

Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey

July to September 2015

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 July to September 2015 survey dental results and makes comparisons to the survey results from the same time the previous two years (July to September 2014 and July to September 2013).
4. Due to revisions to the questionnaire and methodology in 2011/12 comparisons cannot be made to the years before 2011/12. The July to September 2015 GP Patient Survey is the eighth publication since these changes were made.

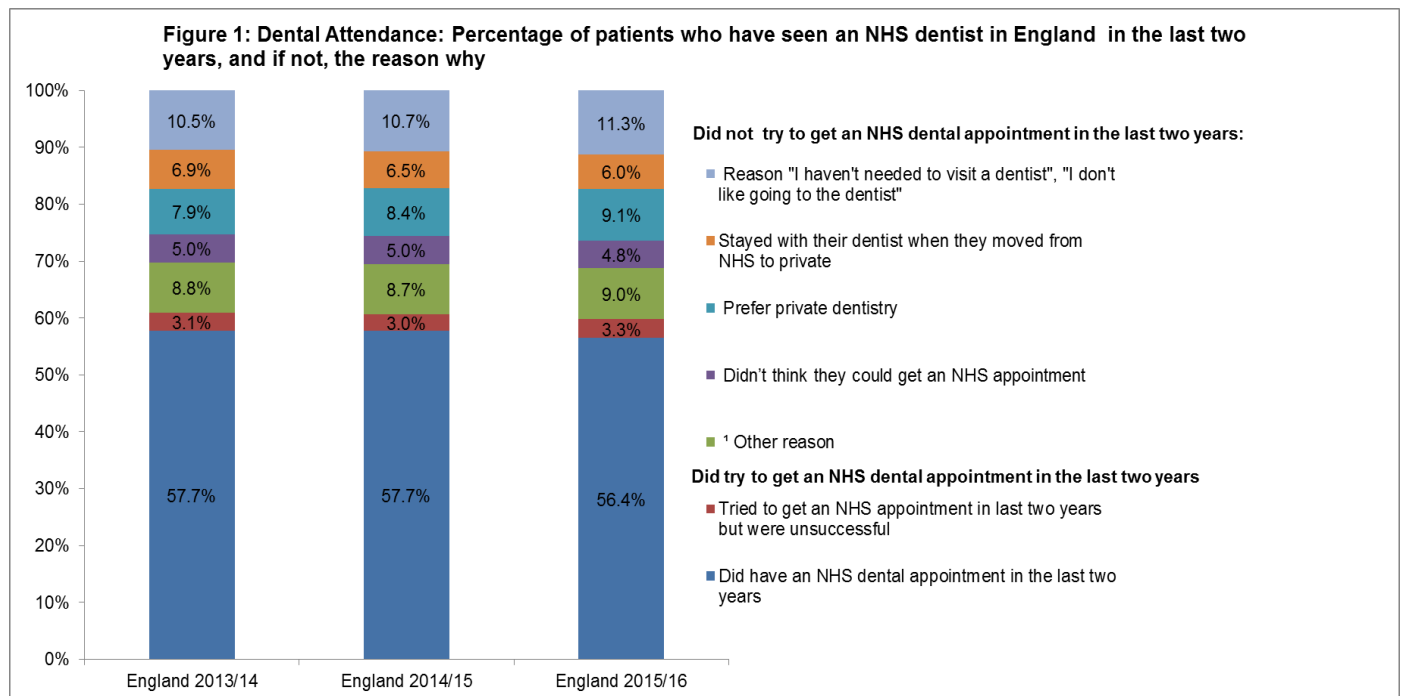
General Survey Information

5. For the July to September 2015 GP patient survey 1.1 million adult GP patients were contacted and 421,000 replies were received. This represents a 39% response rate; an increase of 7 percentage points compared to July to September 2014 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 two years.



¹Other reason includes: "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 (56%) of respondents in the most recent year (2015/16) 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 9% didn't try because they prefer private dentistry.

