

Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey – January to March 2017



Published 6 July 2017 (Annual)

About this release

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.

The GP Patient Survey was chosen to capture this information as a way of accessing the proportion of the population who do not use (or have not recently used) NHS dental services in addition to those that do, to give a fuller picture of people's dental behaviour and experience.

This paper summarises the key findings of the January to March 2017 dental results and makes comparisons to the survey results from the same time the previous two years (January to March 2016 and January to March 2015).

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 2017 GP Patient Survey is the tenth publication since these changes were made.

General Survey Information

- For the January to March 2017 GP patient survey 2.2 million adult GP patients were contacted and 808,000 replies were received. This represents a 37% response rate; a decrease of 1 percentage point compared to January to March 2016 results.
- 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/>
- 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 changes in percentages are expressed at the decimal point, for accuracy.
- Survey region breakdowns are based on the address of the respondent and not the address of the dentist.

Next publication:
5 July 2018

Previous publications:
https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2016/07/07/gpps_dent_y10w23357969/

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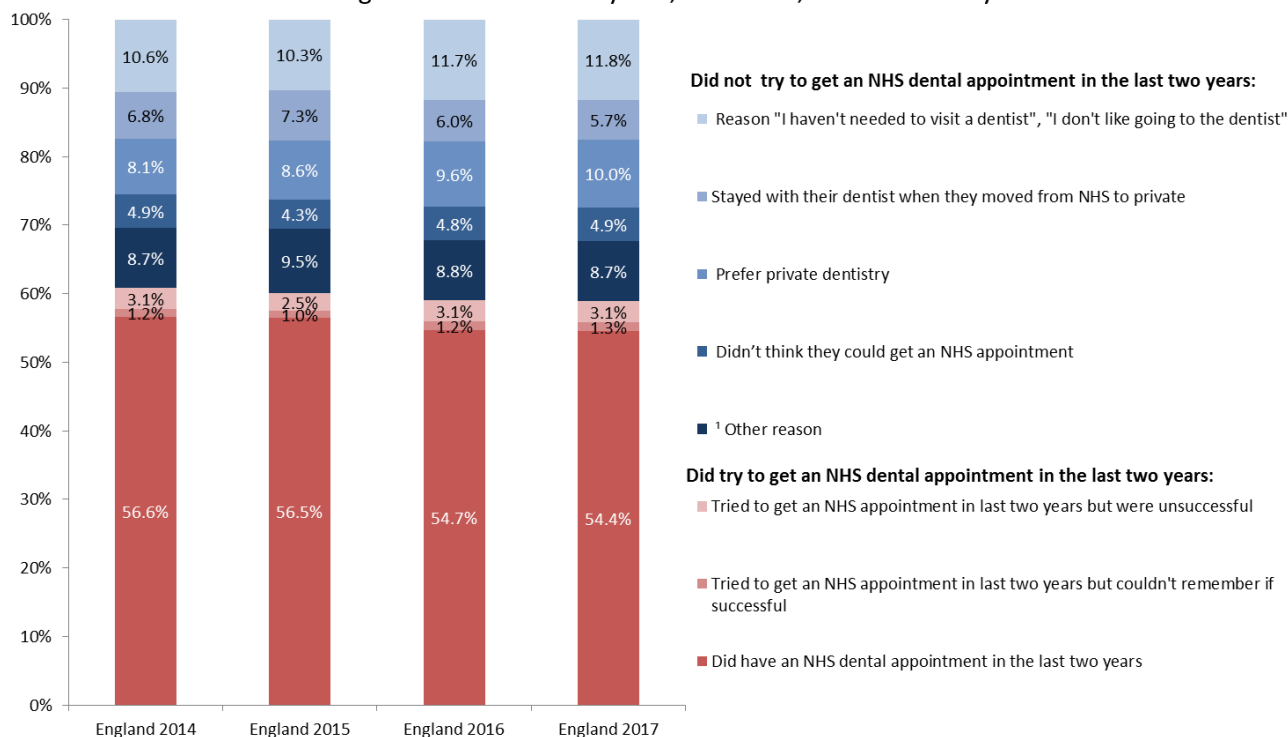


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Overall picture of respondents' dentistry usage

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

Figure 1. Dental Attendance: Percentage of patients who have seen an NHS dentist in England in the last two years, and if not, the reason why



