

# Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey – January to March 2018



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## 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 2018 dental results and makes comparisons – where appropriate – to previous survey results.

The GP Patient Survey has been significantly re-developed for 2018 in order to keep pace with changes in frontline general practice, although the questions relating to NHS dentistry have not changed.

The format and layout of the questionnaire has also been re-designed in places and, for the first time, 16 and 17 year olds have been included in the survey.

## General Survey Information

- For the 2018 GP Patient Survey – conducted between January and March 2018 – 2.2 million GP patients age 16 and over were contacted and 758,000 replies were received. This represents a 34% response rate; a decrease of 3 percentage points compared to 2017 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. Percentages are given to one decimal place in order to greater accuracy.
- Survey region and CCG breakdowns are based on the address of the respondent and not the address of the dentist.
- Although the questions relating to NHS dentistry have not been changed, the inclusion of 16 and 17 year olds means that we cannot be confident that comparisons across years are reliable for some of the questions on NHS dentistry. Annex A provides details for the individual questions. Due to these effects applying to question 49 – “When did you last try to get an NHS dental appointment for yourself?” – any statistics that rely on the answers to this question have not been compared to previous years.

**Next publication:**  
July 2019

**Previous publications:**  
[https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps\\_dent\\_y111864861/](https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps_dent_y111864861/)

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Andy Weaver

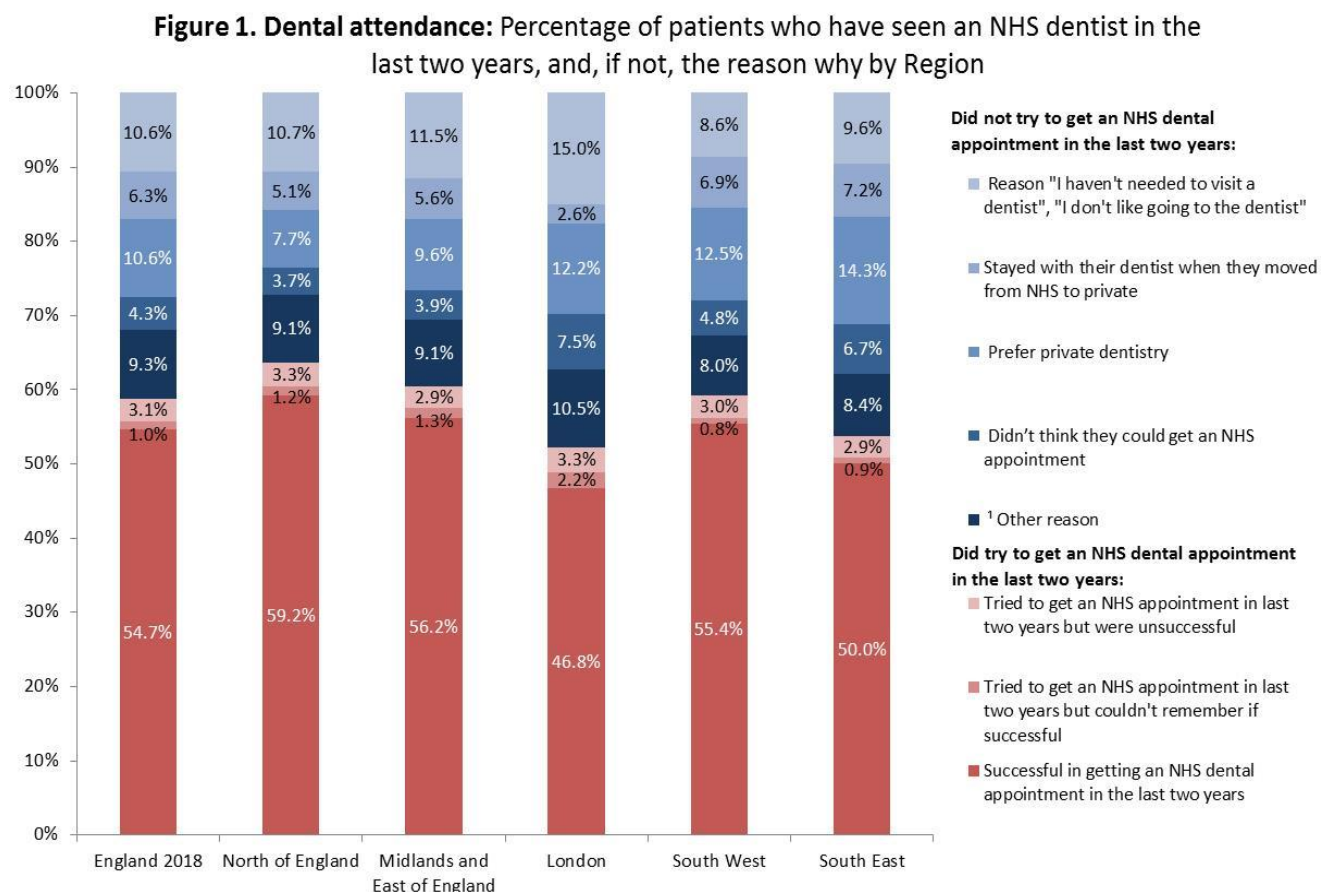
**Feedback or queries:**  
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## Overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour by region

