

Quick Poll Survey:

Your views about Dental Services

Introduction

During April to June 2015, over one third of the enquiries we received were in relation to accessing dental services. Our data tells us that many patients struggle to find and access NHS dental provision and that they have difficulty understanding dental charges. We decided to gather more data so that we could gain a deeper understanding of public opinion.



Aim

To allow local people to quickly share their opinions and experiences of dental services across Leicestershire.



Methodology

We heard from 260 people via online and postal surveys and face-to-face engagement.



 I am unsure that I am being offered or advised about the most appropriate treatment 

Melton resident

 There is definitely a difference at this practice between private and NHS patients, even down to a separate seating area with tea and coffee for private patients 

Charnwood resident

Findings

Who took part

Blaby	8%
Charnwood	29%
Harborough	11%
Hinckley & Bosworth	15%
Melton	5%
NW Leicestershire	3%
Oadby & Wigston	8%
Leicester City	18%
Out of Area	3%



83% of people visited their dentist at least once a year



60% visiting every six months



7% attended every two years or at times of emergency

Dental Charges and Payments

From those that attended their dentist less frequently (every two years or in times of emergency), 10 out of 16 respondents were not sure or did not understand dental charges.

Overall, 40% of respondents either did not understand the cost of treatment or were unsure. (5 people did not answer).

65% of respondents said they were asked to pay after their treatment had been completed, compared to 14% who were asked for payment before their treatment. 3% were not sure and 18% did not pay.

From the 35 patients that paid before treatment, 42% were not sure or did not understand the charges of their treatment.

Appointment Reminders

Of the options we presented, 75 out of 260 respondents (29%) received text messages as a reminder for their appointments, 21% were given appointment cards and 19% received a call from dental practice.

24 respondents told us that they did not receive any reminders for their appointments, with one practice in Charnwood being mentioned six times.

The table below shows that 16 dental practices did not provide appointment reminders. The breakdown by district is below:

Blaby	2	●●
Charnwood	5	●●●●●
Harborough	0	
Hinckley & Bosworth	2	●●
Melton	0	
NW Leicestershire	0	
Oadby & Wigston	1	●
Leicester City	4	●●●●
Out of Area	4	●●●●
Did not answer	2	●●

Performance

When we asked about performance, 15% of people rated their dentist as average.



13 practices were rated below average. The location of these practices are below:

Blaby	2	●●
Charnwood	4	●●●●
Melton	2	●●
Leicester City	3	●●●
Out of Area	2	●●

My wife was told that she would need root canal treatment and the closest appointment would be a private one costing £1500. No mention of NHS treatment was given. I called to query and was told that a root canal would cost less than £100 and found an NHS slot available in a couple of days

Blaby resident

My dentist always makes sure that I understand the pros and cons of treatment. I'm highly nervous of treatment and he manages this and me very well. I'd highly recommend him

Hinckley & Bosworth resident



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What patients told us

NHS Provision

The majority of respondents told us that the service they received from their dentist was very good. However many often struggled to find an NHS dentist. Charnwood appears to perform not as well compared to other areas.

Many people struggle to find and access an NHS dentist locally; in some cases patients are travelling over 10 miles to receive NHS treatment. Those who do find provision are often advised that they will be placed on a waiting list or offered a private appointment.

Cost

Many patients told us that they switched from a private to an NHS dentist due to cost. Elderly patients told us that they found treatment to be expensive.

Communication

Almost half (40%) the people that we heard from were not entirely confident in understanding their charges and entitlements. In some cases patients would pay twice for the same treatment. There is a need for clearer communication so that patients can easily understand treatment price bands and what they are entitled to.

Care and Treatment

The majority of patients that we heard from were happy with the care and treatment that they receive from their dental practice. Many have had very good experiences and have built a good relationship with their dentist. There are others that have had very bad experiences causing them to change practice due to lack of confidence with their dental practice.

I never see the same dentist more than twice as, being a National Health Patient, I only get the latest trainee who is only there for a short period of time

Harborough resident

I would like to attend a more local dentist as I now live in Wigston but have been unable to find a local NHS Dentist that is registering new patients. I have tried several times but without success, so I continue to attend one that is 15 miles away from my home.

Oadby & Wigston resident