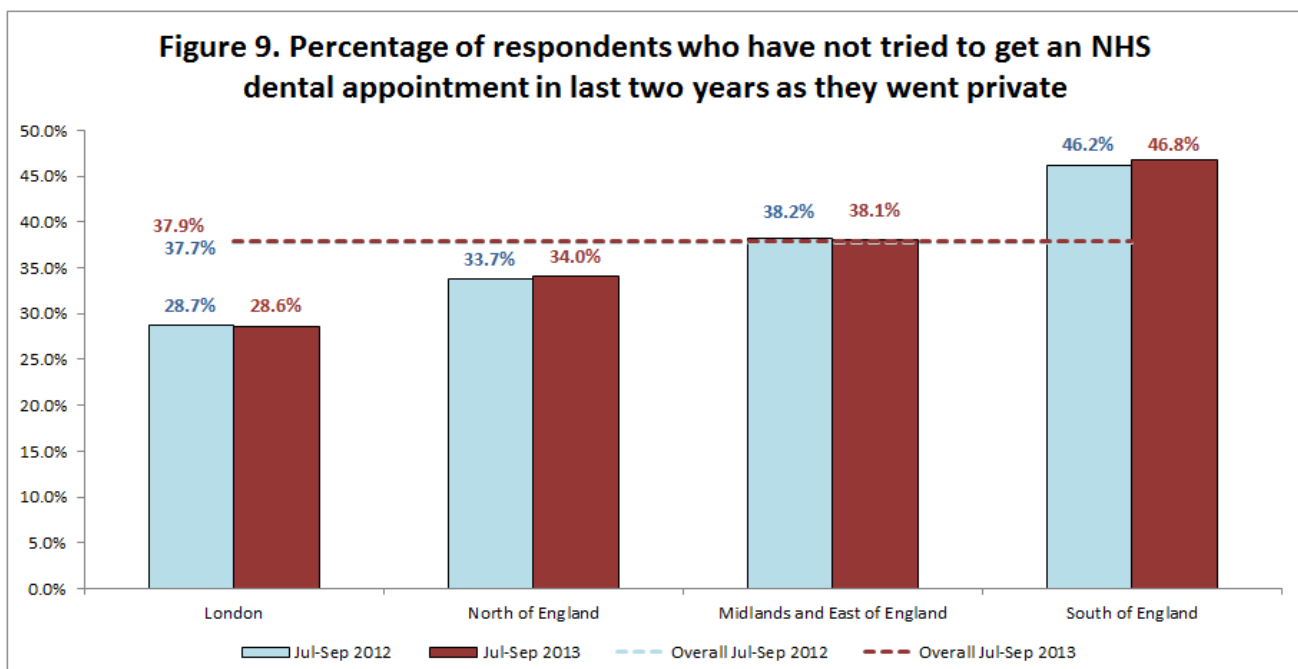
Figure 8. Respondents did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, by Reason for not trying



29. 13% of the respondents who didn't try to get an NHS dental appointment gave their reason as "I didn't think I could get an NHS dental appointment". The proportion of people who gave this response has decreased by 0.8 percentage points per cent compared to the previous year's results.

30. 20% of respondents did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years because they preferred private dentistry, an increase of 1.0 percentage points compared to the same period last year. While 18% stated they stayed with their dentist when they moved from NHS to private.

31. These two private dentistry reasons accumulated to over a third of all responses (38%) of those who have not tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years. However there are regional differences apparent, varying from 29% in London to 47% in the South of England.



To get current results (July to September 2013) please click on the following link:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2013/12/12/2345gppsw1201314/>

To access the full dental results for previous years, please click on the following link:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/category/statistics/gp-dental-statistics/>

Contact email

For further information regarding these statistics, or for any comments on this publication, please contact the following address:

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