- The following graph (Figure 1) shows the overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour in England and the 5 regions:



<sup>1</sup> 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".

- Due to the effects of including 16 and 17 year-olds in the survey, we cannot be confident that comparisons with previous years are reliable.
- There was a regional variation in the percentage of respondents who reported that they had successfully got an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, ranging from 59.2% in the North of England to 46.8% in London (Figure 1).
- 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" (15.0% of respondents). Nationally the figure is 10.6%, 8.0% feeling that they didn't need to go, and 2.6% who do not like going.
- The South East of England has the largest proportion of patients who instead relied on private dental care at 21.5%, with 7.2% of respondents having "stayed with their dentists when they moved from NHS to private" and 14.3% "preferring private dentistry".

## Tried to get an NHS dental appointment

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- Due to the effects of including 16 and 17 year-olds in the survey, we cannot be confident that comparisons with previous years are reliable.
- 58.8% of all respondents tried to get an NHS appointment in the last two years, the maximum recall period recommended by NICE guidelines<sup>1</sup>. 50.9% of respondents had tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last year; 38.4% within the last six months and 22.1% 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 in the previous 2 years being highest in the North of England at 63.7%. In contrast, the rates remain lowest in London at 52.2% followed by South East England at 53.8%.

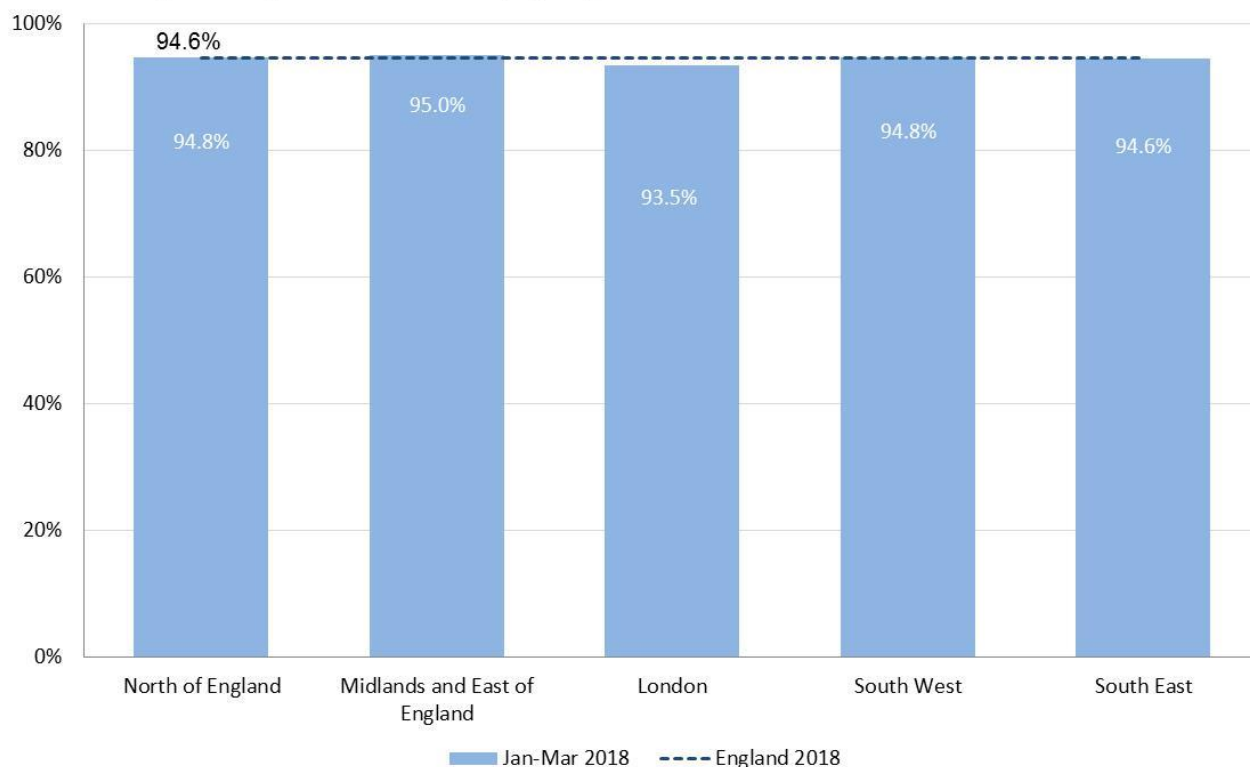
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg19/chapter/1-guidance>

