

Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey – January to March 2020

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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 2020 dental results and makes comparisons – where appropriate – to previous survey results.

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

Changes were made to age brackets and geographical boundaries of CCGs. 16-17-year olds have been included from 2018.

General Survey Information

- For the 2020 GP Patient Survey – conducted between January and March 2020 – 2.3 million GP patients age 16 and over were contacted and 740,000 replies were received. This represents a 32% response rate; a decrease of 1 percentage point compared to 2019 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 ensure greater accuracy.
- Survey region and CCG breakdowns are based on the address of the respondent and not the address of the dentist.
- The inclusion of 16- and 17-year olds in 2018 means that we can now compare this year to two previous years of data. 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 can be compared to the last two years, but we cannot be confident about comparisons previous to 2018.

Next publication:
July 2021

Previous publications:
https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2019/07/11/gpps_dent_8492_8227_42/

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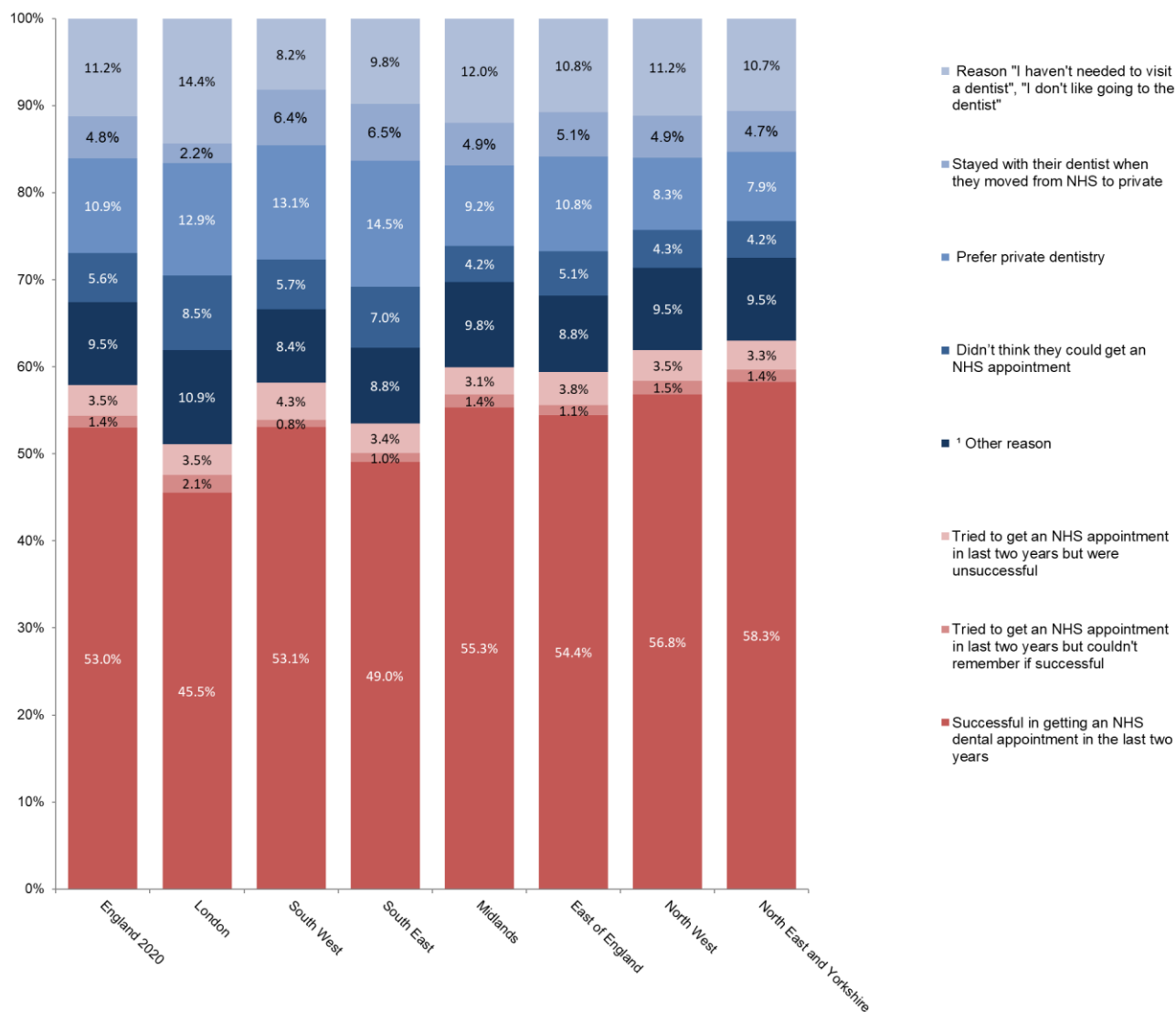


