

Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey

January to March 2014

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 (or have not recently) NHS dental services in addition to those that do to give a fuller picture of people's dental behaviour and experience.
3. This paper summarises the key findings of the January to March 2014 survey dental results and makes comparisons to the survey results from the same time the previous two years (January to March 2013 and January to March 2012).
4. Due to revisions to the questionnaire and methodology in 2011/12 comparisons cannot be made to the years before 2011/12. The January to March 2014 GP Patient Survey is the fifth publication since these changes were made.

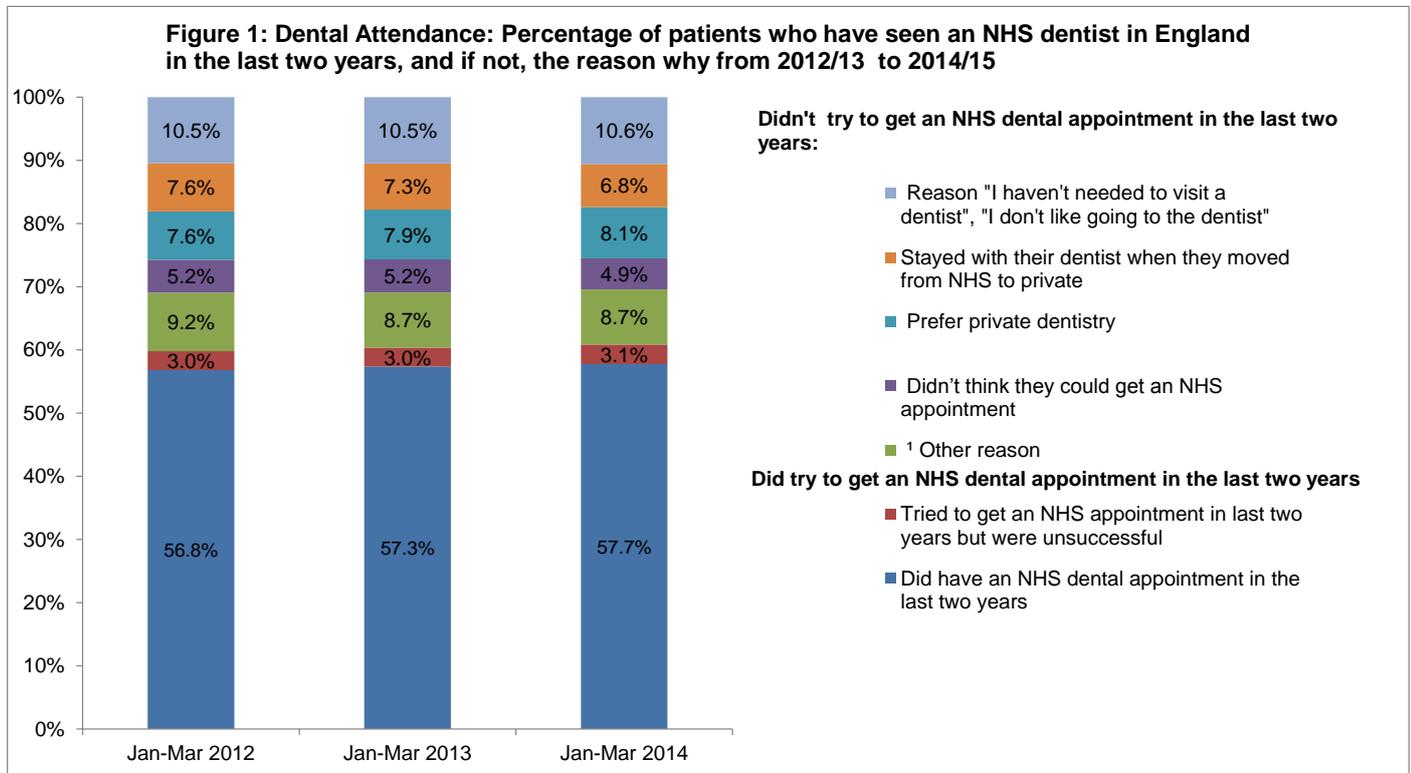
General Survey Information

5. For the January to March 2014 GP patient survey 1.3 million adult GP patients were contacted and 460,000 replies were received. This represents a 35% response rate; a decrease of 0.9% percentage points compared to January to March 2013 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 number; however percentage change is expressed at the decimal point, for accuracy.
8. Survey region breakdowns are based on the address of the respondent and not the address of the dentist.

Key Findings

Overall picture of respondents' dentistry usage

9. The following graph (Figure 1) shows the overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour in England over the last three years.



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".

10. Overall, just under three fifths (58%) of respondents in the most recent year (2014/15) had visited an NHS dentist in the last two years. 11% of the respondents didn't try to see an NHS dentist because they "didn't need to go" or "do not like going" and 8% didn't try because they prefer private dentistry.