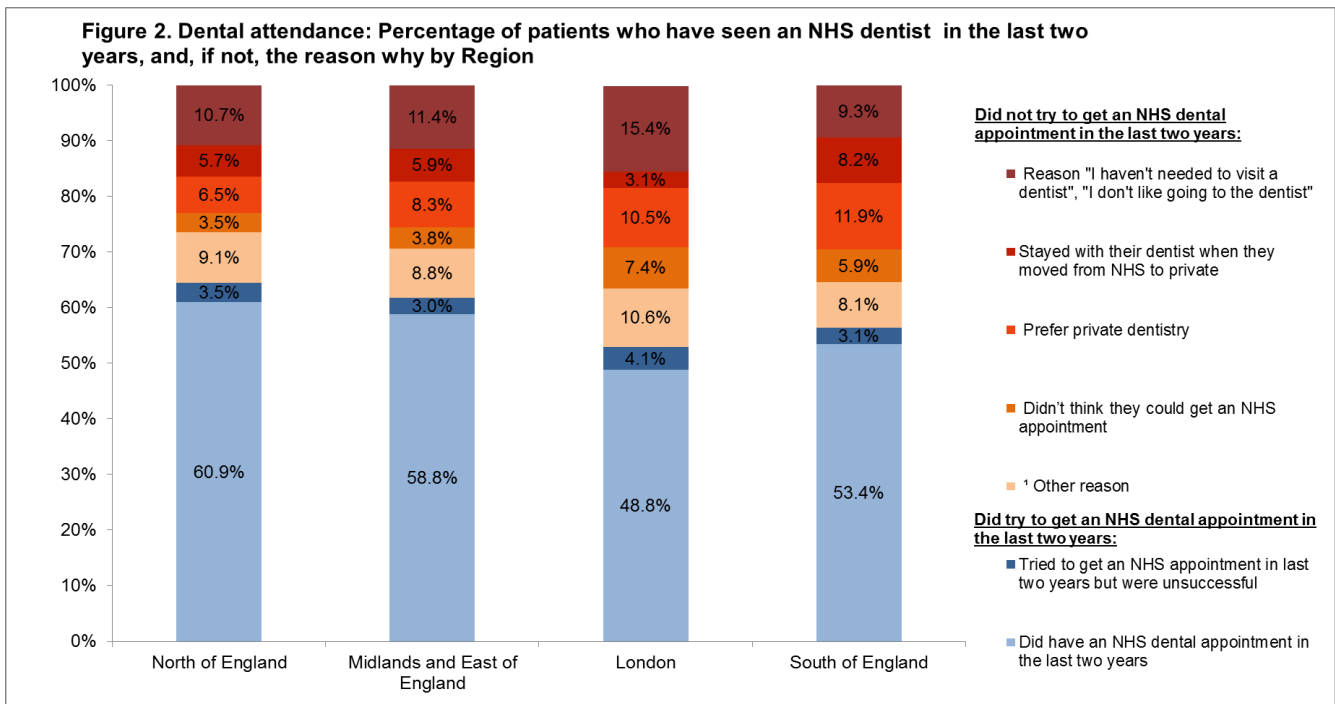
11. There has been a slight decrease in access levels to NHS dental care from the financial year 2014/15 to the current 2015/16 with the number of respondents who "Did have an NHS dental appointment in the last two years" decreasing to 57.7% from 56.4%, which was the highest level throughout the time 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 4.8% of the respondents in 2015/16 from 5.0% both 2014/15 and 2013/14.

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). The breakdown of this between the two response categories is 12.9% of people who did not think they needed to go to the dentist, and 2.4% of people who do not like going. Nationally, the breakdown was 8.5% who felt that they didn't need to go, and 28% who do not like going.



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¹ Other reason includes: "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 8% of these respondents having "stayed with their dentists when they moved from NHS to private" and 12% "preferring private dentistry".

16. The figures imply more residents in the North of England received NHS dental care than any other Region with 61% of all respondents, followed by Midlands and East of England at 60%. For London resident respondents, only 49% received NHS dental care in the last 2 years.

Tried to get an NHS dental appointment

17. 60% 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 1 percentage point decrease compared to July to September 2014. Of those that tried in the last two years, 52% had tried in the last year; 39% 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 64%. In contrast, demand levels to NHS dental services remain lowest in London at 53% 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, 92% were successful. The success rate (when excluding those who stated that they 'can't remember' whether they were successful) was 94%, which is similar to rates recorded in the July to September 2014 survey responses and the July to September 2013 survey.

20. Those respondents who had not been to the practice before were less successful, at 74%, 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).