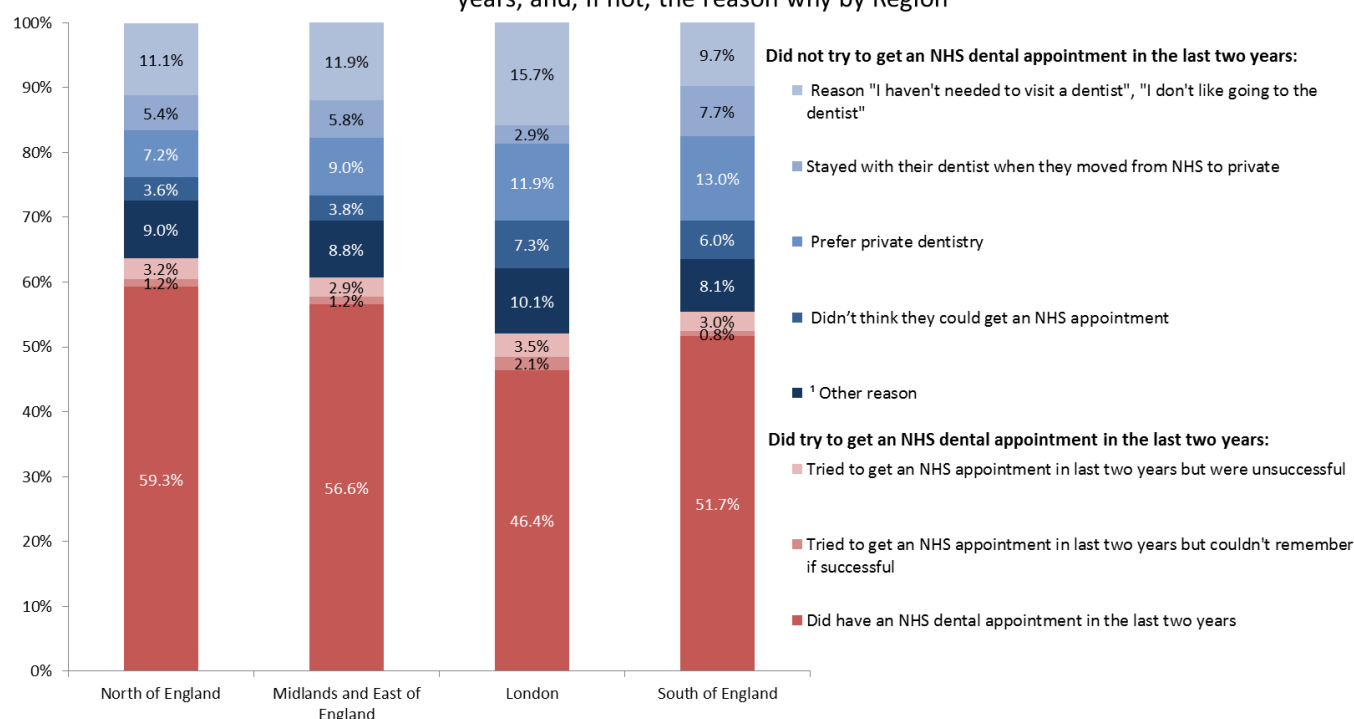
¹ Other reason includes: "I no longer have any natural teeth", "I haven't had time to visit a dentist", "I'm on a waiting list for an NHS dentist", "NHS dental care is too expensive", "Another reason".

- Overall, just over half (54%) of respondents in the most recent year (2017) had visited an NHS dentist in the last two years. 12% of the respondents did not try to see an NHS dentist because they "haven't needed to visit" or "do not like going" and 10% did not try because they prefer private dentistry.
- There has been a slight decrease in access levels to NHS dental care from 2014 to 2017 with the number of respondents who "Did have an NHS dental appointment in the last two years" decreasing from 56.6% to 54.4%.
- The proportion of respondents who "Prefer private dentistry" has increased from 8.1% in 2014 to 10.0% in 2017.
- The proportion of respondents who "Didn't think they could get an NHS dental appointment" has increased to 4.9% of the respondents in 2017 from 4.3% in 2015.

Overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour by region

- There was regional variation in the percentage who visited an NHS dentist in the last two years, ranging from 59.3% in the North of England to 46.4% in London (Figure 2). This variation is similar to the equivalent period last year.
- London has the highest proportion of those who have not tried to get an NHS appointment in the last two years because they “didn’t need to go” or “don’t like going” (16% of respondents). The breakdown of this between the two response categories is 13% of people who did not think they needed to go to the dentist, and 2% of people who do not like going. Nationally, the breakdown was 9% who felt that they didn’t need to go, and 3% who do not like going.