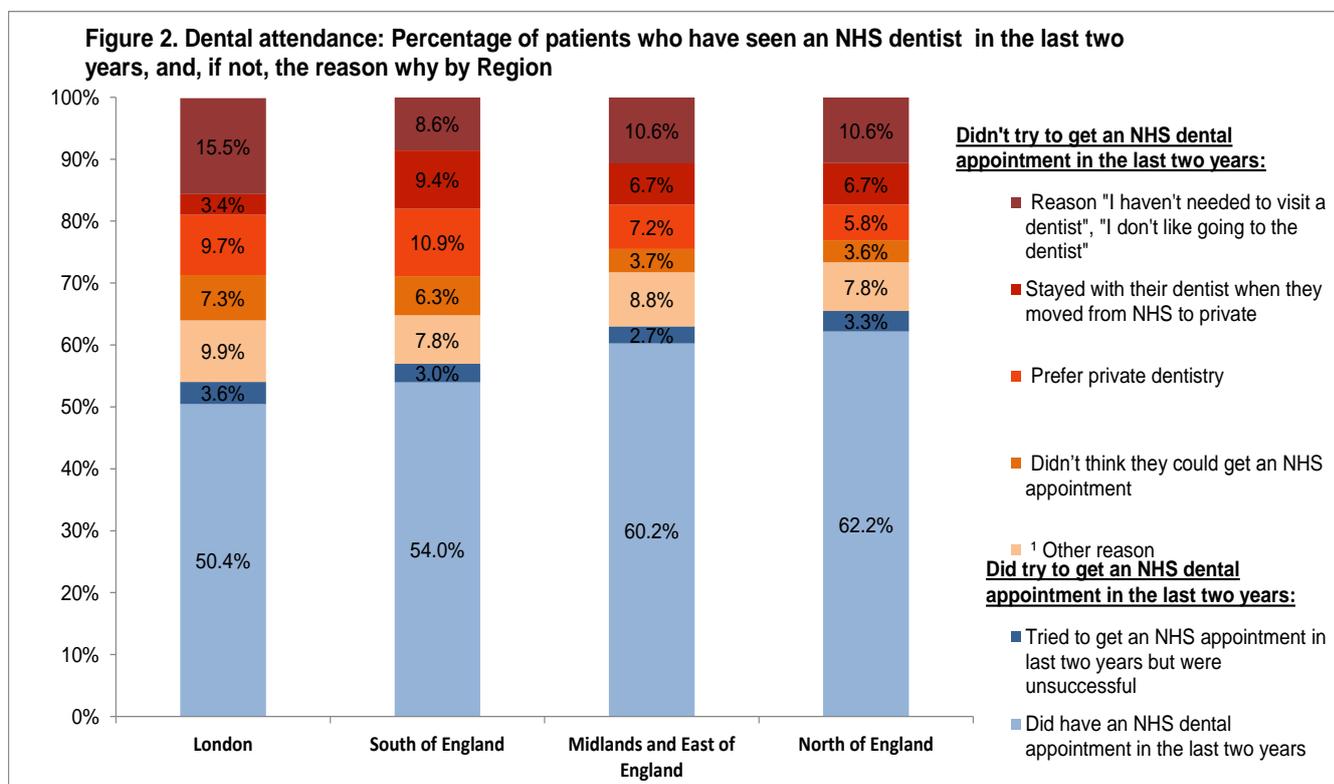
11. There has been a gradual increase in access levels to NHS dental care from the financial year 2012/13 to the current 2014/15 with the number of respondents who "Did have an NHS dental appointment in the last two years" increasing to 57.7% in 2014/15, the highest level throughout the time series.

12. The proportion of respondents who "Prefer private dentistry" has also been on the increase. This could be explained by the benefits of improving economic fortunes which have resulted in households having more disposable income.

13. Respondents who "Didn't think could get an NHS dental appointment" have decreased to 4.9% of the respondents in 2014/15 from 5.2% reported in the two previous years.

Overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour by region.

14. The demand for NHS dental services shows regional variation in responses for those who tried to visit an NHS dentist in the last two years. London has the highest proportion of those who have not tried to get an NHS appointment in the last 2 years who "didn't need to go" or "don't like going" (15% of all respondents).



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".

15. South of England has the largest proportion of patients who sought private dental care at 20% with 9% of these respondents having "stayed with their dentists when they moved from NHS to private" and 11% "preferring private dentistry".

16. The figures imply more residents in the North of England received NHS dental care than any other Region with 62% of all respondents, followed by Midlands and East of England at 60%. For London resident respondents, only 50% received NHS dental care in the last 2 years."

Tried to get an NHS dental appointment

17. 61% of all 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 January to March 2013. Of those that tried in the last two years, 53% had tried in the last year; 40% within the last six months and 23% in the last three months.