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

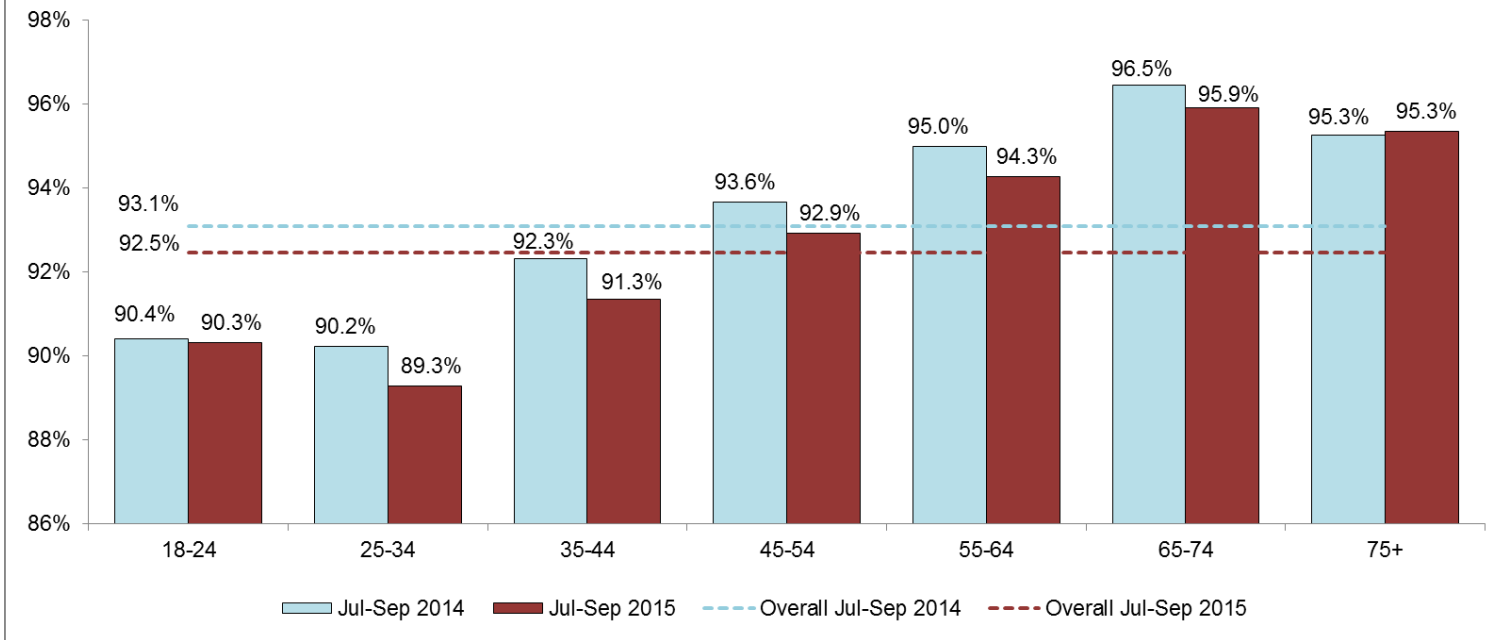
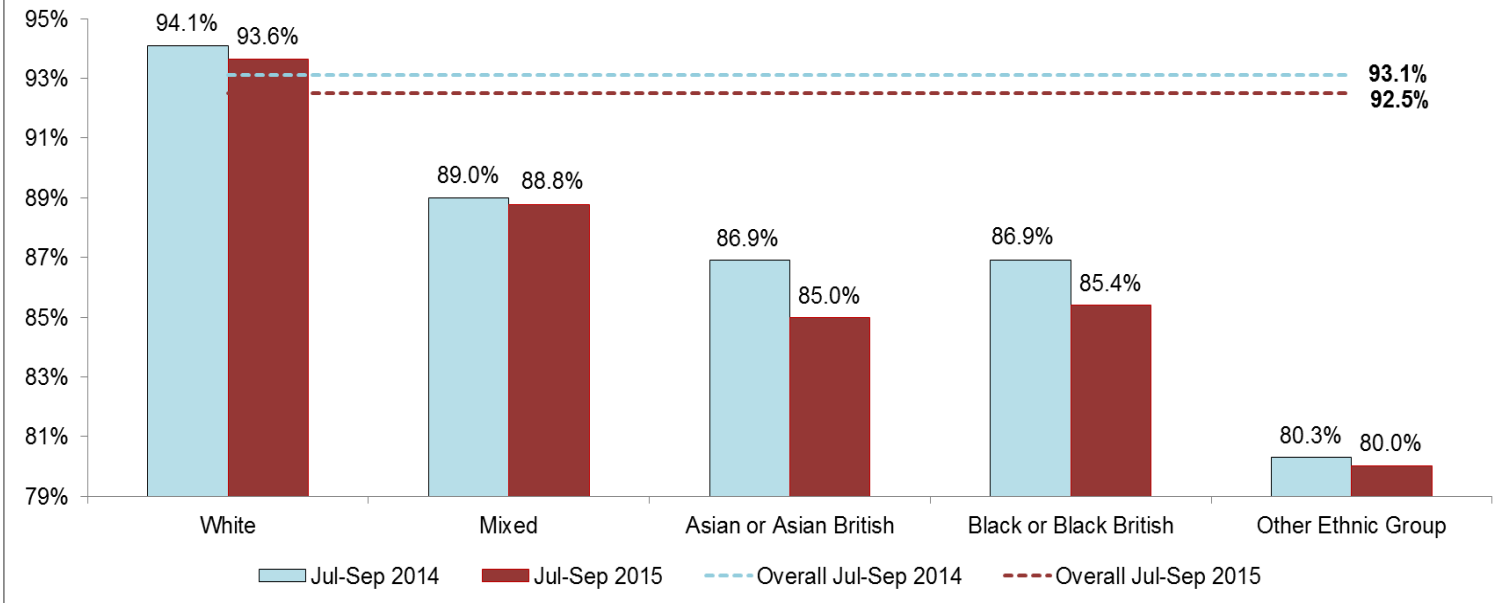


