



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2022

Dear Cost Averis

Thank you for your email about NHS dentists.

Dentistry is an integral part of the clinical services provided by the NHS. I believe it is important that the most vulnerable and those on low incomes continue to receive support and to access dental treatment.

I fully recognise that waiting times and access to dental services has been affected by the pandemic and the degree of infection control measures that have been required to keep services going.

Despite these pressures, dental services in many parts of England have been recovering. In November 2021, one third of dental practices in England were delivering 85 per cent of procedures.

To boost recovery further, Sara Hurley - the Chief Dental Officer – wrote to dental staff in England in December 2021, asking them to deliver 85 per cent of the procedures in their contract between January and March 2022.

The letter further noted that dental practices should plan on the basis that NHS income protection would come to an end in April 2022 when they will be expected to deliver 100 per cent of procedures in their contract.

I am also delighted that the Government has recognised challenges that patients have faced in accessing dental services, recently announcing £50 million funding across England to support the delivery of 350,000 additional dental appointments. This funding will be targeted towards those in greatest need of dental treatment – children, people with learning disabilities, autism or severe mental health problems.

More specifically, I recognise your concerns about the situation here in Darlington. While there have been some small fluctuations year on year, since 2011 around 330 to 350 dentists in Tees Valley CCG carried out some NHS activity. I also want to assure you that I remain in regular contact with local NHS providers and stand ready to assist them with any concerns. However, if you require urgent treatment, I would advise you to contact NHS 111, details of how to do this can be found here: <https://111.nhs.uk>

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours Sincerely
Peter Gibson

PETER GIBSON MP