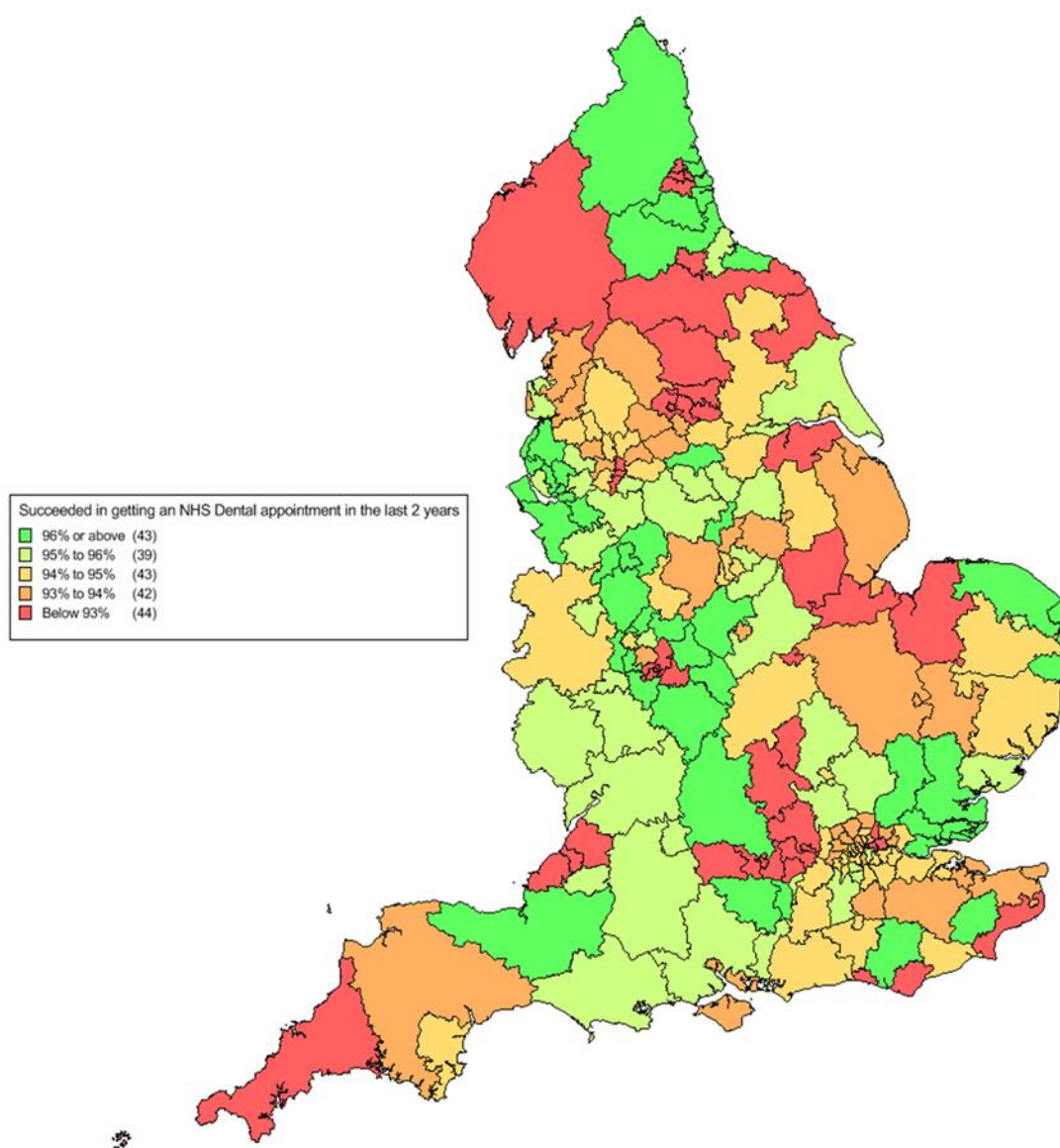
## Success in getting an NHS dental appointment

