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Dentistry Services in the UK

What are Dentistry Services?

Dentistry Services are services that help people maintain good health of their teeth, gums, and mouth as a whole. Dentists diagnose, prevent and treat patients with tooth decay, gum disease, and mouth infections, etc.

Dentistry services are available to everyone, no matter their age, so from young children to the elderly. They aim to improve oral hygiene, reduce pain, prevent mouth diseases, and allow people to have a healthy smile.



Brief History

Dentistry has been practised around the world for thousands of years. They used to use simple tools to remove teeth and treat tooth pain. In the UK, the dentistry services improved after the creation of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948. The NHS allowed dentistry to be more affordable and easily accessible to everyone. As time has gone on, dentistry services have advanced too. Modern technology like digital X rays, implants, and cosmetic treatments, allow dentists to provide more effective care.

How do Dentistry Services work today?

Dentists Provide:

- Dental check ups
- Fillings for cavities
- Removal of teeth
- Crowns and bridges
- Root canals
- Gum disease treatment
- Emergency dental care
- Advice on oral hygiene and healthy lifestyles



Many dental practices also have dental hygienists, dental nurses, and orthodontists who work together to provide high quality and effective care.

Patients are encouraged to attend a dental check up every 6 months.

In England during 2024 - 2025:

- 35 million NHS dental treatments were provided.
- Around 18 million adults were seen by an NHS dentist over a 24-month period.
- There were 24,655 dentists carrying out NHS dental work.

Who uses Dentistry Services?

- Children
- Adults
- Older people
- People with braces
- People with dental pain
- People with health conditions affecting oral health



Benefits of Dentistry Services

- Prevent tooth decay
- Prevent diseases
- Detect issues early before they become worse
- Relieve pain and discomfort
- Improve confidence through a healthy smile
- Maintain good oral hygiene

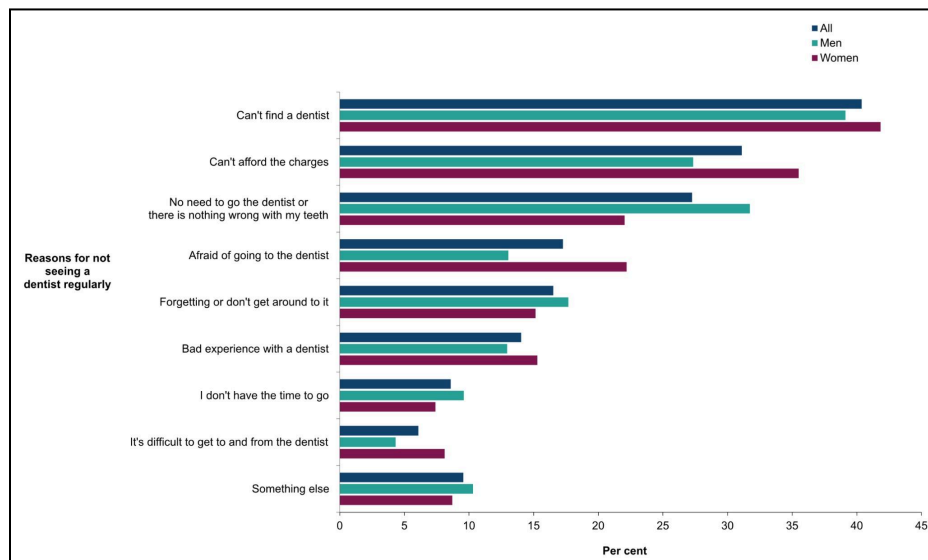
Two Challenges faced by Dentistry Service

1. Difficulty accessing NHS dentists

One of the biggest challenges facing dentistry services in England is the difficulty of accessing NHS dental appointments. It is harder for people to book appointments due to practices being full or long waiting lists. This issue has become worse recently due to the increased demand for dental care, limited NHS funding and lack of available appointments.

Due to this, patients may have to wait multiple weeks or even months for treatments, which has the risk of gum diseases or cavities getting worse and becoming serious conditions. Some people have to pay for private treatment, which can be expensive and unaffordable for some people. Others avoid seeking care until they are in extreme pain.

The lack of access can also apply pressure on other healthcare services. Some people who experience severe pain have to go to A&E, even though hospitals are not designed to provide dental care. This increases the pressure on other healthcare services and those in pain may not get the correct treatment they need.



According to the 2023 Adult Oral Health Survey:

- 40% of people who did not attend regularly said they couldn't find a dentist.
- 31% said cost stopped them from seeking treatment.
- 27% said they didn't think they needed to go.

This can lead to:

- Increased waiting time for NHS services
- Delayed treatment
- Dental conditions worsening
- Increased use of A&E departments being used for dental problems

2. Workforce Shortages

Another significant challenge is the shortage of dentists and other specialists, including nurses, hygienists, etc. Many practices under the NHS struggle to recruit and keep staff, especially in rural and deprived areas. Some dentists also choose to move from the NHS to private healthcare due to workload pressures, funding, and sometimes even being underpaid. A lack of staff can affect those who are vulnerable, for example, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, as they may require more frequent or specialised dental care.