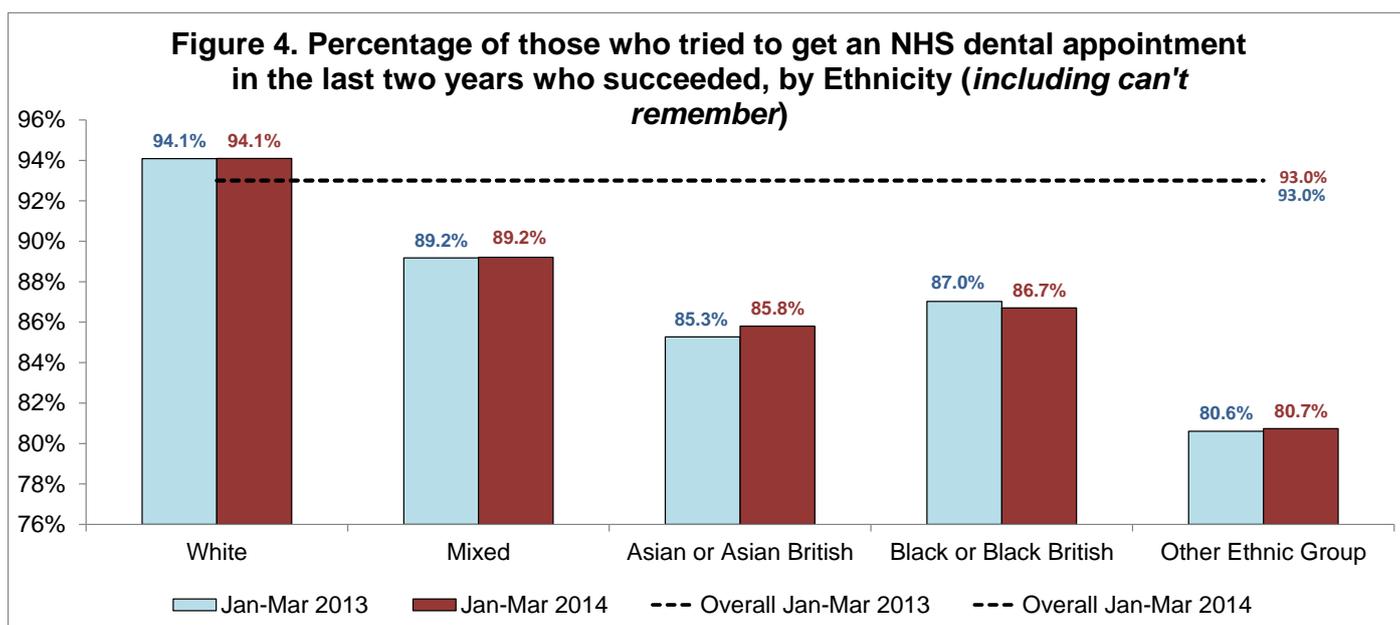
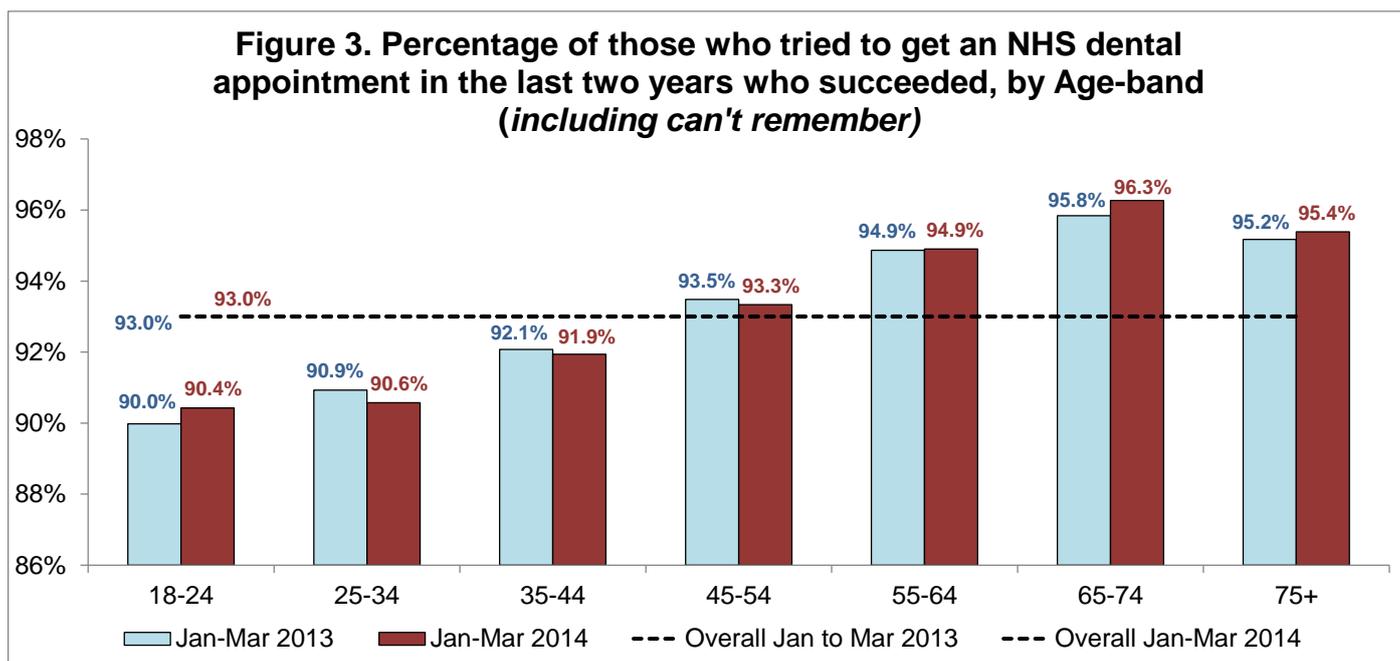
18. There are regional variations in demand for NHS dentistry services with demand being highest in the North of England at 65%. In contrast, demand levels to NHS dental services remain lowest in London at 54% followed by South of England at 57%.