- Due to the effects of including 16 and 17 year-olds in the survey, we cannot be confident that comparisons with previous years are reliable.
- Of those that tried to get an appointment in the last two years, 92.6% were successful. The success rate (when excluding those who stated that they 'can't remember' whether they were successful, as shown in Figure 2) was 94.6%.
- The success rate for respondents who had not been to the practice before was lower, at 77.2%, compared with 96.9% 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 (95.0%). London had the lowest success rate (93.5%) of all the regions (Figure 2).

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



- Figure 3 shows geographically the range of success rates at CCG level.

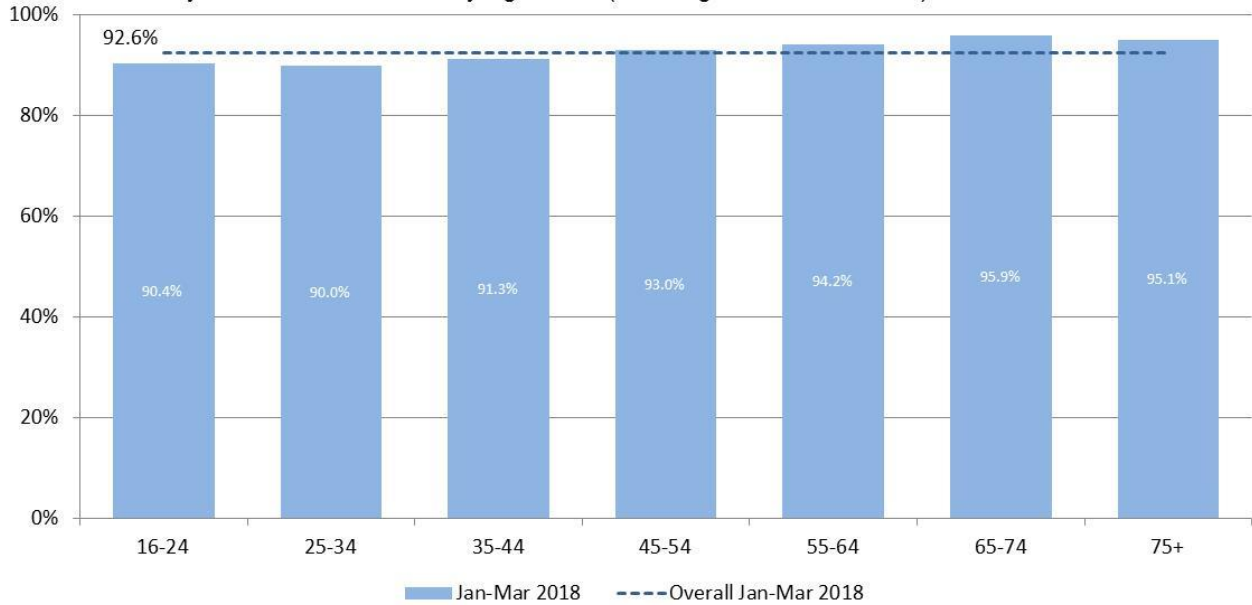


**Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who tried to get, and succeeded in getting, an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, at Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) level, January to March 2018 (excluding “can’t remember”).**