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Overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour by region

- The following graph (Figure 1) shows the overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour in England and the 7 regions:

Figure 1. Dental attendance: Percentage of patients who were successful getting an NHS dental appointment 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".

- There was a regional variation in the percentage of respondents who were successful in getting an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, ranging from 58.3% in the North East and Yorkshire to 45.5% 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” (14.4% of respondents). Nationally the figure is 11.2%, 8.6% feeling that they didn’t need to go, and 2.6% who do not like going.
- The South East has the largest proportion of patients who instead relied on private dental care at 21.0%, with 6.5% of respondents having “stayed with their dentists when they moved from NHS to private” and 14.5% “preferring private dentistry”.

Tried to get an NHS dental appointment

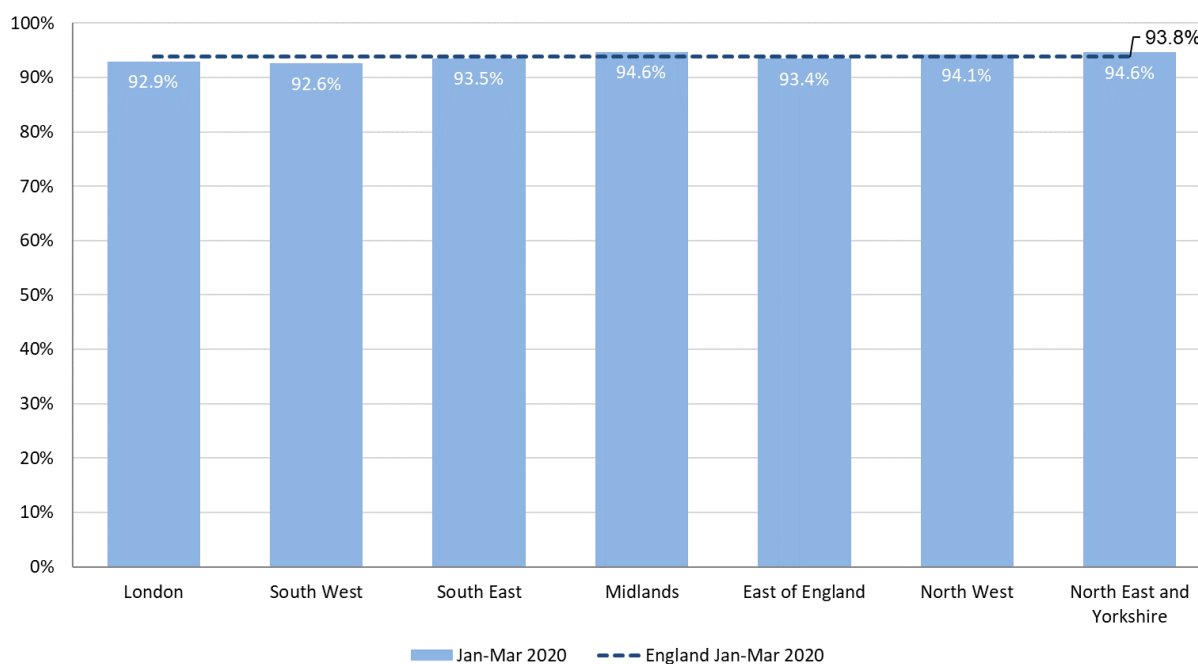
- 57.9% of all respondents tried to get an NHS appointment in the last two years, the maximum recall period recommended by NICE guidelines¹. 49.9% of respondents had tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last year; 37.7% within the last six months and 21.6% in the last three months.
- There is 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 East & Yorkshire at 63.0%. In contrast, the rates remain lowest in London at 51.1% followed by the South East at 53.5%.