Figure 2. Dental attendance: Percentage of patients who have seen an NHS dentist in the last two years, and, if not, the reason why by Region



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”.

- South of England has the largest proportion of patients who sought private dental care at 21%, with 8% of respondents having “stayed with their dentists when they moved from NHS to private” and 13% “preferring private dentistry”.

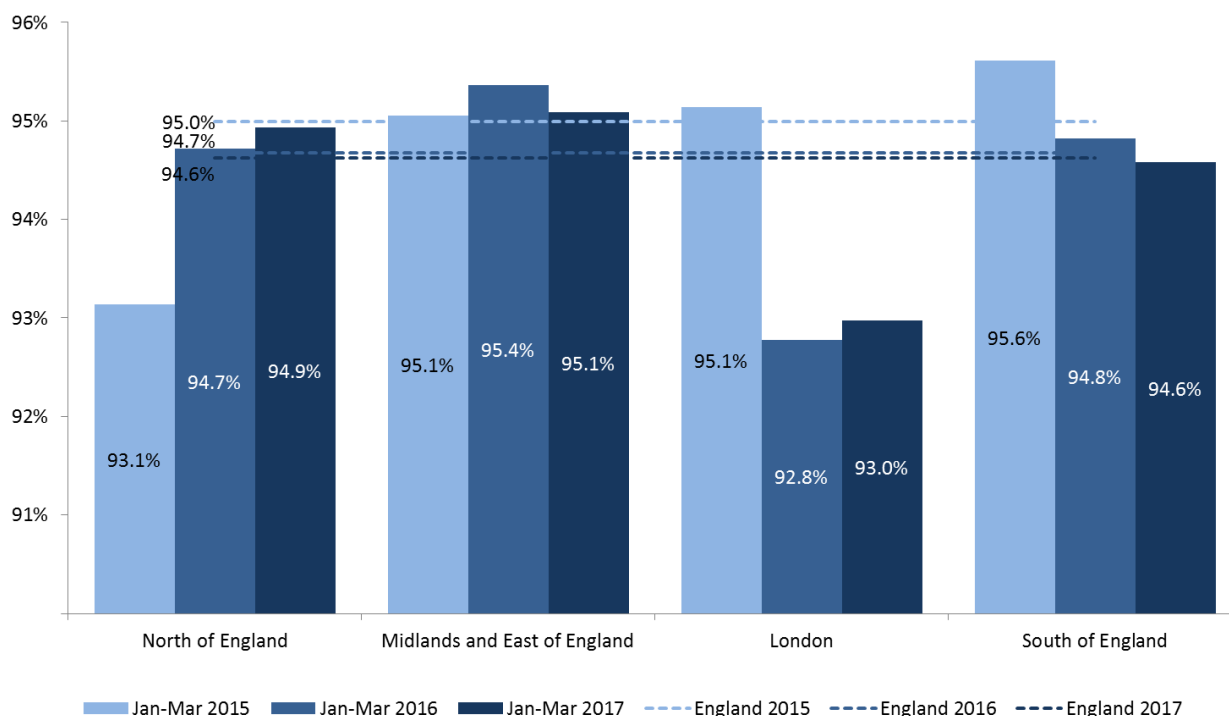
Tried to get an NHS dental appointment

- 59% of all respondents tried to get an NHS appointment in the last two years, the maximum recall period recommended by NICE guidelines. This is the same as January to March 2016. 51% of respondents had tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last year; 38% within the last six months and 22% in the last three months.
- There is regional variation in the contact rate for NHS dentistry services with the percentage trying to get an appointment being highest in the North of England at 64%. In contrast, the rates remain lowest in London at 52% followed by South of England at 55%.

Success in getting an NHS dental appointment

- 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, as shown in figure 3) was 95%, which is similar to rates recorded in the January to March 2016 survey and the January to March 2015 survey.
- 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.
- Regionally, the success rate in getting an NHS dental appointment was highest in the Midlands & East of England (95%). London had the lowest success rate (93%) of all the regions (Figure 3). London was also the Region with the lowest proportion of respondents who had been to the practice before. The North of England and London recorded small increases between 2016 and 2017, whilst Midlands & East of England and the South of England recorded small decreases for this period.