Figure 4. Percentage of those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years who succeeded, by Ethnicity (including 'can't remember')



Regional breakdown of success rates

22. Regionally, the success rate in getting an NHS dental appointment was highest in the South of England (95.1%). London has the lowest success rate (92%) 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 except London recorded slight increases in the proportion of patients who succeeded in getting a dental appointment between 2013 and 2014. All regions recorded slight decreases from the previous year for the period July to September 2015.

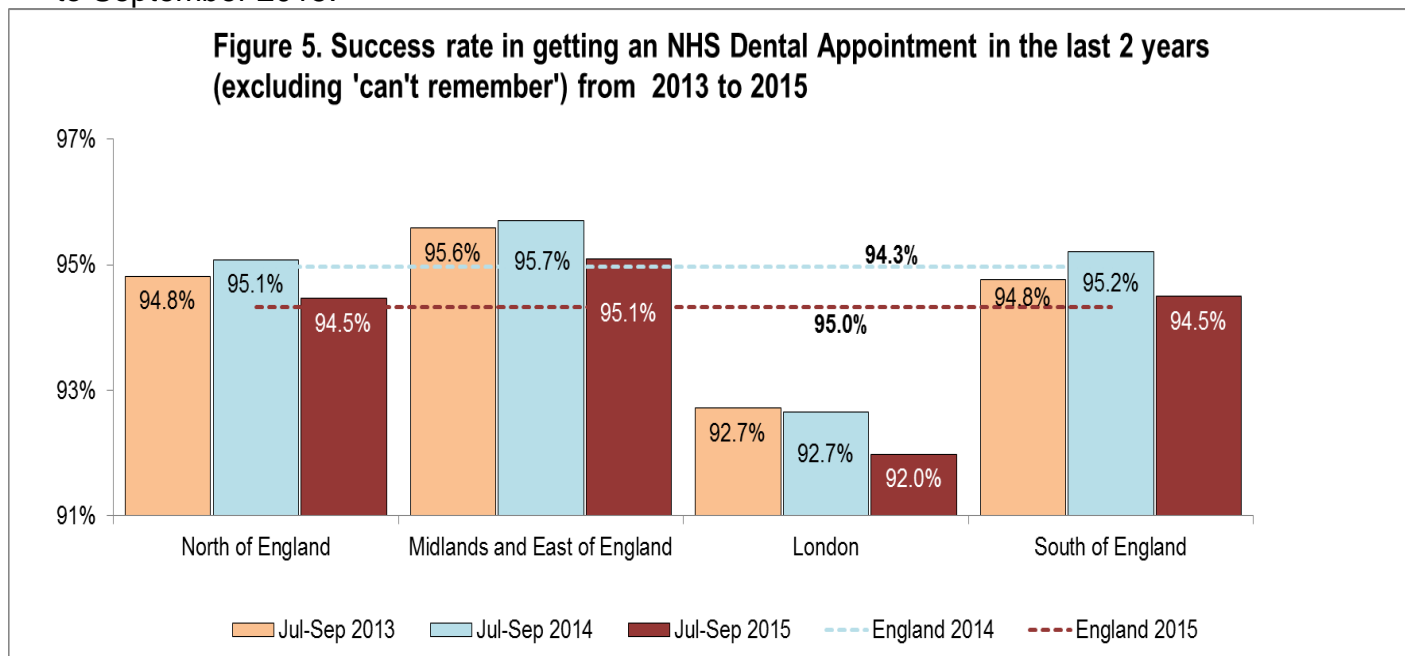
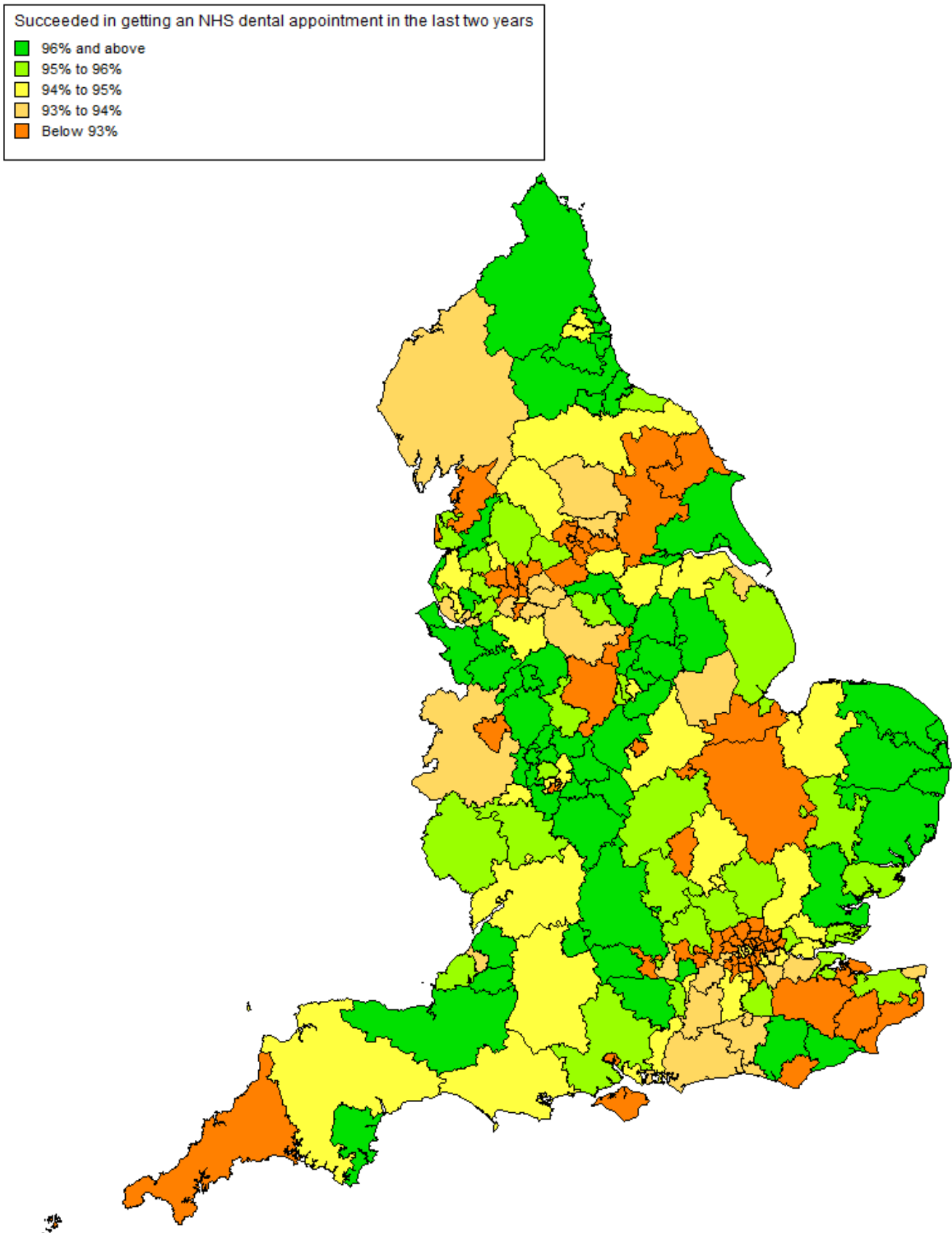