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

Success in getting an NHS dental appointment

- Of those that tried to get an appointment in the last two years, 91.6% 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 93.8%.
- The success rate for respondents who had not been to the practice before was lower, at 70.5%, compared with 95.8% 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 and the North East and Yorkshire (94.6%). The South West had the lowest success rate (92.6%) 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.

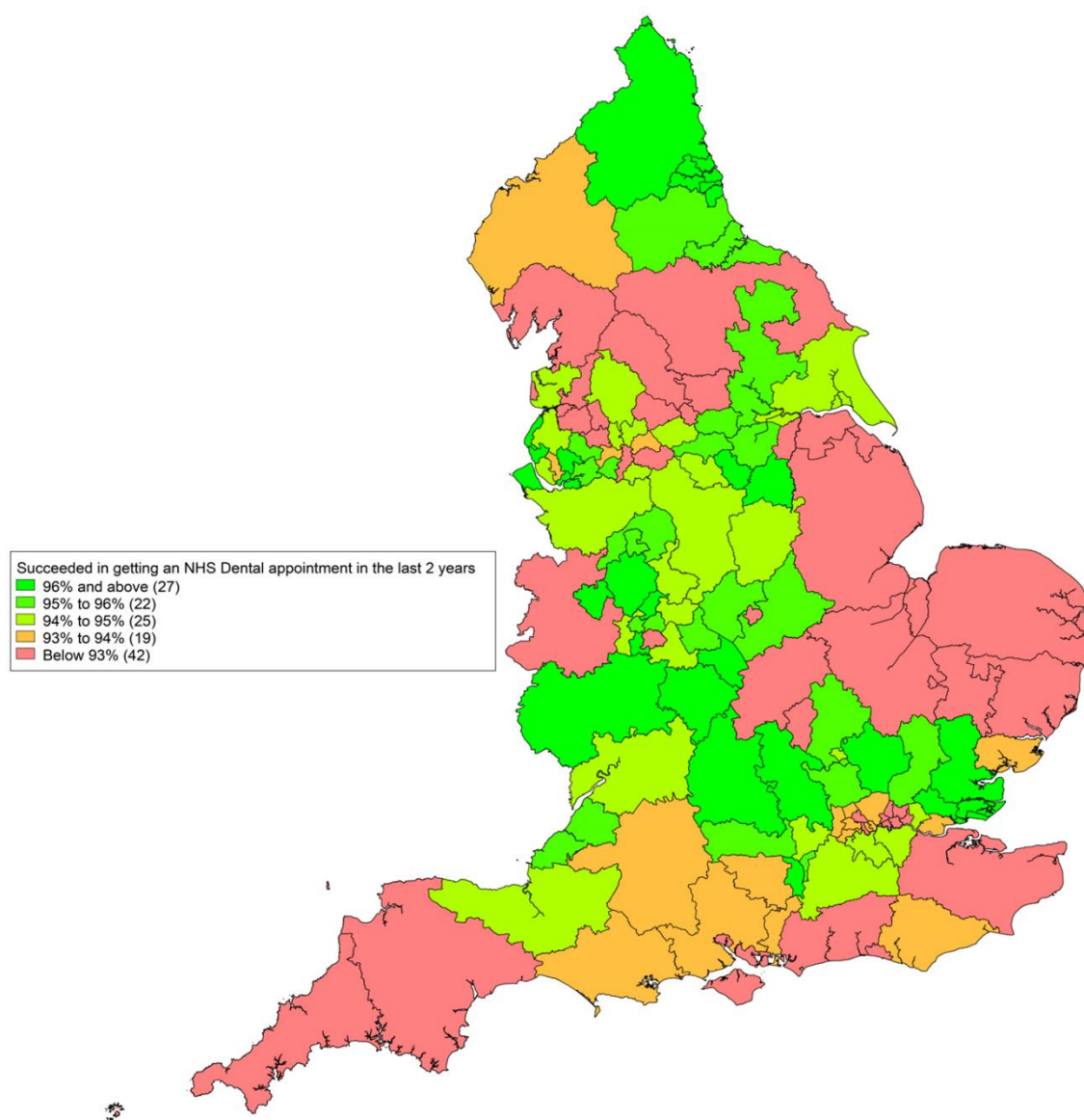


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who tried to get, and succeeded in getting, an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, at Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) level, January to March 2020 (excluding “can’t remember”). The figures in brackets in the key represent the number of CCGs.