Figure 3. Success rate in getting an NHS Dental Appointment in the last 2 years (excluding 'can't remember') from 2014 to 2016



- At CCG level, success rates in getting an NHS dental appointment for those who tried in the last two years range from 81% for NHS Bradford City to 98% for NHS St Helens. Figure 4 shows geographically the range of success rates at CCG level.

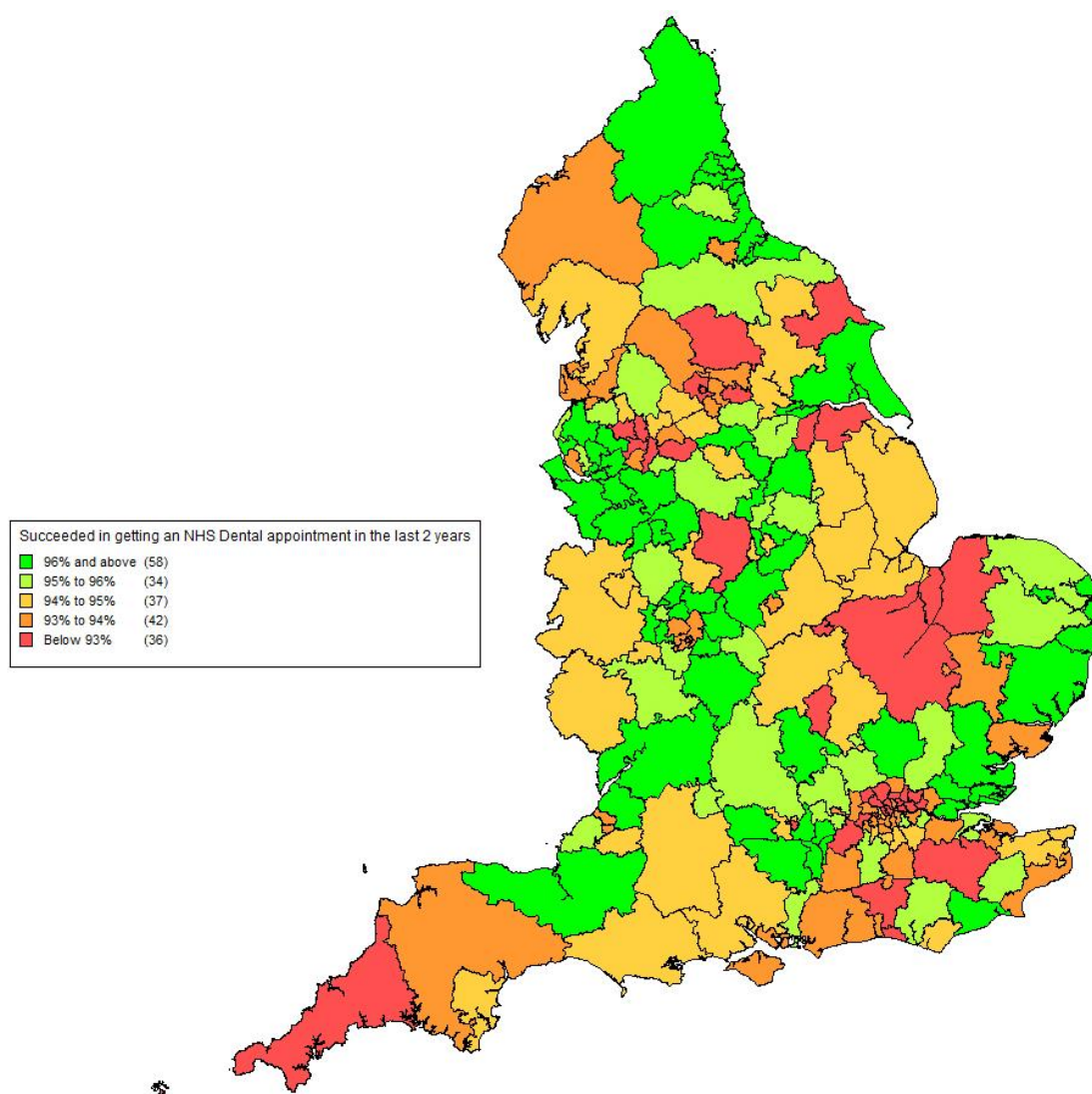


Figure 4. Percentage of respondents who tried to get, and succeeded in getting, an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, at Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) level, January to March 2017 (excluding 'can't remember').

