

# A guide to accessing dental services in Redbridge



January 2022

**Healthwatch Redbridge**

## Introduction

Over the last year local people have told us how difficult it has been for some of them to access dentists in Redbridge. We began hearing concerns through our signposting service and via responses to our Covid-19 questionnaire and feedback shared from local community groups via online meetings<sup>1</sup>.

Although the issue of dental access began prior to Covid-19, the pandemic has intensified the problems. This is a nationwide issue that has reached the media<sup>2</sup> and been raised by local Healthwatch across the country<sup>3</sup>.

In January 2022, we published a comprehensive report<sup>4</sup>, detailing our findings and made several recommendations.

We want to see better access to dental care for all. Many people told us they were unable to find a dentist or to access an emergency appointment. People spoke about the costs of dental treatments and how this has been a barrier for some.

In order to support local people, we have created this short guide with information about how to find and register with a dentist if you haven't already got one.

We also wanted to provide information on accessing emergency care, and to explain the way dental services are funded.

We hope this guide is helpful. We would also invite you to contact us and we welcome any feedback or comments on dental services.

## Finding an NHS Dentist

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<sup>1</sup> [http://healthwatchredbridge.co.uk/sites/default/files/healthwatch\\_redbridge\\_covid-19\\_report\\_18.12.20.pdf](http://healthwatchredbridge.co.uk/sites/default/files/healthwatch_redbridge_covid-19_report_18.12.20.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55978595>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bda.org/news-centre/press-releases/Pages/Dentists-back-Healthwatch-call-to-fix-system-in-crisis.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.healthwatchredbridge.co.uk/node/1781>



At the moment, we have found there is a long waiting list for routine dental treatment. This is partly due to Covid-19 as dentists had to close for a few months at the start of the pandemic. Currently few dentists are registering new NHS patients.

This website shows dentist practices who are taking on new NHS patients: <https://dentalchoices.org/find-nhs-dentist/>

You may need to broaden your search to “London” in order to find a practice, and you may be required to travel.

**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.

If you are struggling to find a dentist who will take on NHS patients, you can contact the NHS England's Customer Contact Centre: 0300 311 2233 or <https://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/>

## Registering with an NHS Dentist



**Registration with dentists is not the same as for a GP. Simply find a dental practice that's convenient for you (this can be anywhere in London) and phone them to see if there are any appointments available.**

Here is a link to The NHS Website where you can search for dentists: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Dental surgeries will not always be able to take on new NHS patients. You may have to join a waiting list or look for a different dentist who is taking on new NHS patients.

Once you find a dental surgery, you may have to fill in a registration form at your first visit, which is just to add you to their patient database. But that does not mean you have guaranteed access to an NHS dental appointment in the future.

It is worth noting that dentists' may remove you from their patient list if you have not had an appointment with them within two years.

## Dental charges



Dentistry is one of the few NHS services where you have to [pay a contribution towards the cost of your care](#).

The information on this page explains what you may have to pay for your NHS dental treatment.

- **Emergency dental treatment - £23.80** This covers emergency care in a primary care NHS dental practice such as pain relief or a temporary filling.
- **Band 1 course of treatment - £23.80** This covers an examination, diagnosis (including [X-rays](#)), advice on how to prevent future problems, a scale and polish if clinically needed, and preventative care such as the application of [fluoride](#) varnish or fissure sealant if appropriate.
- **Band 2 course of treatment - £65.20** This covers everything listed in Band 1 above, plus any further treatment such as fillings, root canal work or removal of teeth but not more complex items covered by Band 3.
- **Band 3 course of treatment - £282.80** This covers everything listed in Bands 1 and 2 above, plus crowns, [dentures](#), bridges and other laboratory work.

Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/dental-costs/understanding-nhs-dental-charges/>

## Emergency Dental Care



**Anyone who needs emergency dental care should first call the dental practice they have most recently attended. If you have not got a dentist, please see below:**

- **NHS 111** - if you cannot contact book an appointment with your practice or do not have one, you can ring 111 or go online: <https://111.nhs.uk/>

### **Further information:**

- Do not contact a GP, as they will not be able to offer emergency or out-of-hours dental care.
- If you are in pain while waiting to see a dentist, take painkillers.
- An urgent dental treatment will cost £23.80. If you are asked to come back for further treatment, you could be charged more.
- If you are entitled to free NHS dental care, you should be able to claim back the cost of any treatment. To do so, ensure you keep all receipts.

## Share your Experiences



We are always interested in hearing about your experiences. We share anonymised information (we will never share your personal details without your permission) with the local and national organisations who are responsible for services.

Our aim is to improve access to services and ensure that individual voices are heard.

You can contact us on [info@healthwatchredbridge.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchredbridge.co.uk)  
or call **020 8553 1236**.

## **Healthwatch Redbridge**

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