- The top three CCGs with the highest success rates for those who tried to get an appointment in the last two years (excluding “can’t remember”) were NHS South Tyneside CCG (99.2%), NHS Sunderland CCG (97.9%) and NHS Dudley CCG (97.5%).
- The bottom three CCGs with the lowest success rates for those who tried to get an appointment in the last two years (excluding “can’t remember”) were NHS Portsmouth CCG (85.1%), NHS Kernow CCG (85.9%) and NHS West Suffolk CCG (87.8%).

- 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 91.6% (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")

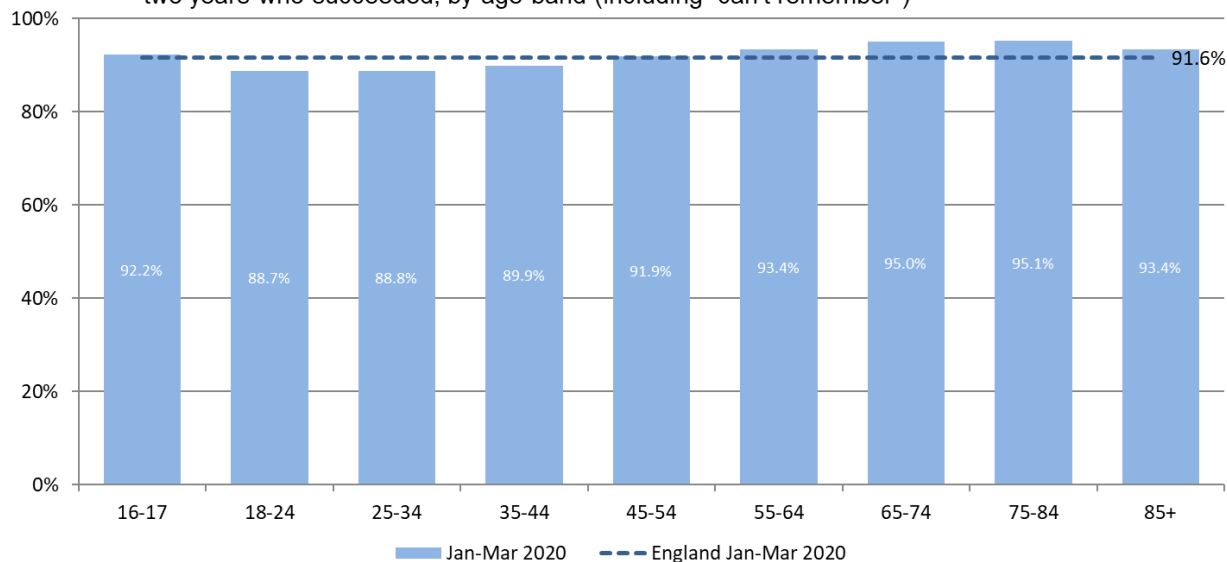
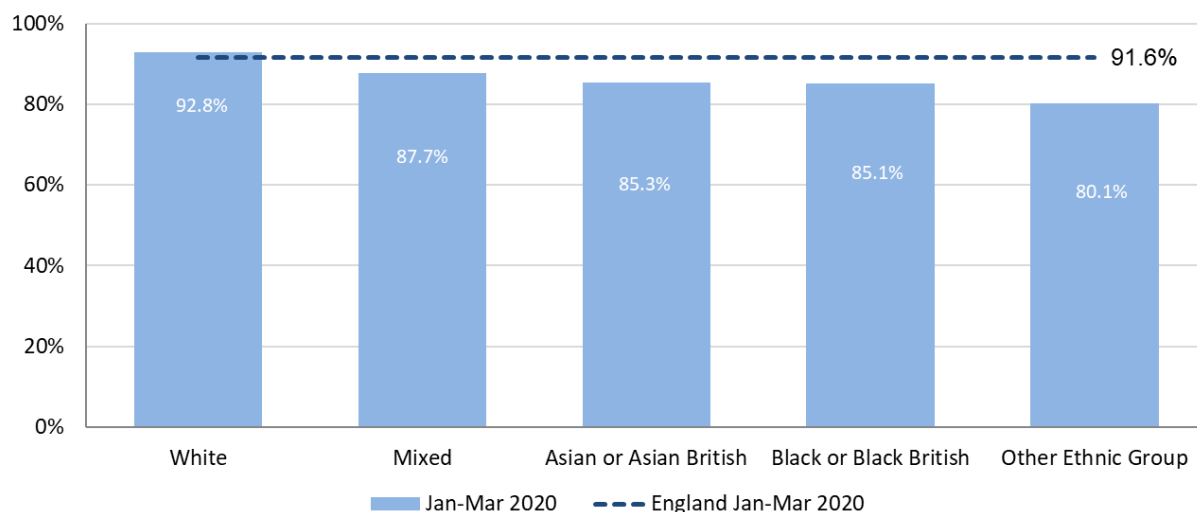