- The top three CCGs with the highest success rates for those who tried in the last two years were NHS St Helens (97.6%), NHS Eastern Cheshire (97.0%) and NHS South Gloucestershire (96.8%).
- The bottom three CCGs with the lowest success rates for those who tried in the last two years were NHS Bradford City (80.5%), NHS Newham (82.0%), and NHS North Corby (84.4%).

- Lower levels of success were reported by younger adults (Figure 5) and ethnic minorities (Figure 6). A higher proportion of both of these groups also live in London than any other Region, where the success rate is lowest.

Figure 5. 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')

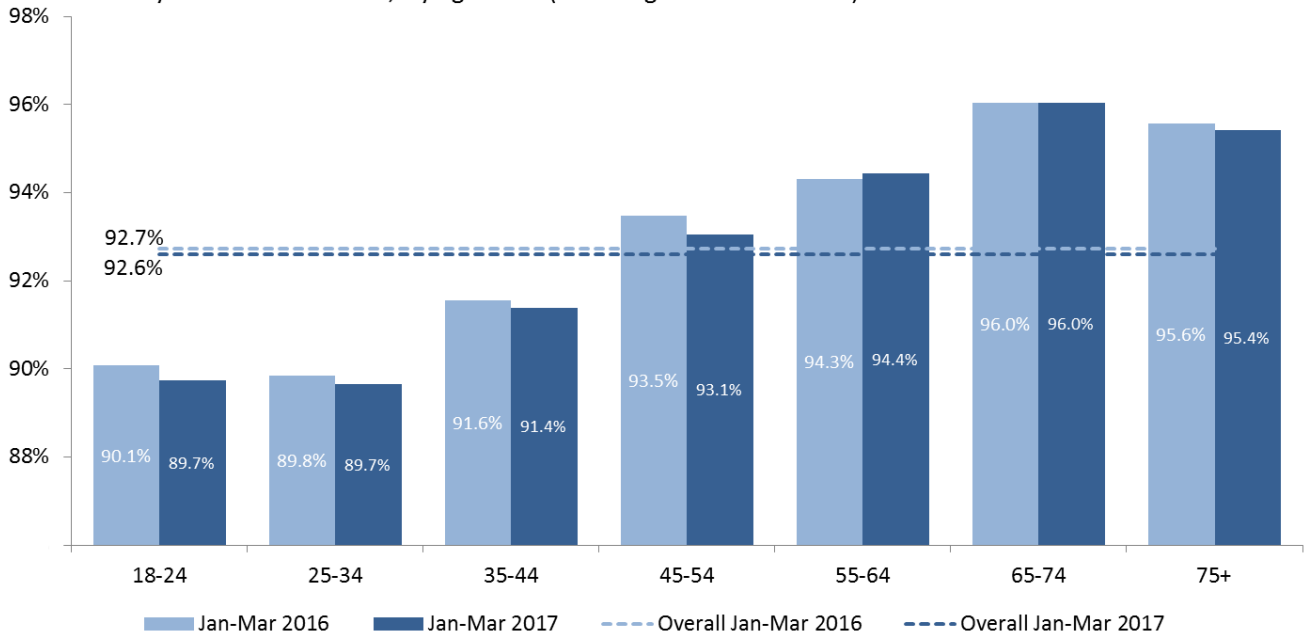
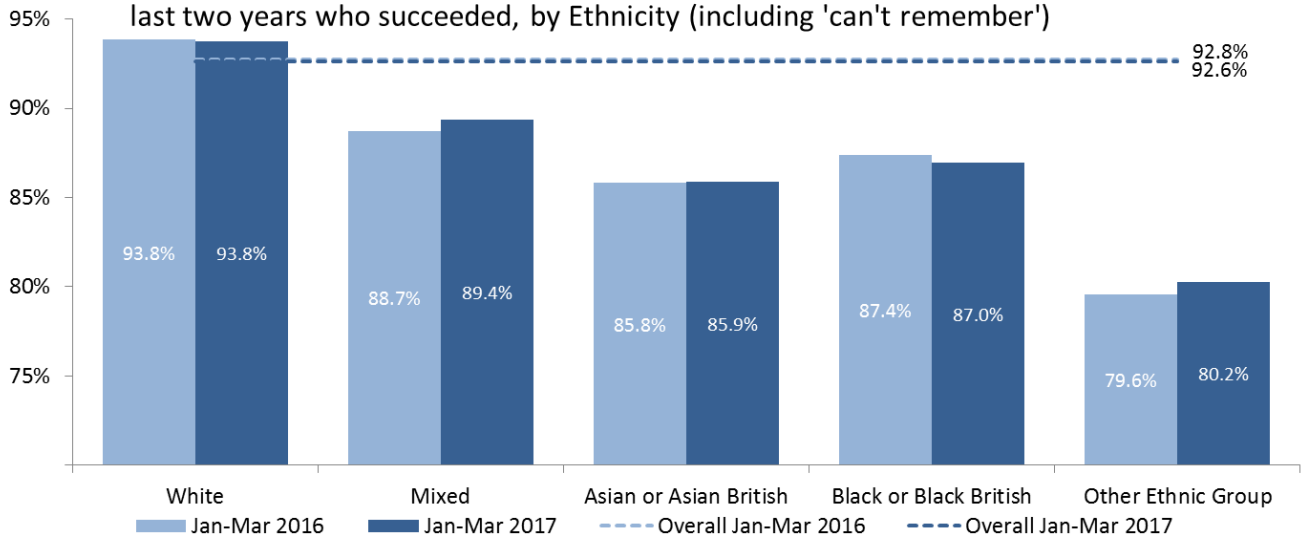


