

Call for evidence: Dentistry in London

July 2024

The London Assembly Health Committee has launched an investigation into the state of dentistry in London. The investigation will examine the following:

- The barriers for both adults and children in accessing NHS dental care in London and the reasons behind the decrease in the number of Londoners accessing NHS dentistry
- A comparative view of access to services in London compared with the rest of the country
- The experiences of Londoners who have used or tried to access dental care in London
- The health inequalities that exist in accessing dental care in London
- Why Londoners who are entitled to free NHS dental care across London are not taking up appointments
- What preventative measures are being taken to support the oral health of adults and children, including the promotion of oral health in schools
- What action needs to be taken by the NHS and health partners in London to ensure all Londoners can access an NHS dentist and support good oral health

The Committee would like to invite those who have knowledge of dentistry and oral health in London to provide written evidence to the Committee. The information you provide will help to inform the work of the Committee and influence its recommendations.

¹ House of Commons Library, [NHS Dentistry in England](#), 29 May 2024

² NHS England Digital, [NHS Dental Statistics for England, 2022-23, Annual Report](#)

Background

There has been a decline in the number of people in London and England accessing NHS dentistry.¹ London is one of the worst performing regions in the country for accessing NHS dentistry. In 2022-23, the North East and Yorkshire had the highest percentage of adult patients seen (46.3 per cent) and London the third lowest (37.4 per cent). For children, the North West had the highest rate of children seen (59.4 per cent), while London had the lowest (47 per cent).²

In 2022/23, the number of dentists carrying out NHS activity was higher than a decade earlier in 2012/12.³ However, this rise has not kept pace with population growth, and a 2023 survey by the British Dental Association found that over half of dentists said they had reduced the amount of NHS work they carry out since the pandemic.⁴

How to respond

The Committee welcomes any evidence relevant to the following questions:

1. What are the specific barriers that prevent adults and children in London from accessing NHS dental care?
2. How do these barriers differ across various demographics, including age, income, and ethnicity, and what are the underlying causes of these disparities?

³ House of Commons Library, [NHS Dentistry in England](#), 29 May 2024

⁴ British Dental Association, [Half of dentists have cut back NHS work, with more to follow as crisis mounts](#), 6 March 2023

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3. What impact is the lack of availability of NHS dentistry in London having on the oral health of Londoners?
4. What preventative measures are currently being taken to support oral health in London, and how effective are these measures?
5. What are the main challenges facing emergency dental care in London?
6. What specific actions need to be taken by the NHS and health partners in London to improve access to dental care and oral health outcomes?
7. What action can the Mayor take to advocate and work with partners to improve the provision of dental care, including preventative measures, in London?

Written submissions should be sent to scrutiny@london.gov.uk with 'Health Committee call for evidence' as the subject line. The deadline is Friday 6 September 2024. You do not need to answer all questions - please answer only those that are most relevant to you or your organisation.

What we will do with the responses

The submissions will be used to inform the London Assembly Health Committee's investigation. Responses may be used and quoted in a report or output from the Committee.

In the large majority of circumstances we will publish written submissions and the names of the individuals or organisations that submitted them online. This is to ensure transparency about what evidence the Committee has received. Exceptions to this are usually applied where there is a legal reason for non-publication or if there is a safeguarding or welfare issue. If there is a reason that you would like your evidence not to be published with your name (submitted anonymously) or not to be published at all (submitted confidentially), please let us know and the Committee will consider the request. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and the Assembly may be required to release non-personally identifiable information if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

About the Health Committee

The London Assembly consists of 25 elected members, who publicly examine the policies and programmes of the Mayor of London and relevant agencies through committee meetings, plenary sessions, site visits and investigations.

The Health Committee carries out investigations into health and wellbeing issues in London. It scrutinises the work of the Mayor on health issues, and in particular the actions arising from the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy. It routinely publishes findings and recommendations from its investigations.

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The members of the committee are:

- Krupesh Hirani AM (Chair)
- Emma Best AM (Deputy Chair)
- Marina Ahmad AM
- Andrew Boff AM
- Alex Wilson AM

Contact us

Email submissions	scrutiny@london.gov.uk Please use 'Health Committee call for evidence' as the subject title
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