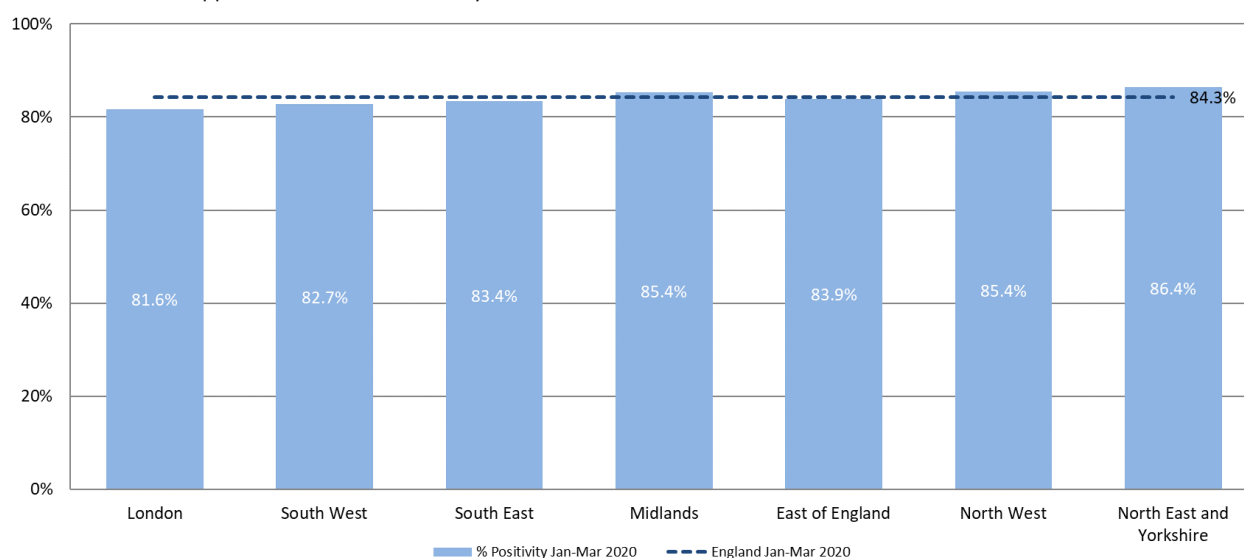
Figure 5. Percentage of those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years who succeeded, by ethnicity (including "can't remember")



Overall experience of NHS dental services

- Of the respondents that tried to get NHS dental care in the last two years, 84.3% of respondents rated their NHS dental experience as positive.
- In January to March 2020, 50.8% had a very good experience and 33.4% had a fairly good experience. Meanwhile 8.7% said it was neither good nor poor, and fairly poor and very poor had a 3.8% and 3.2% share of the total respectively.
- Satisfaction rates with the overall patient experience of NHS dental care is highest in North East and Yorkshire, with 86.4% of respondents respectively rating their patient experience as positive. Meanwhile London had the lowest, with 81.6% (Figure 6).