Successful in getting an NHS dental appointment

19. 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%, which is similar to rates recorded in the January to March 2013 survey responses and an increase of 0.3 percentage points when compared to the January to March 2012 survey.

20. Those respondents who had not been to the practice before were less successful, at 76%, compared with 96% who were successful when trying to make an appointment at a practice they had visited before.

21. Lower levels of success were also reported by younger adults (as shown in figure 3) and ethnic minorities (figure 4).



Regional breakdown of success rates

22. Regionally, the success rate in getting an NHS dental appointment was highest in 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. All English regions recorded slight increases in the proportion of patients who succeeded in getting a dental appointment for the first two years (January to March 2012 and January to March 2013) with all regions with the exception of the North recording slight decreases from the previous year for the period January to March 2014.

Figure 5. Success rate in getting an NHS Dental Appointment in the last 2 years (excluding can't remember) from 2012/3 to 2014/15

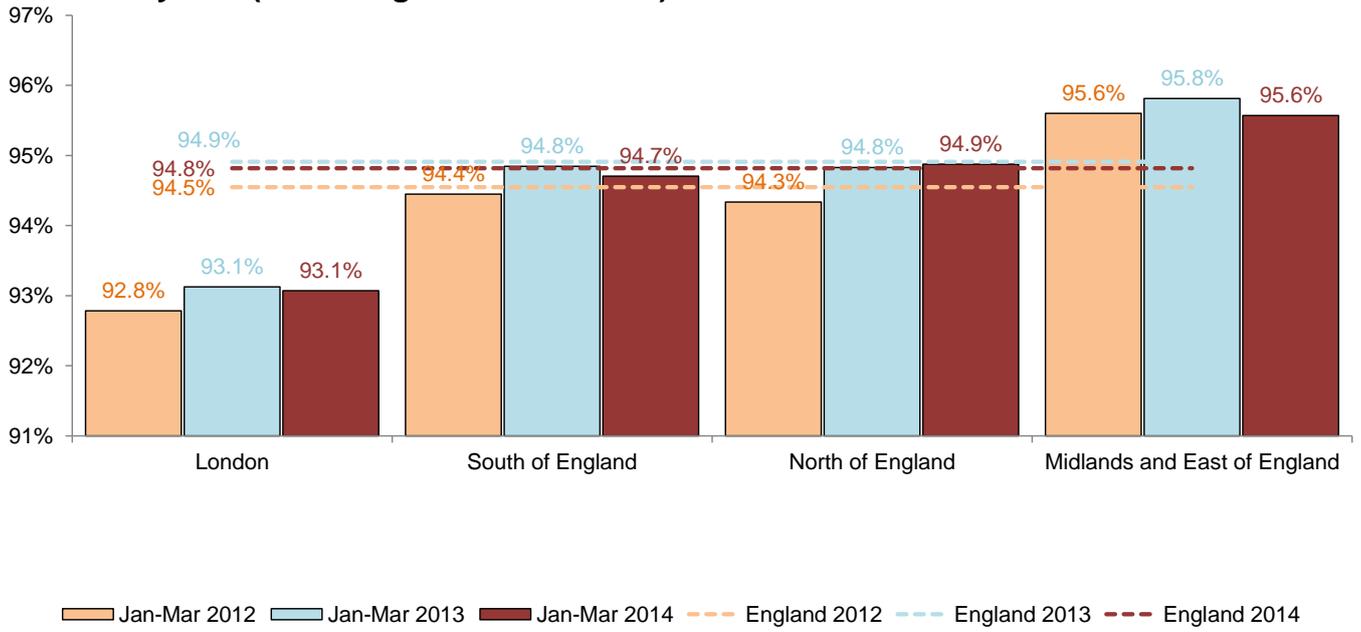
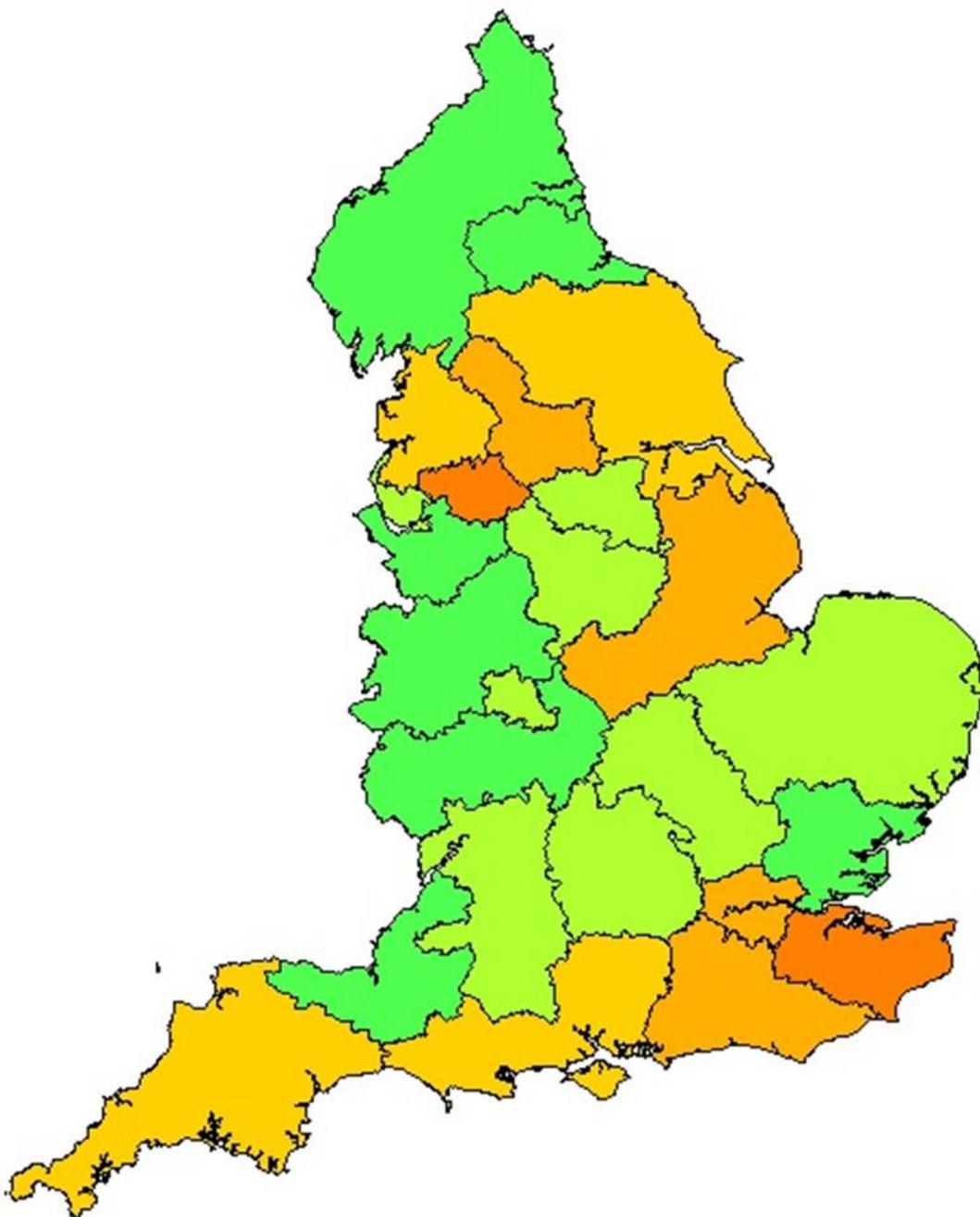