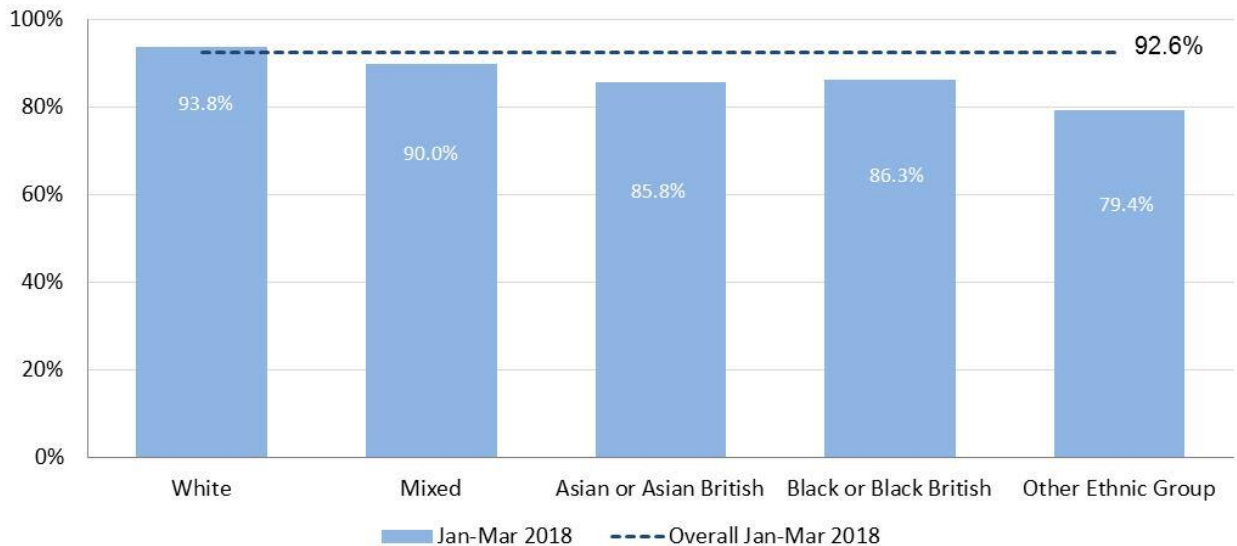
- The top three CCGs with the highest success rates for those who tried in the last two years were NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG (98.5%), NHS Sunderland CCG (98.5%) and NHS Dudley CCG (98.4%).
- The bottom three CCGs with the lowest success rates for those who tried in the last two years were NHS South Lincolnshire CCG (86.1%), NHS Harrogate and Rural District CCG (86.2%) and NHS Bradford City CCG (86.9%).

- Lower levels of success were reported by younger age groups (Figure 4) and ethnic minorities (Figure 5) against the national figure of respondents reporting that they had been successful of 92.6% (including those who “can’t remember”).