This can lead to:

- Longer wait time for appointments
- Pressure on staff
- Less access to care
- Higher risk of dental issues

The British Dental Association estimates that around 13 million people in England cannot access NHS dental care, highlighting ongoing problems with availability and waiting times

How Dentistry Services Improve Health

- Prevent diseases
- Treat dental problems
- Support overall health
- Improve confidence
- Educate people about oral hygiene

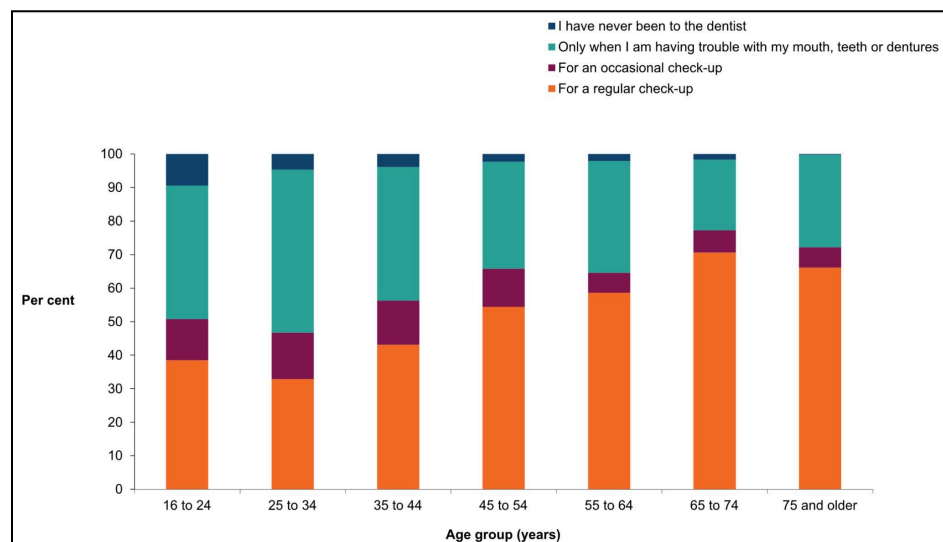
Interesting Facts

- Tooth decay is one of the most common health problems around the world
- Brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste helps prevent cavities
- Sometimes a dentist can identify signs of other health conditions during an oral examination
- Regular check ups can help detect whether or not a person has oral cancer



Statistics

- 65% of adults in England reported visiting a dentist at least once every two years, while 35% visited less often or only when they had a problem.
- More than 60% of NHS dental treatments are Band 1 treatments, such as check ups, X rays and advice.



Conclusion

Dentistry services are a crucial part of the healthcare system. They prevent, diagnose, and treat any oral issues. Although challenges like lack of access to appointments and staff shortages can have an effect on the quality of care in some cases, dentistry continues to play an important role in a person's health and quality of life.

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Portfolio Submission: Task 2 (Essay)

Health Care Services

Residential Care Home

The Development of Residential Care Home Services in the UK

Residential care homes are a crucial part of the health and care system. They provide accommodation, care, and support for those unable to live independently due to their age, disabilities, or health conditions. Residential care homes ensure individuals have the best support by offering a safe environment where highly trained staff are there to give assistance with day to day life. Over time, residential care homes have developed, improving the quality of care provided and personalised care for individuals.

The history of residential care homes is taken all the way back to the Poor Law Act of 1601, when those who are elderly, disabled, or struggle with independence were taken care of in warehouses. They were given food and shelter, however the living conditions were unsafe and had minimal privacy. Since then it has changed severely on how to care for them. When the NHS was established health and social care became more prioritised.

When the Care Standards Act came into place in 2000, national standards for care homes and residential living had stricter regulations that needed to be followed, so residents received high quality of care. In England, residential care homes are now regulated by the Care Quality Commission, where inspections take place so standards are met. This has allowed for residents' rights to be respected.

Modern care homes provide more than just living. They also receive extra care from staff including, dressing, eating, and even being given medication at appropriate timings. Care homes also put together social activities, give nutritious meals, etc. They are cared for and catered to by their individual needs.

Residential care homes also work with other healthcare providers like GPs, nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, etc. This makes sure that the residents are being given the correct treatment and medications to ensure they are being supported for both their mental and physical health. It is easier when families are involved with the care planning to ensure details are not missed, so the correct support can be given.

However, care homes still face multiple challenges. One of them being, the high demand for care as the population of England is ageing too. As people are living longer, they also need more support. A statistic by The House of Commons shows that, by 2043, approximately 24% of the UK population will be 65 and older, which will put immense pressure on the care services.

Another challenge is staff shortages. Care homes in the UK have difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff, mainly due to low pay, high workloads and no progression in the career. In 2023 - 2024, Skills for Care reported that there were around 131,000 job vacancies in England's care sector. Staff shortages can put extreme pressure on the staff already working, which can lower the quality of care provided.

Residential care homes play a huge role in contributing to the quality of life for adults. They provide them with a safe place to live where they receive appropriate care, also making them feel less isolated by social activities. The care workers ensure the residents maintain their independence when possible, alongside meeting their health and safety needs. Families are also reassured that their loved ones are taken care of in the best manner by qualified professionals.

In conclusion, residential care homes have improved significantly from basic care to modern, person centred care services that ensure rights are always respected while offering high quality of care. Even though the care service faces many challenges like staff shortages and high demand for care, care homes still play a vital role in England's health care system.

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