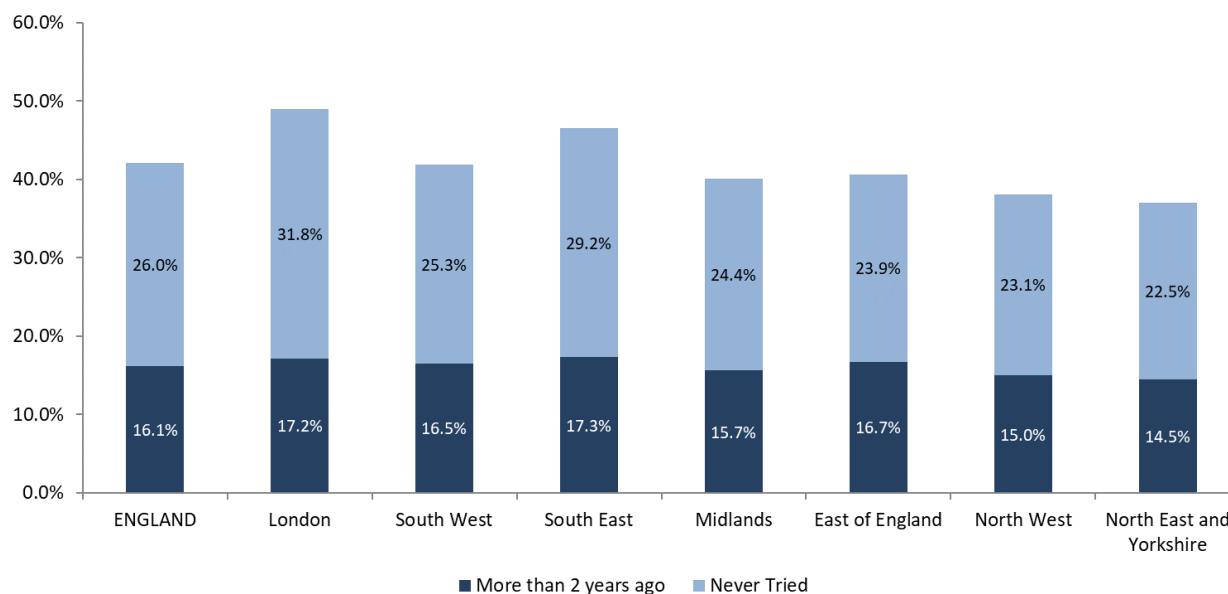
Figure 6. Positive experience of NHS Dental Services from all those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years



Did not try to get an NHS dental appointment

- Just over two fifths (42.1%) 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 (26.0%) 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 Central London (Westminster) CCG had the highest proportion, with 58.5% of respondents who had not tried in the two-year period. In comparison, NHS Rotherham CCG, in the East of England, had the lowest proportion, with only 28.9% 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.

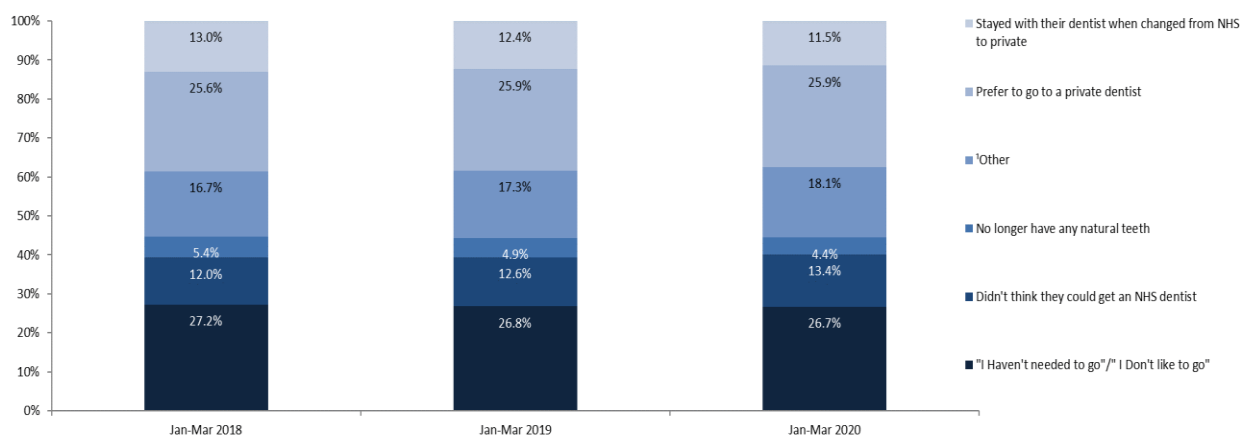
Figure 7. Percentage of respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years (more than two years ago and never tried) by Region