Figure 6. Percentage of respondents who tried to, and succeeded in getting, an NHS Dental appointment in the last two years, at Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) level, July to September 2015 (excluding 'can't remember').

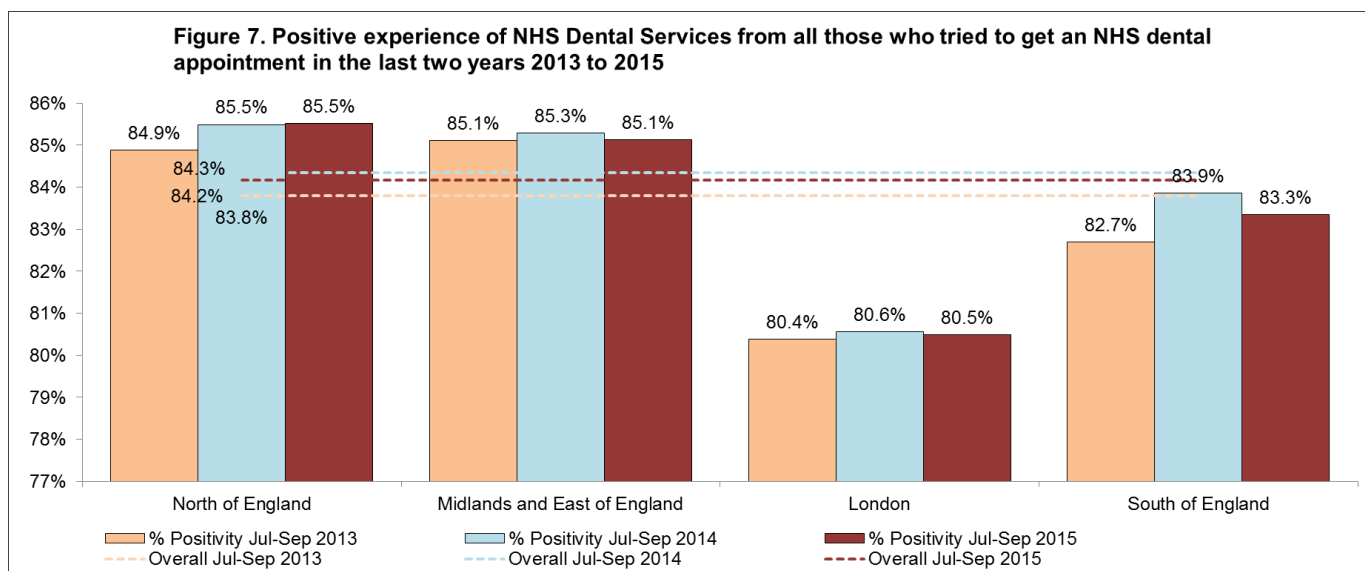
23. At CCG level, success rates in getting an NHS dental appointment range from 80% for NHS Bradford City to 99% for NHS Bassetlaw. Figure 6 shows geographically the range of success rates at CCG level.



24. The top three CCGs with the highest success rates over the two-year period were NHS Bassetlaw CCG (99.4%), NHS West Cheshire CCG (98.9%) and NHS South Tyneside CCG (98.9%).
25. The bottom three CCGs with the lowest success rates over the two-year period were NHS Bradford City CCG (80.5%), NHS Tower Hamlets CCG (87.1%), and NHS Newham CCG (87.6%),

Overall Experience of NHS dental services

26. Of the respondents that tried to get NHS dental care in the last 2 years, 84.2% of respondents rated their NHS dental experience as positive, a decrease of 0.1 percentage points compared to July to September 2014.
27. In July-Sept 2015, 49% had a very good experience, which has been kept consistent from the same period last year. Of the remaining responses 35% 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.
28. 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 0.1 percentage point decrease from the previous year. All regions except North of England recorded decreases in respondents who rated their patient experience as positive, as compared to the previous year (see figure 7 below).
29. 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 21% of those who were unsuccessful. This in part explains the regional differences seen.

