



## **Information for health professionals/organisations who work with patients/clients with additional needs in Barnsley about the new Easy Read Guide on oral health and accessing dental services.**

The local NHSE Dental Public Health team has produced an easy read guide for people with additional needs on how they can look after their oral health and how and when they should access a dentist.

The guide is designed for health professionals and organisations who have patients/clients with additional needs to share with patients/clients and their carers/supporters.

The comprehensive guide contains information and advice on:

- how to maintain a healthy mouth, teeth and gums through brushing with a fluoride toothpaste
- denture care
- preventing tooth decay through a healthy diet
- preventing mouth cancer through reducing alcohol intake and stopping smoking
- preventing gum disease through stopping smoking

In addition, the guide offers advice on how to access NHS dental services for routine regular care, and when and how people should seek emergency and urgent dental care for problems with their mouths or teeth.

We encourage you to make this guide available to patients/clients with additional needs and their carers in the Barnsley area. When you provide the guide to patients/clients, please use the opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of good oral health for good general health.

You may also be asked by a patient/client to help them with finding dental care. Here is some information to help you with this.

## **Helping a patient/client access dental care:**

Everyone needs to see a dentist regularly, even if they are not having any problems or no longer have any natural teeth. Adults should have a check-up at least once every 2 years and children at least once a year – the time between appointments will be decided by a dentist and depends on the patient's individual oral health.

To find a regular NHS dentist for routine care for a patient/client, search <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>. Routine care includes things like check-ups, fillings and extractions (for those not currently in pain), dentures, and gum treatments.

Not all dental practices will be able to take on new NHS patients. People may need to join a waiting list or look for a different dentist who is taking on new NHS patients. Some people may wish to see a dentist privately.

## **If you have patients/clients who are worried about seeing a dentist or do not know what to expect, you may find it helpful to signpost them to:**

- Information sheets to help your patients/ clients understand what happens at the dentist and the people they are likely to meet at the dentist: <https://widgit-health.com/downloads/dental-procedures.htm>
- This video, which explains in words, symbols and Makaton signs, on what happens on a regular visit to see the dentist: <https://tinyurl.com/c9n5ctf4>

## **Those with a dental emergency or urgent dental problem will need to access care more quickly than those seeking regular routine care.**

A dental emergency is something which is serious or life threatening and needs treatment straight away at a hospital accident and emergency department. For example:

- bleeding that cannot be stopped following tooth extraction.
- rapidly increasing swelling around the throat or eye.
- injury to the mouth/face.

Please direct patient/clients (and their carers) straight to the nearest A&E.

**Urgent dental care** is for those who need treatment at a dental practice within 24 hours so things don't get even worse. For example:

- toothache/facial pain not controlled by over-the-counter painkillers.
- dental infection/swelling (which is not rapidly increasing around the throat or eye).
- an adult (permanent) tooth which has been knocked out.

Please direct patients/clients needing urgent dental care to contact their own regular dentist or another local dentist for an appointment. They may need help from their carers to do this.

To find a local dentist for urgent care, people can use the [Find a Dentist website](#).

For those who cannot get an appointment and **need urgent dental care, there is the NHS 111 service.** This can be accessed:

- online at [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) (for people aged 5 and over only)
- by calling 111

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



For people with difficulties communicating or hearing, the following services can be used:

- call 18001 111 using text relay (in an emergency text users can call 18000 to get through to 999)
- use the British Sign Language service [signvideo.co.uk/nhs111](https://signvideo.co.uk/nhs111)
- call 111 and ask for an interpreter for other languages.

The patient (or carer on their behalf) will be asked questions about their symptoms on the NHS111 website, or by speaking to someone on the phone to find out what their dental problem is. They may then be offered an urgent dental appointment.

- NHS 111 urgent dental appointments are not available all the time.
- They may need to travel to another town or city for the appointment.
- The dentist will only try to fix the main problem they have.
- They will need to pay for dental treatment unless they are entitled to free NHS dental treatment. It is free for children, people who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby and for people on some benefits. For further information on who is entitled to free NHS dental treatment please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/who-is-entitled-to-free-nhs-dental-treatment-in-england/>
- They will need to see their regular dentist or find a regular dentist for any other treatment which isn't urgent.

### **Community Dental Services - for those needing extra support**

Community dentistry provides services in community settings for children and adults who find it difficult to receive treatment in a regular general dental practice, due to their additional needs.

They look after people with severe learning and/or physical disabilities or mental illness, and patients who are elderly or housebound or those who have a medical condition which affects their dental care.

Please discuss with a health professional about accessing the community dental service.

**For health professionals considering referring patients to the community dental service, there are criteria for referrals to be accepted.**

The service will usually accept:

- Children with special needs that significantly affect provision of dental care (for example, learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders). Children with severe dental anxiety or other behavioural management difficulty where treatment has already been attempted and preventive care provided. Children will normally be accepted for a single course of treatment but may be offered continuing care if difficulties are ongoing\*
- People who are medically compromised – these are patients who for medical reasons cannot receive care in a general dental practice, but who do not require care in a hospital setting. Such reasons may include a patient's physical frailty or complex medical or medication history.
- People with a learning disability – these are patients at the moderate and severe end of the spectrum of learning disability where that learning disability severely impacts on their ability to accept dental care. Those with milder learning disabilities can usually be seen in a regular general dental practice.
- Adults with serious mental illness. Details of their current mental health practitioner should be given in the medical history.
- Have a Body Mass Index (BMI) over 40 (Bariatric Patients). For people with a BMI between 30 and 40, there should be an additional health need, with the additional health need being the primary reason for referral.

(\*PLEASE NOTE: The Community dental service do not provide the general anaesthetic service for children requiring extractions under general anaesthetic who do not have any additional needs. These should be referred by the patient's dentist to the local oral surgery department (Barnsley General Hospital).

For information on how to refer into the Community Dental Service and referral forms please contact:

Barnsley: [rgh-tr.newstreetdental@nhs.net](mailto:rgh-tr.newstreetdental@nhs.net)

There are referral forms for dentists and another referral form for other health professionals. Completed referral forms along with supplementary information can be emailed to the address above.

For health professionals: If you are NOT sending this via a secure email address (i.e. from nhs.net to nhs.net) then please password protect your referral form and send the password in a separate email trail.

If you have any queries, please call the Community Dental team on  
Barnsley (New Street Health and Wellbeing Centre) 01226 645150