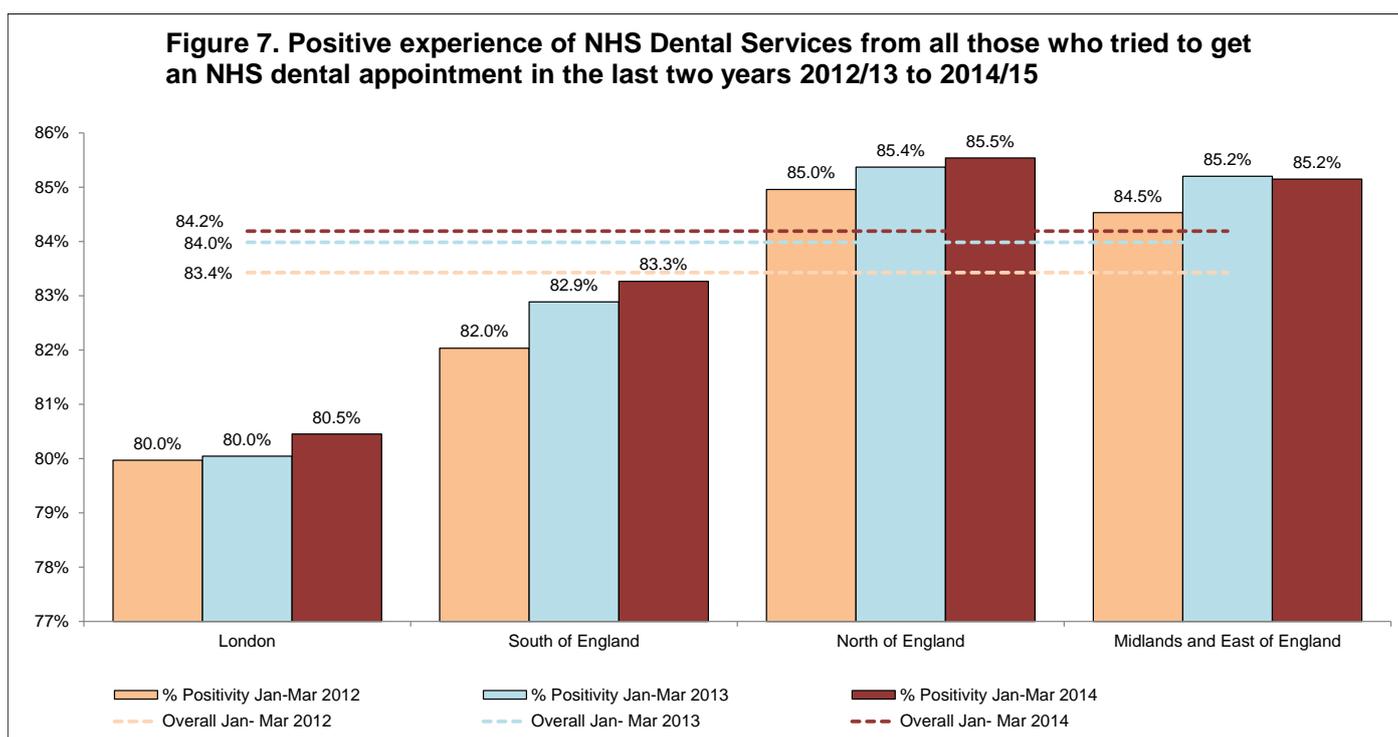
Figure 6. Percentage of respondents who tried to, and succeeded in getting, an NHS Dental appointment in the last two years, at Area Team level, January to March 2014 (excluding can't remember).

23. At Area Team level success rates in getting an NHS dental appointment range from 92.5% in Kent and Medway to 97.4% in Durham, Darlington and Tees. Figure 6 shows geographically the range of success rates at Area Team level.



Overall Experience of NHS dental services

24. Of the respondents that tried to get NHS dental care in the last 2 years, 84% of respondents rated their NHS dental experience as positive, an increase of 0.2 percentage points compared to January to March 2013.
25. 48% had a very good experience, 0.5% point higher than the responses from the same period last year. Of the remaining responses 36% had a fairly good experience, 9% of respondents said it was neither good nor poor, and fairly poor and very poor had a 4% and 3% share of the total respectively.
26. Satisfaction rates with the overall patient experience of NHS dental care remain high in the North of England and Midlands and East of England with 86% and 85% respectively of respondents rating their patient experience as positive while London had the lowest with 81%, a 0.4% improvement from the previous year. All regions with the exception for Midlands and East of England recorded increases in respondents who rated their patient experience as positive as compared to the previous year (see figure 7 below).
27. 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 positive (88%), compared to only 20% of those who were unsuccessful. This in part explains the regional differences seen.