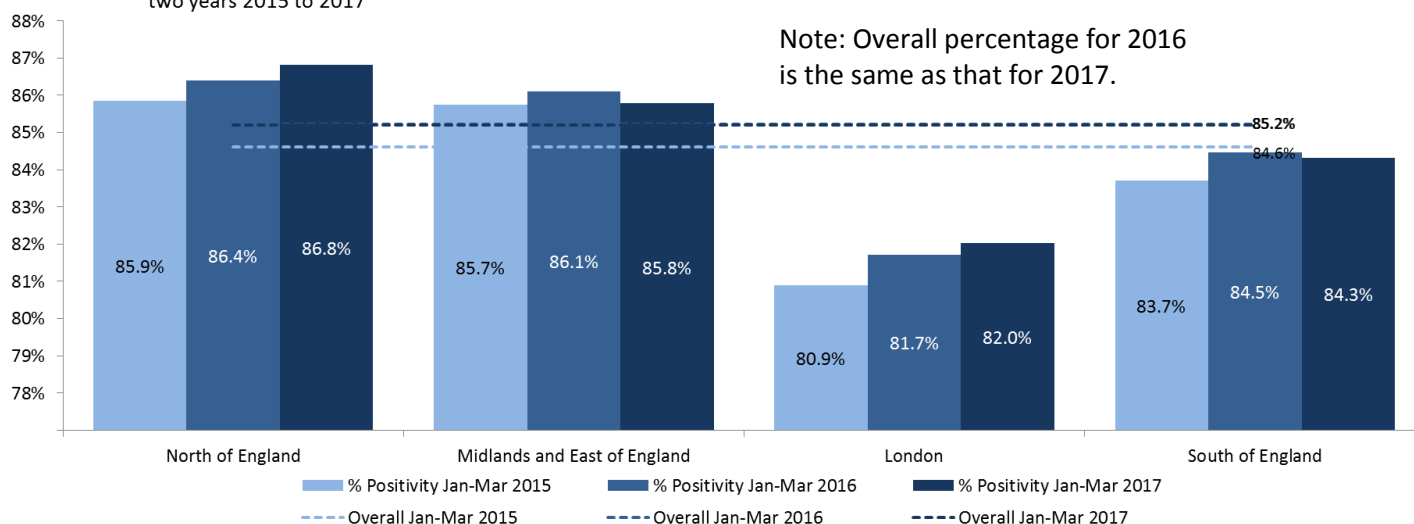
Figure 6. Percentage of those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years who succeeded, by Ethnicity (including 'can't remember')



Overall experience of NHS dental services

- Of the respondents that tried to get NHS dental care in the last two years, 85% of respondents rated their NHS dental experience as positive, a small increase of 0.02 percentage points compared to January to March 2016.
- In January to March 2017, 50% had a very good experience, which is the same as the same period last year. 35% had a fairly good experience, 8% said it was neither good nor poor, and fairly poor and very poor had a 4% and 3% share of the total respectively.
- Satisfaction rates with the overall patient experience of NHS dental care remain high in the North of England and Midlands & East of England, with 87% and 86% of respondents respectively rating their patient experience as positive. Meanwhile London had the lowest, with 82%. North of England and London recorded increases in the percentage of respondents who rated their patient experience as positive compared to the previous year (Figure 7).
- 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 (89%), compared to only 21% for those who were unsuccessful. This in part explains the regional differences seen.