**Figure 4.** 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")



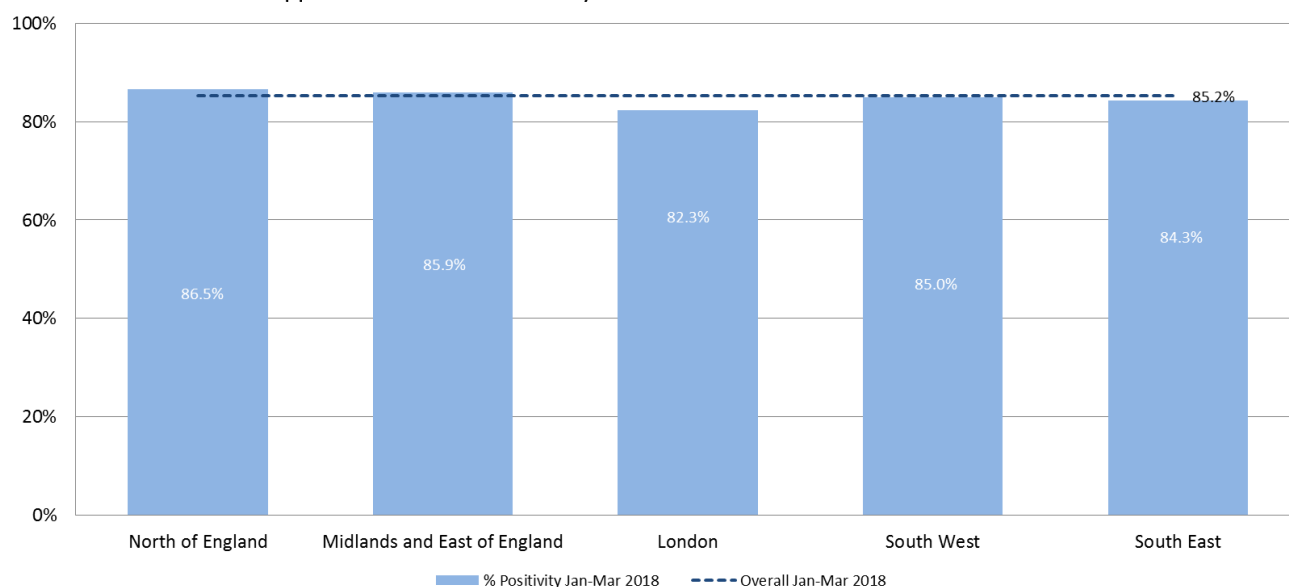
**Figure 5.** Percentage of those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years who succeeded, by ethnicity (including "can't remember")



## Overall experience of NHS dental services

- Due to the effects of including 16 and 17 year-olds in the survey, we cannot be confident that comparisons with previous years are reliable.
- Of the respondents that tried to get NHS dental care in the last two years, 85.2% of respondents rated their NHS dental experience as positive.
- In January to March 2018, 51.9% had a very good experience and 33.4% had a fairly good experience. Meanwhile 8.2% said it was neither good nor poor, and fairly poor and very poor had a 3.6% and 2.9% share of the total respectively.
- Satisfaction rates with the overall patient experience of NHS dental care is highest in the North of England, with 86.5% of respondents respectively rating their patient experience as positive. Meanwhile London had the lowest, with 82.3% (Figure 6).

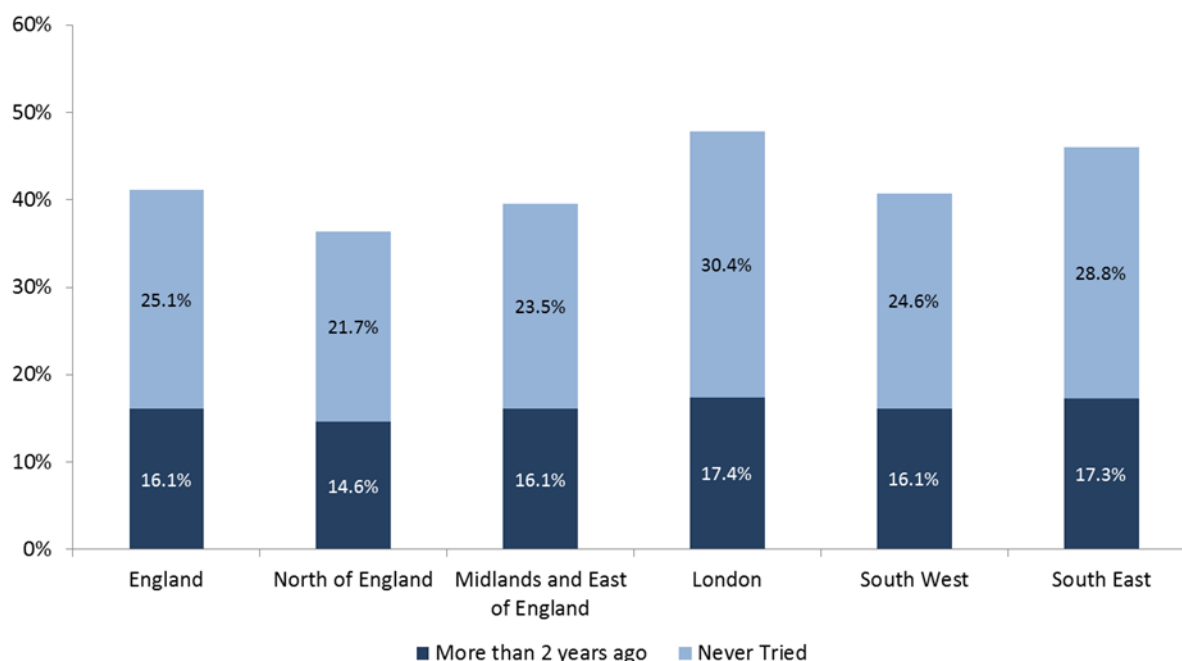
**Figure 6.** Positive experience of NHS Dental Services from all those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years