Reasons for not trying to get an appointment

- 16- and 17-year olds were only included for the first time from 2018 meaning we can only compare between the latest three years of data.
- 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 (26.7%) of the respondents stating one of these reasons (Figure 8).
- 13.4% 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 0.8 percentage points compared to the previous year’s results.
- 25.9% of the respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years said they preferred private dentistry, the same number of 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 11.5%.

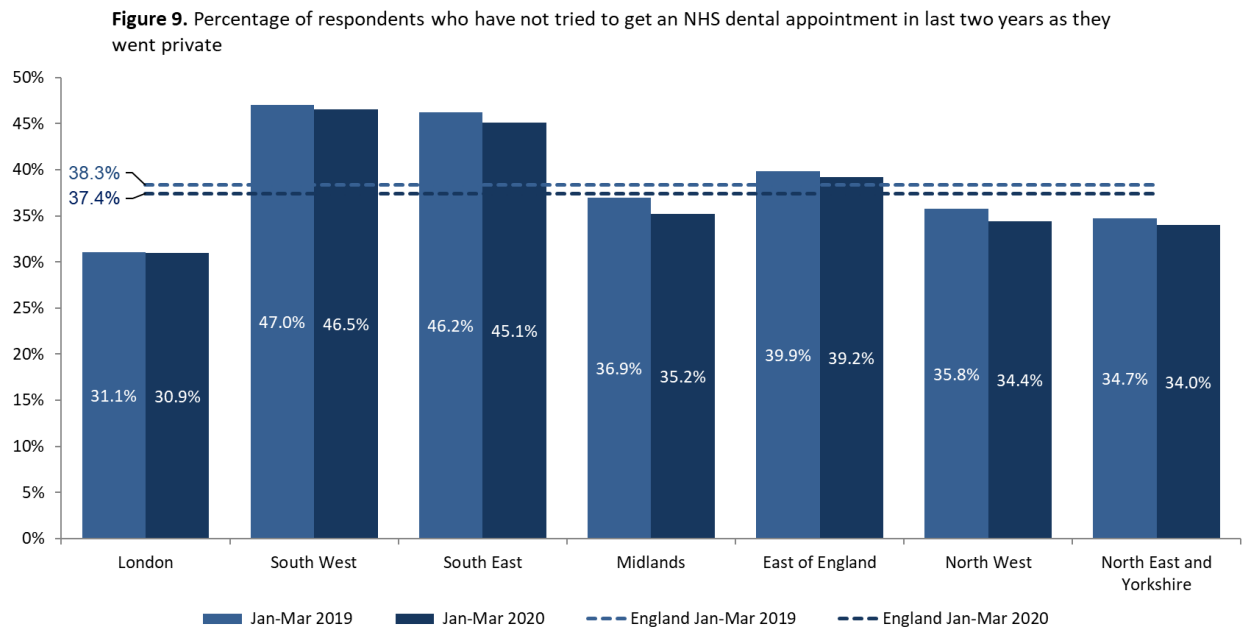
Figure 8: Proportion of respondents who did not try to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years, by reason for not trying from 2018 to 2020



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 (37.4%) 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 30.9% in London to 46.5% in the South East (Figure 9).
- All of the regions had a decrease in this figure from the previous year.

- The overall figure for 2019 was 37.4%, which is a decrease of 0.9 percentage points upon the previous year.



To get current results (January to March 2020) please click on the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2020/07/09/gpps_dent_3758-78929/

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

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

Annex A – Changes in 2020 survey and comparability with 2019 survey

2020 Question number	2020 Question wording (no change)	2020 Question responses (no change)	2020 results comparable to 2019?
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'	Yes
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'	Yes
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