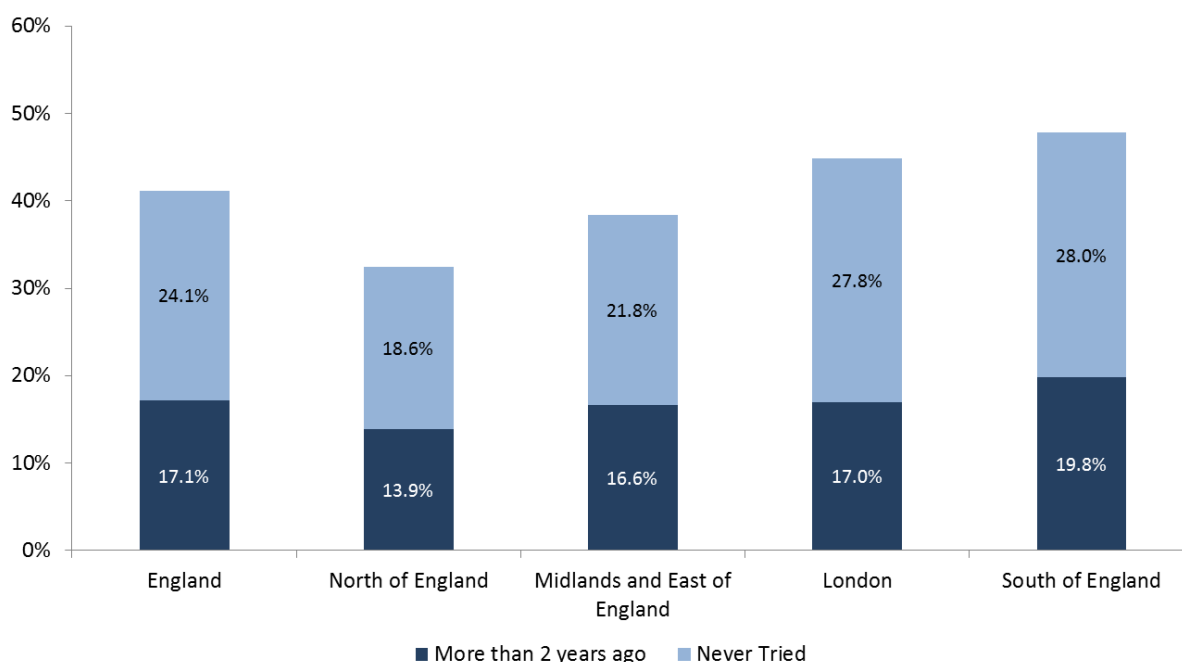
Figure 7. Positive experience of NHS Dental Services from all those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years 2015 to 2017



Did not try to get an NHS dental appointment

- Just over two fifths (41%) 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). Just under a quarter (24%) of all respondents had never tried to get an NHS dental appointment, while 17% of respondents last tried over two years ago.
- 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 South of England. NHS Camden CCG had the highest proportion, with 58% of respondents who had not tried in the two year period. In comparison, NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG, in the Midlands & East of England, had the lowest proportion, with only 27% of respondents not attempting to get an NHS appointment in the last two years.
- For the respondents who have never tried to get an NHS dental appointment, London and South of England had the highest proportions.