## Did not try to get an NHS dental appointment

- Due to the effects of including 16 and 17 year-olds in the survey, we cannot be confident that comparisons with previous years are reliable.
- Just over two fifths (41.2%) 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). A quarter (25.1%) of all respondents had never tried to get an NHS dental appointment, while 16.1% 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. NHS Camden CCG, in London, had the highest proportion, with 55.4% of respondents who had not tried in the two year period. In comparison, NHS Southport and Formby CCG, in the North of England, had the lowest proportion, with only 28.1% 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 had the highest proportion.

**Figure 7.** 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

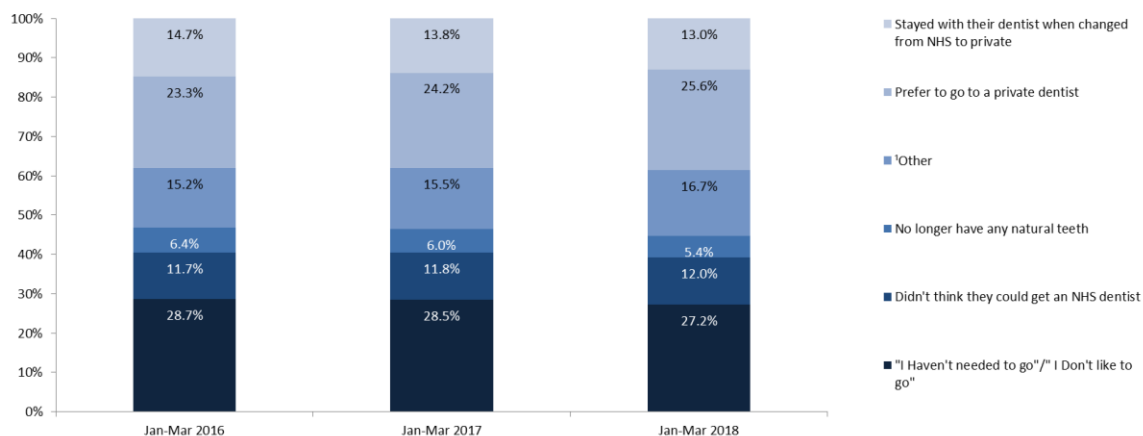




## Reasons for not trying to get an appointment

- The effects of including 16 and 17 year-olds in the survey have not affected the results for this question, and hence comparison with previous years is reliable in this case.
- 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 (27.2%) of the respondents stating one of these reasons (Figure 8).
- 12.0% 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 0.2 percentage points per cent compared to the previous year’s results.
- 25.6% 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 1.4 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 13.0%.