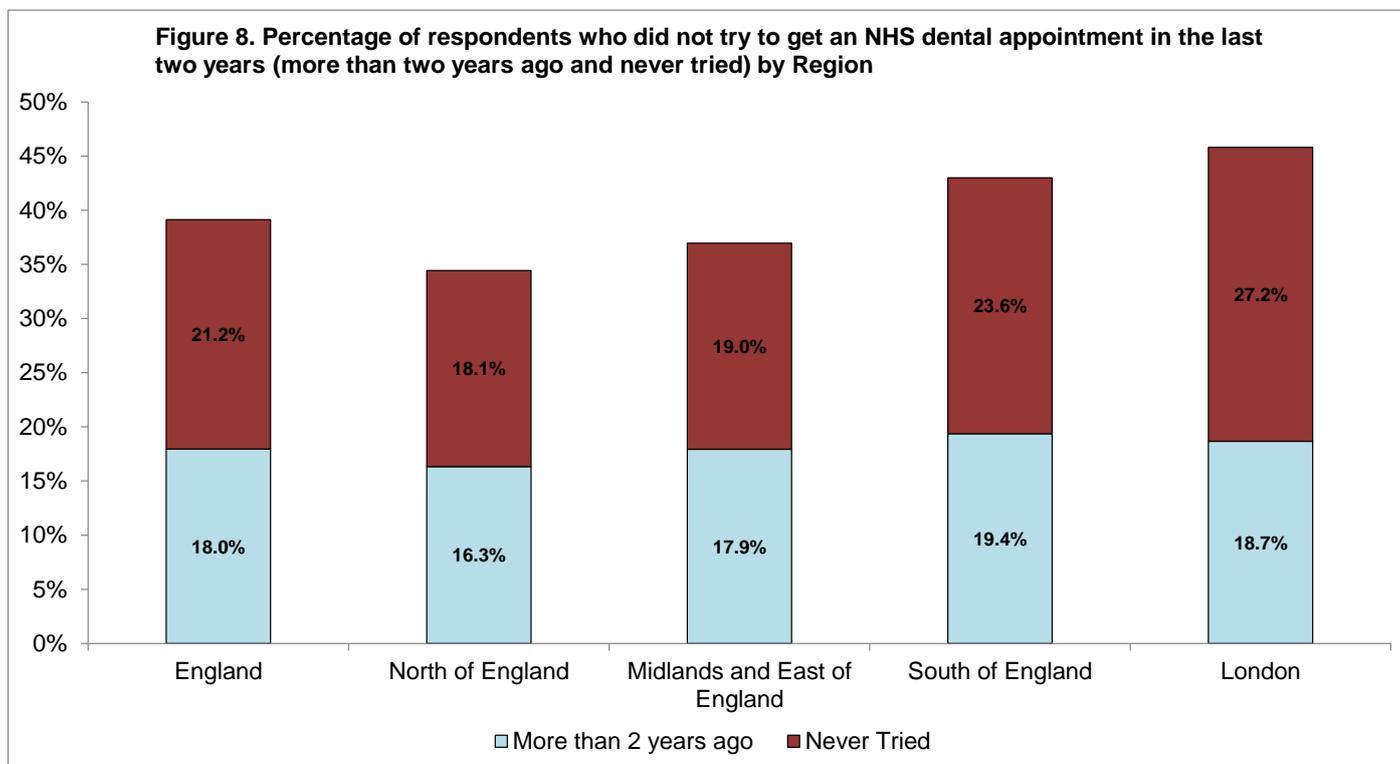


Did not try to get an NHS dental appointment

28. 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 8). 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.
29. 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 who had never tried

in the two year period. In