

Summary of the Dental Results from the GP Patient Survey – January to March 2024

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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 2024 dental results and makes comparisons – where appropriate – to previous survey results.

The GP Patient Survey was significantly re-developed in 2024 in order to keep pace with changes in frontline general practice and the way the population responds to survey. Unlike much of the rest of the survey, the questions about dentistry themselves have changed very little in the past year – although more fundamental changes took place between 2022 and 2023. Details of the small changes between 2023 and 2024 are provided in Annex A at the end of this document .

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

General Survey Information

- For the 2024 GP Patient Survey – conducted between January and March 2024 – 2.56 million GP patients age 16 and over were contacted and 699,790 replies were received. This represents a 27.3% response rate.
- 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 0 decimal places and so totals may not match due to rounding.
- Survey region and ICS breakdowns are based on the GP practice of the respondent and not the address of the dentist.
- The GP Patient survey questionnaire has been redeveloped and the survey design changed to ensure that that the survey continues to reflect how primary care services are delivered, and how patients experience them. The main GPPS survey results can not be compared with previous years due to the magnitude of the changes.
- The dental section questions have changed much less. However the mode of delivery has changed to an online first approach. This is likely to have resulted in a slightly different sample of people responding to the survey and so changes of small magnitude can not be taken as 'real' changes. And changes of larger magnitude may reflect a change for better or worse, however must be interpreted with real caution.

Next publication:
July 2025

Previous publication:
[Statistics » GP Patient Survey Dental Statistics; January to March 2023, England](#)

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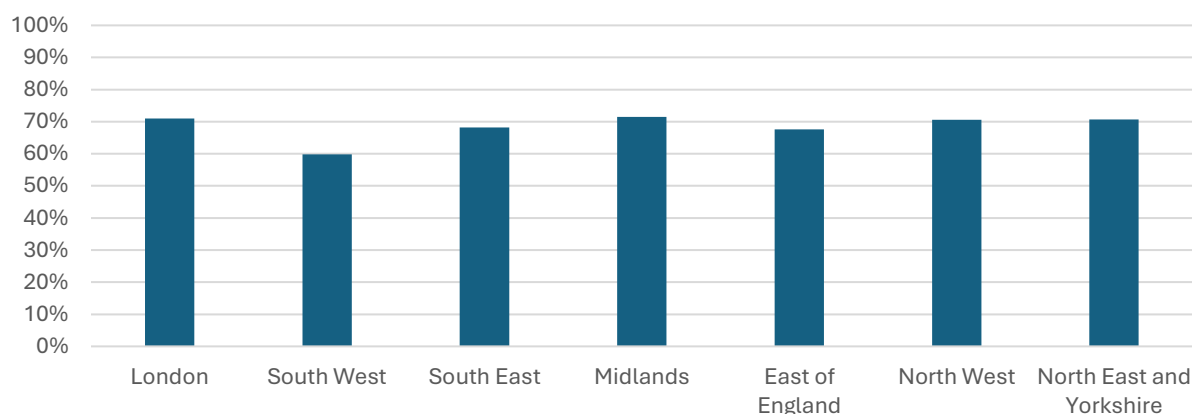
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Overall experience of NHS dentistry

- Of the respondents that tried to get NHS dental care in the last two years, 69% of respondents rated their overall NHS dental experience as positive (very good and fairly good). The reported figure in 2023 was 70%, given the changes in mode of delivery this difference is very unlikely to be a 'real' change in experience.
- In January to March 2024, 41% had a very good experience and 29% had a fairly good experience. Meanwhile 11% said it was neither good nor poor, and fairly poor and very poor had a 7% and 13% share of the total respectively.
- For most regions, satisfaction rates with the overall patient experience of NHS dental were very similar at 71%, South East and East of England were slightly lower at 68% and the lowest rate in the South West at 60% (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Positive experience of NHS Dental Services from all those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years



Tried to get an NHS dental appointment

- 52% of all respondents tried to get an NHS appointment in the last two years, the maximum recall period recommended by NICE guidelines¹. This is lower than was reported in 2023 (53% in 2023). Given the changes in mode of delivery, and the survey itself, this is unlikely to represent a real change. 45% of respondents had tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last year; 34% within the last six months and 21% 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