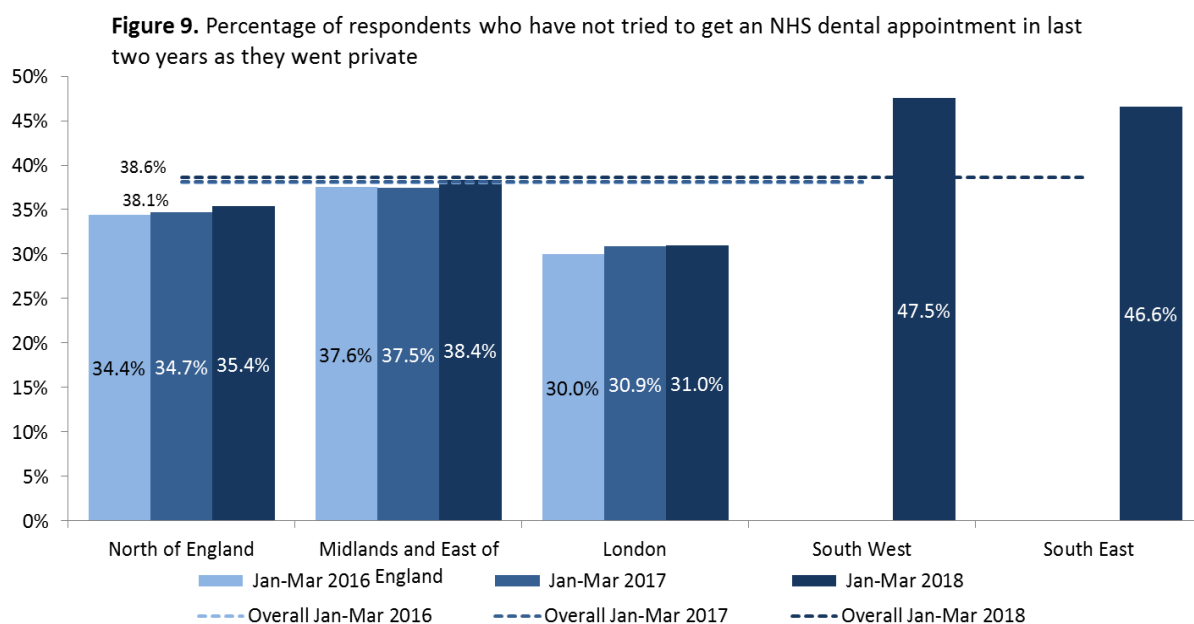
**Figure 8:** Proportion of respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, by reason for not trying from 2016 to 2018



<sup>1</sup> 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 (38.6%) 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 31.0% in London to 47.5% in the South West (Figure 9).
- From 2018, the former South region has been split into South West and South East. There are therefore no historic data for the newly split regions, however for reference the January-March 2017 survey figure for the South region was 46.5%.
- The overall figures for 2016 and 2017 were the same, at 38.1%.



To get current results (January to March 2018) please click on the following link:

[https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2018/08/09/gpps\\_dent\\_x1786\\_239846/](https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2018/08/09/gpps_dent_x1786_239846/)

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

[https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps\\_dent\\_y111864861/](https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2017/07/06/gpps_dent_y111864861/)

## Annex A – Changes in 2018 survey and comparability with 2017 survey

2018 Question number	2018 Question wording (no change)	2018 Question responses (no change)	2018 results comparable to 2017?
49	'When did you last try to get an NHS dental appointment for yourself?'	'In the last 3 months', 'Between 3 and 6 months ago', 'Between 6 months and a year ago', 'Between 1 and 2 years ago', 'More than 2 years ago', 'I have never tried to get an NHS dental appointment'	NO
50	'Last time you tried to get an NHS dental appointment, was it with a dental practice you had been to before for NHS dental care?'	'Yes', 'No', 'Can't remember'	NO
51	'Were you successful in getting an NHS dental appointment?'	'Yes', 'No', 'Can't remember'	YES
52	'Overall, how would you describe your experience of NHS dental services?'	'Very good', 'Fairly good', 'Neither good nor poor', 'Fairly poor', 'Very poor'	YES
53	'Why haven't you tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last 2 years?'	'I haven't needed to visit the dentist', 'I no longer have any natural teeth', 'I haven't had time to visit a dentist', 'I don't like going to the dentist', 'I didn't think I could get an NHS dentist', 'I'm on a waiting list for an NHS dentist', 'I stayed with my dentist when they changed from NHS to private', 'I prefer to go to a private dentist', 'NHS dental care is too expensive for me', 'Another reason'	YES