comparison, South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw, in the north, had the lowest proportions, with only 15% of respondents not attempting to get an NHS appointment in the last two years.

30. 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 24% respectively).



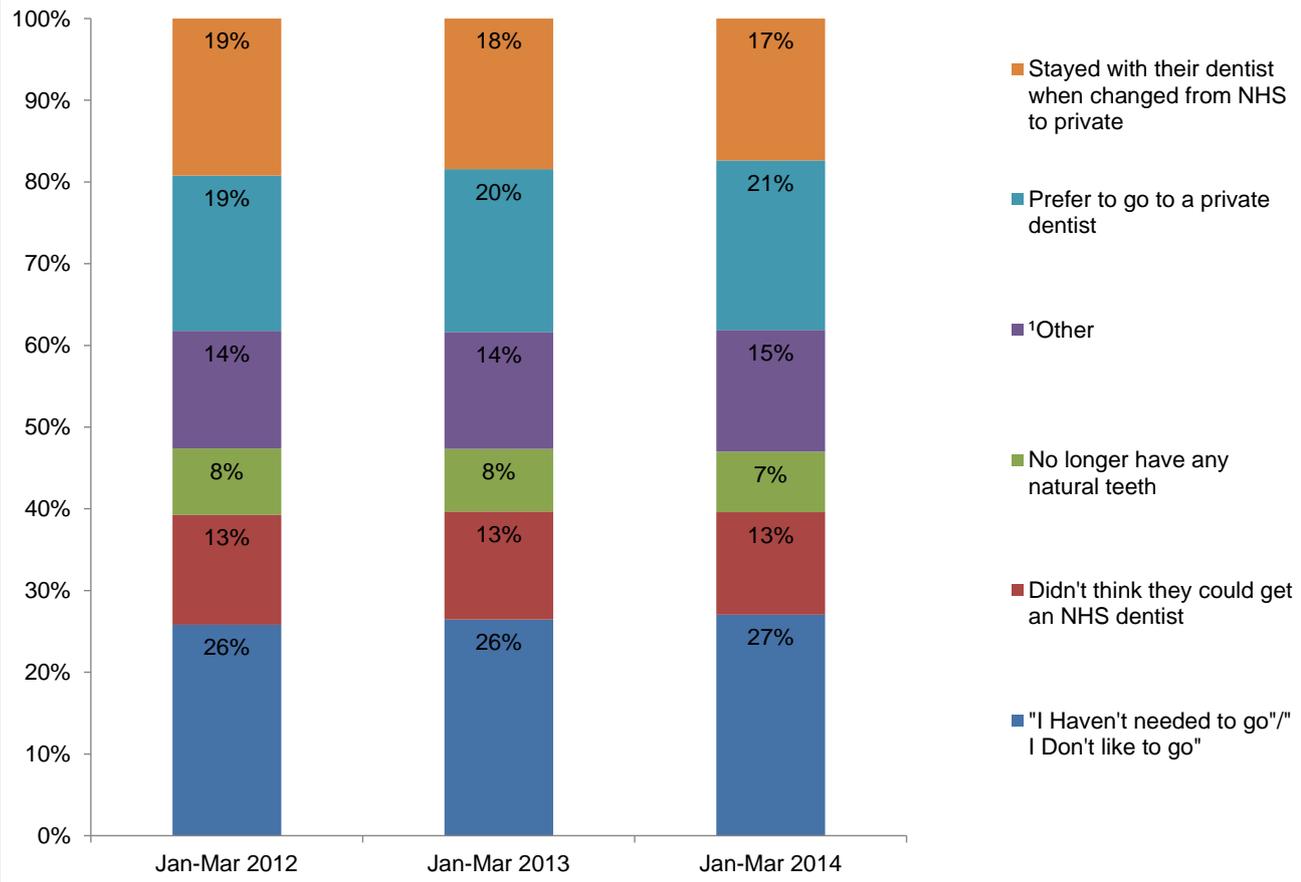
Reasons for not trying to get an appointment