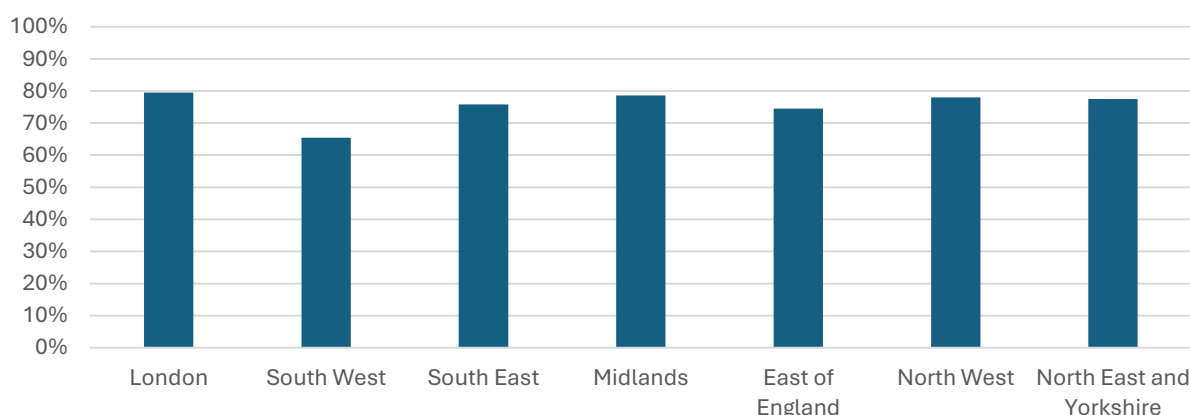
¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg19/chapter/1-guidance>

North East & Yorkshire at 58% followed by the North West at 57%. In contrast, the rates remain lowest in London at 46% followed by the South East at 48%.

Success in getting an NHS dental appointment

- Of those who tried to get an appointment in the last two years, 74% 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 76%. This is compared to 77% in the previous year (excluding 'can't remember'). As stated elsewhere, this small change is likely due to change in mode of delivery.
- The success rate for respondents who had not been to the practice before was lower, at 35%, compared with 85% who were successful when trying to make an appointment at a practice they had visited before. In 2023 the comparative figures were 33% and 85%.
- This year the proportion of people who have tried to make appointments at a practice they had not been to before for NHS care was 15% in 2024 compared with 14% in 2023. This is likely due to the change to online first and is also likely to explain the overall success rate decreasing whereas the success rate of people who have and have not been before both increasing or staying the same.
- Regionally, the success rate for people who tried to get an NHS dental appointment was highest in London (80%). South West had the lowest success rate (65%) of all the regions. (Figure 2).

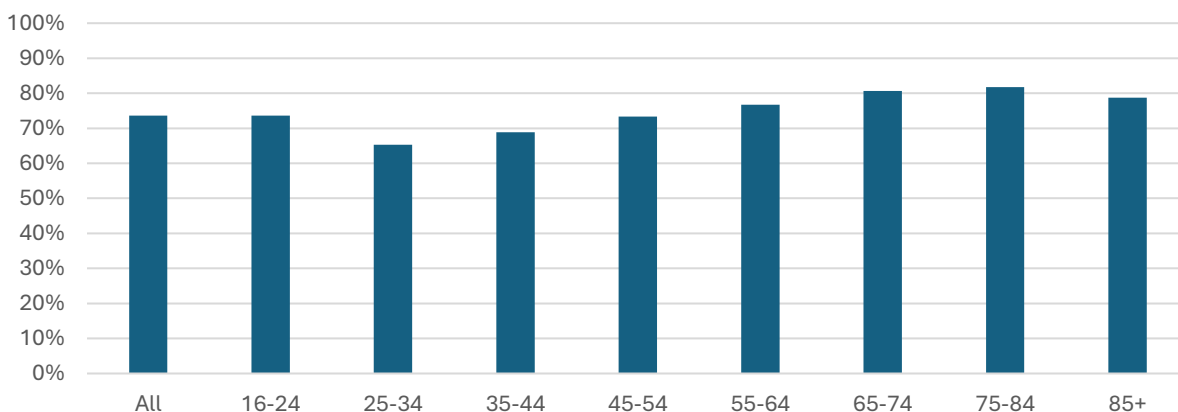
Figure 2. Percentage of those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years who succeeded, by age-band (excluding "can't remember")



- The top three ICBs with the highest success rates for those who tried to get an appointment in the last two years (excluding "can't remember") were Coventry and Warwickshire (89%) Hertfordshire and West Essex, and Black Country (84%).