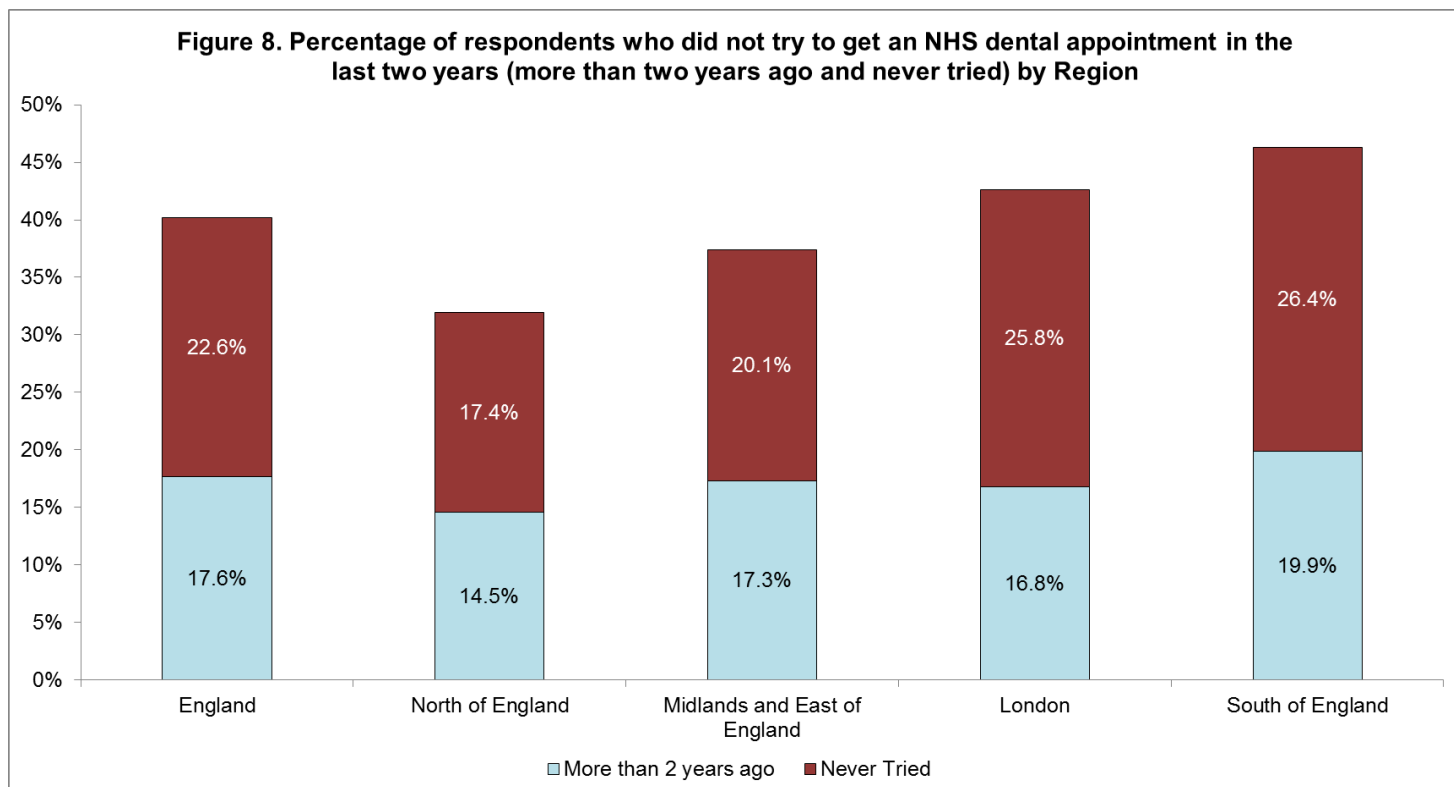


Did not try to get an NHS dental appointment

30. Two fifths (40%) 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 (23%) of all respondents had never tried to get an NHS dental appointment, while 18% of respondents last tried over two years ago.

31. 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 CCGs. NHS West London CCG had the highest proportion, with 37% of