31. The main reasons stated by respondents for why they have not tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years is “I don’t like to go” or “I haven’t needed to go” with just over a quarter (27%) of the respondents stating this reason (see figure 9).

32. 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 0.7 percentage points per cent compared to the previous year’s results.

33. 21% of respondents did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years because they preferred private dentistry, an increase of 0.8 percentage points compared to the same period last year. Those respondents who stayed with their dentist when they moved from NHS to private made up 17% of all the responses submitted.

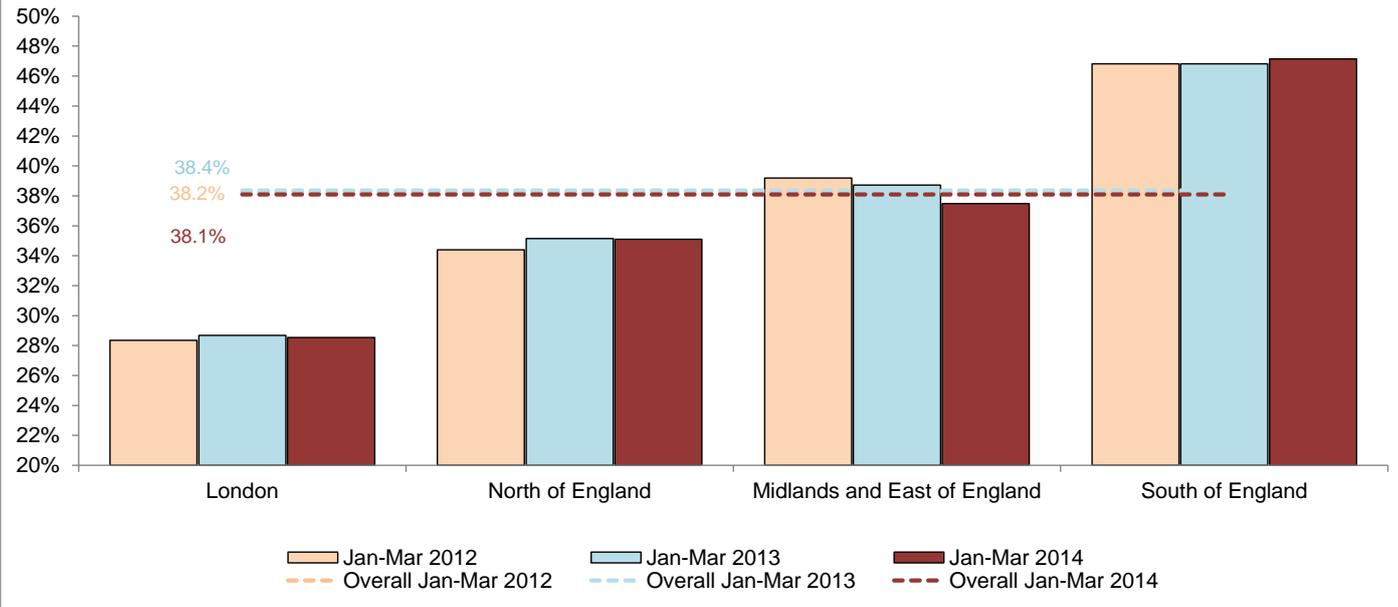
Figure 9: Proportion of respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, by reason for not trying from 2012/13 to 2014/15



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"

34. These two private dentistry reasons accounted for 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 (as shown in figure 10).

Figure 10. Percentage of respondents who have not tried to get an NHS dental appointment in last two years as they went private from 2012/13 to 2014/15



To get current results (January to March 2014) please click on the following link:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2014/07/03/2346gppsw2201314>

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:

Email: gpsurveydental@dh.gsi.gov.uk