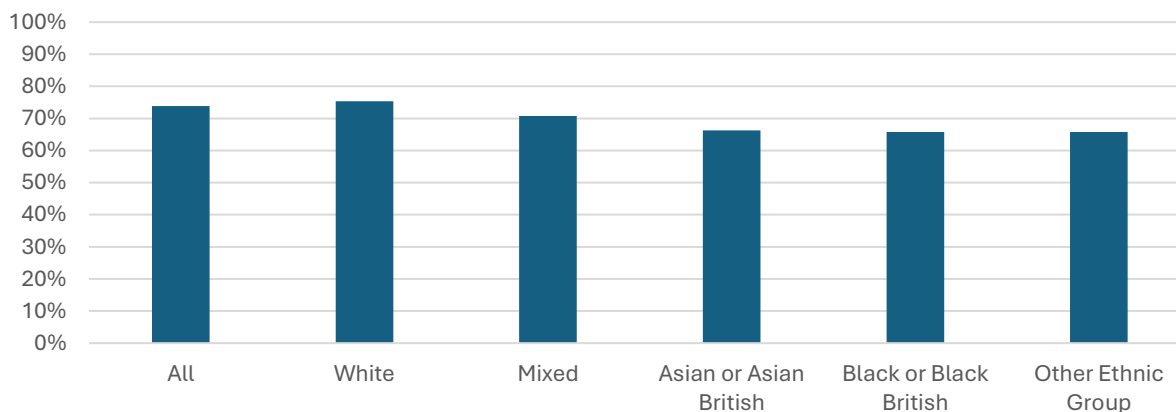
- The bottom three ICBs with the lowest success rates for those who tried to get an appointment in the last two years (excluding “can’t remember”) were Somerset (53%), Norfolk and Waveney (60%), and NHS Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (61%).
- Lowest level of success was reported by 25-34 years (65%) age group (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Success rate in getting an NHS Dental Appointment in the last 2 years (including 'can't remember') by Age band



- In 2024, as in previous years, there was variation in the proportion of people who successfully made an appointment, between ethnic groups. Whilst 71% of those who described themselves as ‘White’ were successful in getting an appointment, those of all other ethnicities were less successful (including those who “can’t remember”) (Figure 4)

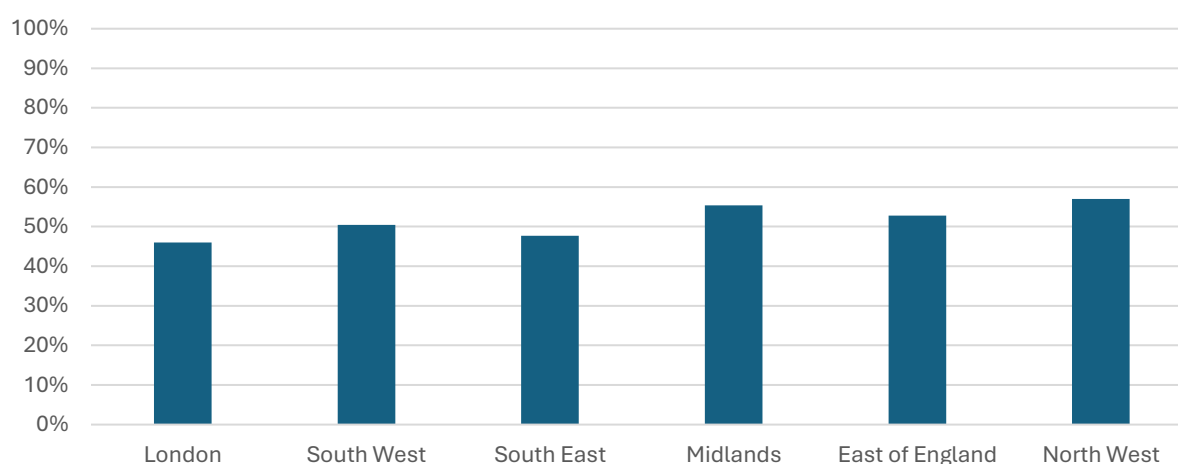
Figure 4. Percentage of those who tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years who succeeded, by ethnicity (including "can't remember")



Overall survey population breakdown of dental behaviour by region

- The 2024 survey shows that there is regional variation in the proportion of people who have tried to make an appointment in the last two years. As the following graph (Figure 5) shows, 58% of respondents in North East and Yorkshire have tried to make an appointment (the region where the proportion is greatest), whereas 46% of respondents in London have tried to make an appointment (the smallest proportion by region). The following section looks at the proportions who have not tried to make an appointment in the last two years.