all respondents who had never tried in the two year period. In comparison, NHS South Sefton CCG, in the North of England, had the lowest proportion, with only 13% of respondents not attempting to get an NHS appointment in the last two years.

32. 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 (25.8% and 26.4% respectively).



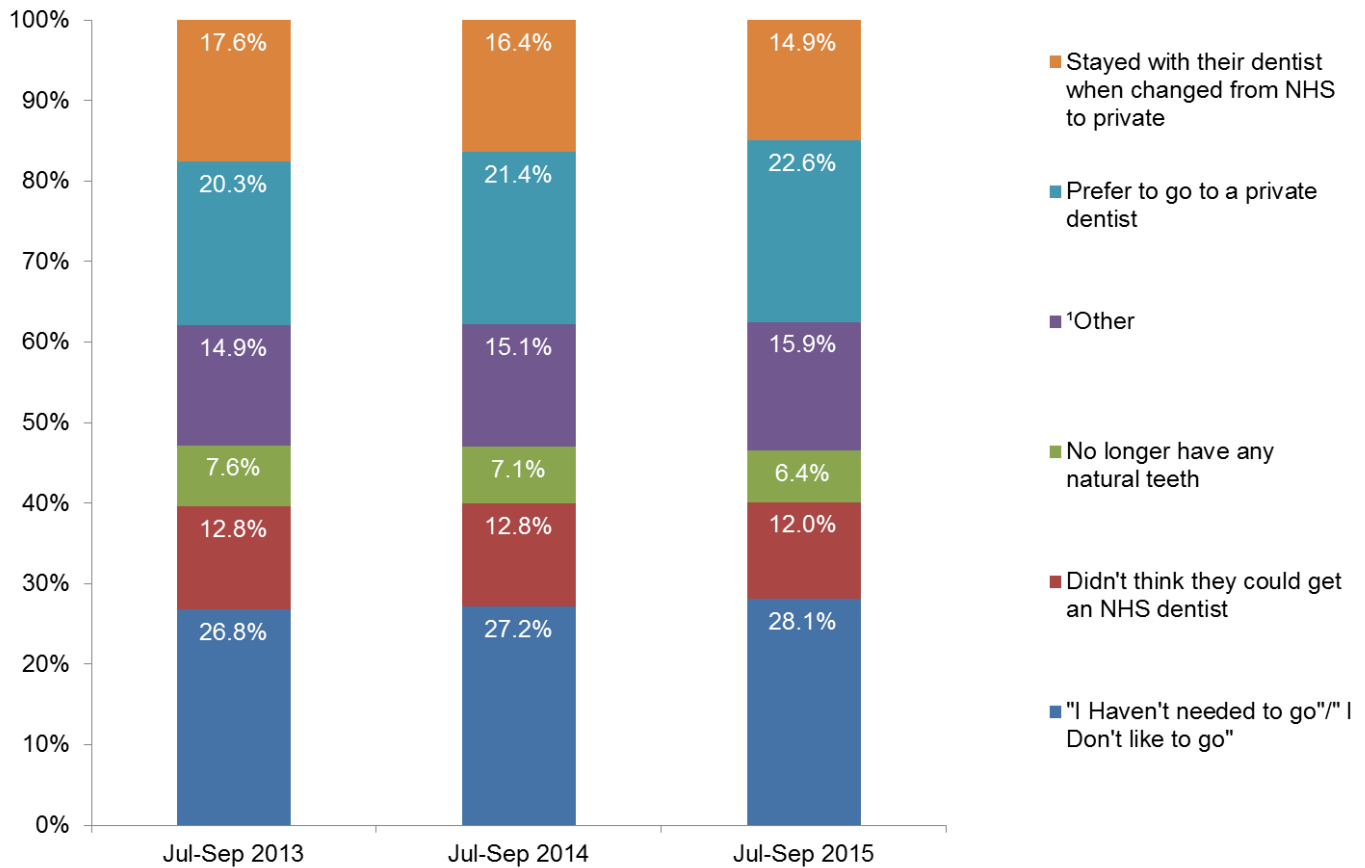
Reasons for not trying to get an appointment