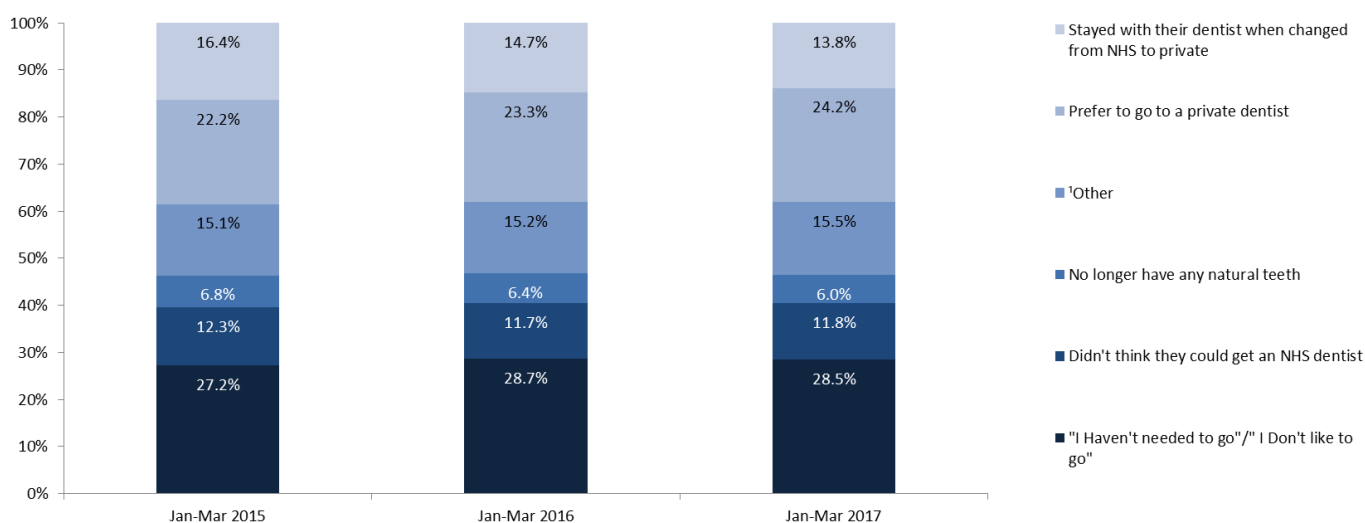
Figure 8. Percentage of respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years (more than two years ago and never tried) by Region



Reasons for not trying to get an appointment

- When considering the respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment, 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 over a quarter (29%) of the respondents stating one of these reasons (Figure 9).
- 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 increased by 0.1 percentage points per cent compared to the previous year’s results.
- 24% of the respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years said they preferred private dentistry, an increase of 0.9 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 14%.

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 2015 to 2017

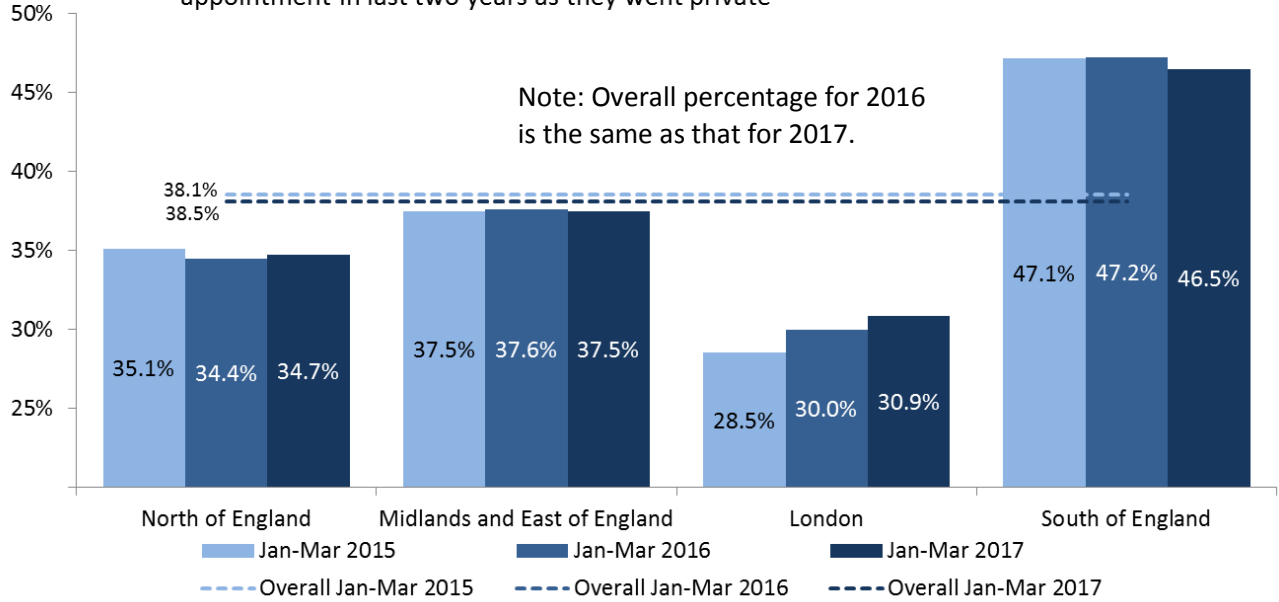


¹ Other reason includes: “I haven’t had time to visit a dentist”, “I’m on a waiting list for an NHS dentist”, “NHS dental care is too expensive”, “Another reason

- 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 marked regional differences, varying from 31% in London to 47% in the South of England (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 (January to March 2017) please click on the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps_dent_y111864861/

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/>