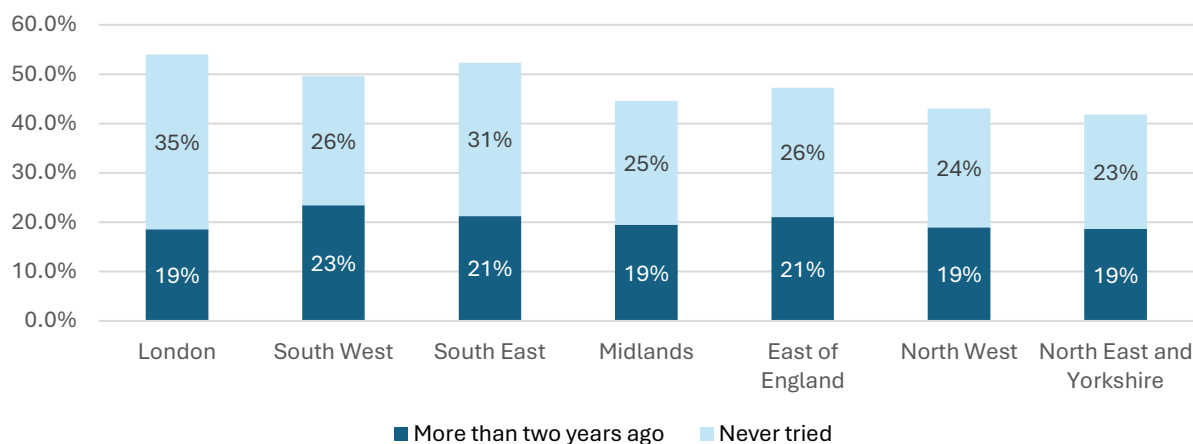
Figure 5. Percentage of respondents who have tried to make a dental appointment in the last two years



Did not try to get an NHS dental appointment

- In total, 48% of all respondents mentioned that they had not try to get an NHS dental appointment in last two years. 28% of all respondents mentioned that they never tried to get NHS dentist appointment, while 20% mentioned they tried more than 2 years ago (Figure 7).
- For the respondents who have never tried to get an NHS dental appointment, London had the highest proportion with 35%. The following chart (Figure 6) shows the proportions by region that have never tried, and those who tried more than two years ago.

Figure 6. Percentage of all 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 the 48% of people who had not tried to get an NHS dental appointment within the last two years were asked why, the main reason selected (27%) was that they prefer to go to a private dentist. The full list was as follows:
 - 27% I prefer to go to a private dentist
 - 25% I didn't think I could get an NHS dental appointment
 - 20% I haven't needed to visit a dentist
 - 14% Another reason
 - 6% I don't like going to the dentist
 - 6% NHS dental care is too expensive
 - 4% I'm on a waiting list for an NHS dentist
- For the response "I didn't think I could get an NHS dental appointment". This response is highest in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucester at 31% and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly at 30% and the lowest in Black Country ICB at 15% and Warwickshire at 17%.
- 20% of respondents in Black Country ICB, the ICB with the highest proportion mentioned that they did not need to visit a dentist or didn't like going to the dentist whereas Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly had the lowest at 7%.
- Surrey Heartlands and Gloucestershire ICB have the highest percentage of people saying they preferred private dentistry at 20% whereas South Yorkshire and Black Country ICBs had the lowest at 7%.

To get current results (January to March 2024) please click on the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/2024/07/11/gp-patient-survey-dental-statistics-january-to-march-2024-england>

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 2024 survey and comparability with 2023 survey

Changes between the 2023 and 2024 versions of the survey were minimal.

- The questions moved slightly within the questionnaire. In 2023 the questions were numbers 48 to 52; in 2024 they were 49 to 53
- The text preceding Q53 [in the 2024 survey] changed from its 2023 equivalent:
2023: “If more than one of these applies to you, please put an X in the box next to the main one only.”

2024: “Please put an X next to the **main option** only.”

- The wording of one of the options in Q53 [in the 2024 survey] changed “I didn’t think I could get an NHS dentist” is now “I didn’t think I could get an NHS dental appointment”
- In two of the questions (q50 and q51 in the 2024 survey), the option “can’t remember” changed to “I can’t remember”

Annex B: 2024 Survey questions

No.	Question	Options	Routing
Q49	When did you last try to get an NHS dental appointment for yourself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	[continue to Q50]
			Go to Q53
Q50	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 I can't remember	
Q51	Were you successful in getting an NHS dental appointment? Please put an X in all the boxes that apply.	Yes No, no appointments were available No, the dentist was not taking new patients No, for another reason I can't remember	
Q52	Overall, how would you describe your experience of NHS dental services?	Very good Fairly good Neither good nor poor Fairly poor Very poor	Go to Q54 [ie do not answer final Dentistry question]

Q53	Why haven't you tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years?	Why haven't you tried to get an NHS dental appointment in the last two years? Please put an X next to the main option only. I haven't needed to visit a dentist I don't like going to the dentist I didn't think I could get an NHS dental appointment I'm on a waiting list for an NHS dentist I prefer to go to a private dentist NHS dental care is too expensive Another reason	
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