

NHS Dental Appointments and Attendance Policy

Since the introduction of the current dental contract in 2006, there is no such thing as NHS registration. Patients can register with a dental practice, but this does not guarantee the entitlement of NHS care, which is at the discretion of the dental practice.

Here at Indigo Dental, we obviously understand that patients would like certainty and assurance about the dental treatment they receive and be mindful of the costs of their dental treatment, so we offer NHS care to patients 2 years from their last dental examination. This period allows us to follow NHS NICE guidance on recalls for a dental examination, which says that no more than 2 years should elapse between examination. We do send out reminders to encourage you to book your recall appointment with us, by both text message and email.

The reason for this two-year period is to ensure that we maintain a sustainable business model, which allows us to offer continued NHS care to the patients who attend regularly, without creating a situation where their NHS care is withdrawn suddenly due to a shortfall in NHS funding.

Each year, NHS funding provided for dentistry is subject to an activity target that we are required to achieve to ensure we continue to receive funding. Failure to hit this activity target can result in a withdrawal of funding. We are also required to ensure we provide dental care evenly throughout the year, which means we need to ensure we see a steady number of patients each year. Since the funding is limited, we focus our provision of care on the patients who have attended regularly. If we do have capacity during the year, we can take on a limited number of NHS patients, but this is subject to each dentist's waiting lists.

Registration at the practice without an NHS dental examination will not entitle you to NHS care, so it is important to attend a dental examination on the NHS when you register as soon as possible. We may on occasion offer an emergency appointment on the NHS, but this does not constitute acceptance for regular dental appointments on the NHS.

We aim to send patients regular reminders for their dental examination and utilise letters, emails, and text messages to communicate with our patients, but we cannot guarantee that every patient will receive these reminders if their contact information has not been provided or out of date. It is therefore the responsibility of each patient to ensure they attend regularly or within two years to maintain access to NHS Dental care.

NHS Dental Care Rules

It is important to follow the rules of the practice to ensure you have continued access to NHS dental care. We do not charge patients for missed or short notice cancellations, but we can decline to rebook patients for NHS appointments if this occurs. If you miss your first appointment with us, then we will be unlikely to offer you another appointment on the NHS. If you miss, cancel on short notice, or arrive late for your appointment then we can decline future appointments.

Indigo Dental NHS Dental Appointments and Attendance Policy

If you fail to pay for your dental treatment in full when requested or are rude, aggressive, or abusive with our team - including our reception team, we will decline NHS treatment and appointments.

These rules are a summary of our main operating policy but not exhaustive and there may be additional matters that determine your NHS registration.

We aim to provide a 1-year guarantee on NHS dental work where possible and when carried out subject to advice, and we only have an obligation to see any patient within 2 months of completing their dental treatment.

Options Outside Of NHS Dental Care

If you do repeatedly cancel appointments on short notice (2 business days) or arrive late, then we may not be able to offer you future appointments on the NHS. At this stage, you may wish to register at another dental practice that offers you NHS care, or you can stay registered with us as a private patient. In these circumstances, you may be asked to pay for your appointment in advance or pay a deposit. Failure to provide the necessary notice or missing the appointment will mean your deposit is forfeited. We do make every effort to remind patients about their appointments, but we cannot accept responsibility if they are not received by patients.