

What you may need to know about Dental Services For the Armed Forces Community

1. How can I find an NHS dentist to register family or as a veteran?

You can search for a dentist near you using the NHS website. Dentists don't have specific catchment areas. That means you can find a dentist to suit you in any area, whether that's near your home, work, or another convenient location.

You may find that some dentists have a waiting list for NHS appointments. Others may not be able to take on new NHS patients at all. Contact several practices to find one who can.

Your area may also have a dental access centre, which can treat people who don't have a regular NHS dentist. Contact your local NHS Area Team if you aren't sure what's available in your area.

There are also private dentists and those who offer a mixture of NHS and private appointments. A dentist who has all their NHS slots filled may have private appointments available, but these will be charged differently to NHS appointments.

If you have a medical condition or disability that makes it difficult to use a local dental surgery, there may be a community dental service. These services have easy access into the surgery, or other adaptations suited for people with physical disabilities. They also have dentists who have received training in treating patients with special requirements.

Contact NHS England on 0300 311 2233 to find out if there is a service in your area.

NHS England South East Area Team
York House
18-20 Massetts Road
Horley
Surrey RH6 7DE

Your dentist or GP may need to refer you to a local service.

2. Finding a dentist: Practical tips

a. Get recommendations to help you by speaking to other members of the Armed Forces community or other families in the area.

b. NHS Website

<https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Dentists/LocationSearch/3>

Put in your postcode or town and it will search from there. If there isn't a local service taking NHS patients, it is worth phoning and getting on a waiting list or finding out when they next open their books for new NHS patients (Dentists do open and shut their lists).

c. Access to treatment in an emergency or out of normal working hours

If you think you need urgent care, contact your usual dentist as some practices offer emergency dental slots and will provide care if clinically necessary.

You can also contact **NHS 111**, who can put you in touch with an urgent dental service.

Do not contact your GP, as they will not be able to offer urgent or emergency dental care.

Address & contact details	NHS UK users rating	Accepting NHS patients by referral only	Accepting new adult NHS patients	Accepting new adult patients entitled to free NHS dental care	Accepting children as new NHS patients	Urgent NHS dental appointments
Gabriels Hill Dental Surgery Tel: 01622 677100 35a Gabriels Hill Maidstone Kent ME15 8JJ 0.2 miles away	2 ratings Rate it yourself	NO	?	?	?	YES
Maidstone Dental Centre Tel: 01622 682029 Knightshill Chambers 12 Knightshill Street Maidstone, Kent Kent ME15 8LP 0.4 miles away	208 ratings Rate it yourself	NO	YES Adults 18 and over	YES	YES Children up to the age of 18	YES

When to go to A&E

Only visit A&E in serious circumstances, such as:

- severe pain
- heavy bleeding
- injuries to the face, mouth or teeth

If you're not sure whether you should go to A&E, contact NHS 111, who will be able to advise you.

- d. Use the above if you cannot get access routine dental services particularly for children with severe tooth pain and decay.

3. A Veteran or Reservist has an injured mouth

If, as a Veteran or Reservist you have a service related mouth injury, ensure that you are registered with an NHS Dentist; you should have priority to get on any lists and to have any required care or treatment under the NHS.

4. Benefits

If you are in receipt of certain benefits i.e. Armed Forces Independence Payment, then you should be able to apply for lower rate dental care. You will need to complete the HC1 Form (<https://assets.nhs.uk/prod/documents/HC1-September-2018.pdf>).

You don't have to pay for NHS dental treatment if you're:

- under 18, or under 19 and in full-time education
- pregnant or have had a baby in the previous 12 months
- being treated in an NHS hospital and your treatment is carried out by the hospital dentist (but you may have to pay for any dentures or bridges)
- receiving low income benefits, or you're under 20 and a dependant of someone receiving low income benefits

5. If you are a veteran and have no injury

If you are a Veteran and have no service related injury you will be treated as the rest of the population. If you are in a hot spot area you may have difficulty accessing a dental service. In this scenario, you are not being disadvantaged in comparison to your local population.

6. If you are a family member of a Serving person

If you are a family member of a Serving person who is moving around due to their service, then there is a case for you to go to the top of a waiting list when they open. This is because you may be being disadvantaged due to frequent moves and so could never get on a list. You may also be undertaking treatment at the time of the move.

7. If you are a Reservist

As a reservist, when you are being deployed you should not be taken off any list if you are unable to meet the regular check-up dates. This would result in you being disadvantaged under the Armed Forces Covenant.

8. Referral for Orthodontics

- a. Injured Veteran – If the referral is due to an injury sustained through service then the individual should be prioritised for treatment.
- b. Family Member - If you are being referred as a family member who is moving round due to deployments the referral must be done immediately even if you were to move in 2 months' time, so that the clock starts and you are in the system. You should not be impacted by a 'postcode lottery' for services. When you do move, you should go into the same place on the waiting list in the new service that you were previously. If you are moving to a new area there should be no distance requirements on the referral; you should be able to be referred to the new area that you will be living in.

9. Problems finding an NHS dentist

If after contacting several dental practices you still cannot find a dentist accepting NHS patients, you should call NHS England's Customer Contact Centre on 0300 311 2233.

NHS England commissions dental services in England and is required to meet the needs of their local population for both urgent and routine dental care.