33. 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 (28%) of the respondents stating this reason (see figure 9).

34. In July-Sept 2015, 12% 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.

35. This period 23% of respondents did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years because they preferred private dentistry, an increase of 1.2 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 15% of all the responses submitted.

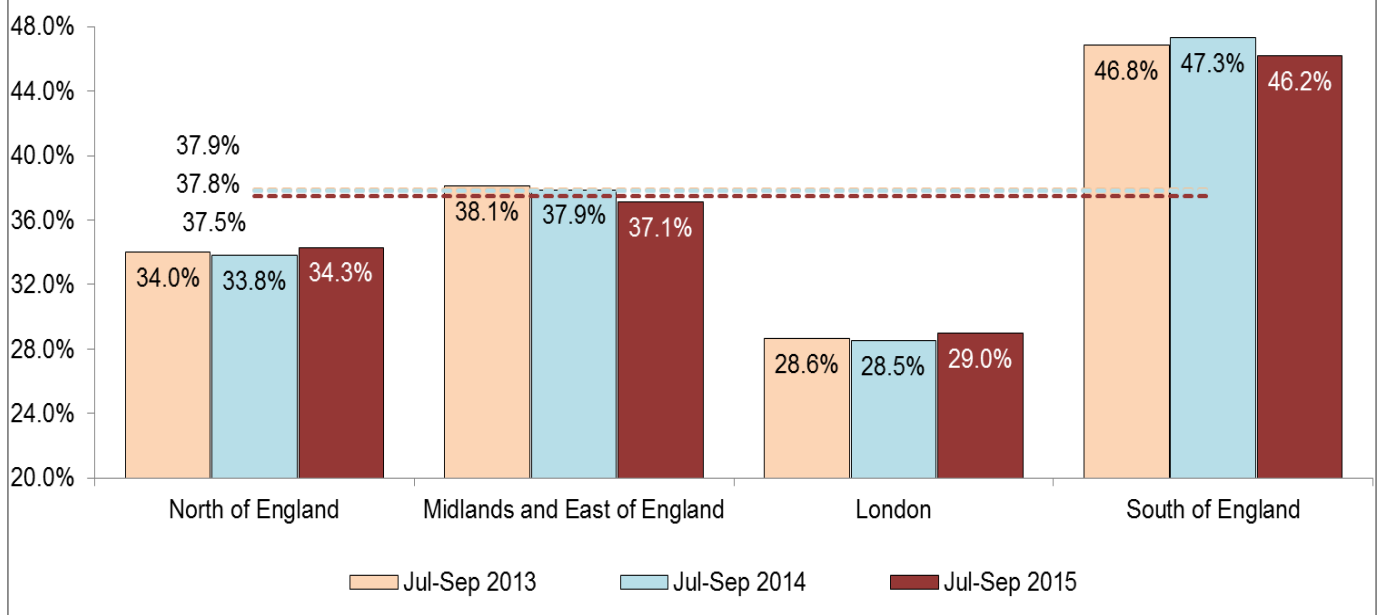
Figure 9: Proportion of respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, by reason for not trying from 2013 to 2015



* 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"

36. These two private dentistry reasons accounted for over a third of all responses (38.5%) 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 46% 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



To get current results (July to September 2015) please click on the following link:

http://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2015/12/17/gpps_dent_7483921

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

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