

# MP Attitudes towards NHS Dentistry

Survey findings



August 2026 ©

**LDC**  
Confederation



# Introduction

Since the General Election of 2024 there have been nine debates in Parliament on access to, and the state of, NHS dental services. Approximately 45 MPs have spoken about, or raised points on, NHS dentistry from across political parties and across the country. Following on from our survey on public attitudes to NHS Dentistry which we ran in 2024 and published in 2025, we decided to run a similar survey in the early summer of 2026 of Members of Parliament, given the evident interest.

We contacted all 650 MPs (of whom the most interested 45 represent seven per cent), to invite them to share, in confidence, their opinions on NHS dentistry. Of the 650 MPs contacted 12 responded to the survey giving a rather disappointing response rate of two per cent. If we compare the response rate to the 45 most interested MPs, however, the response rate is 26 per cent.

As with our Public Attitudes survey we wanted to understand more about attitudes, rather than focusing on the usual questions about access. We wanted to understand if they knew what the access rates were, if they were acceptable, if they use NHS dental services themselves and if they agreed with us on what needs to be done.

We asked MPs how they feel about their oral health, and how important it is to them. Whether they attend as an NHS or private patient and what influenced that decision. We also asked how important it is to them that dental services are available on the NHS, and whether they have been contacted by constituents about it. We then asked a series of questions about improving the situation.

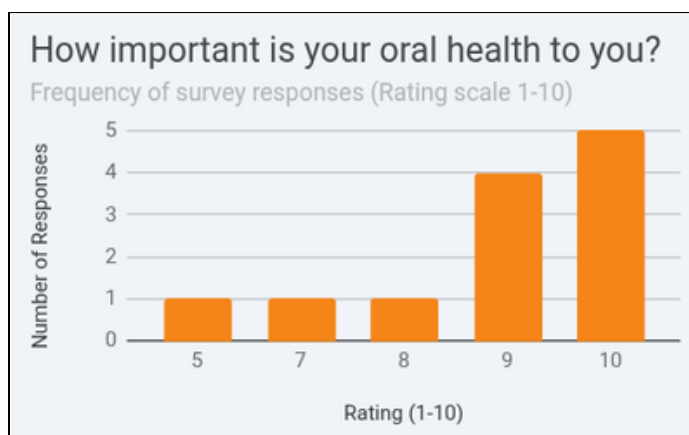
# Summary of key findings

- Nine out of 12 respondents indicated that their oral health was very important to them.
- Half the respondents accessed dental care privately, with one not sure if they attended on the NHS or privately.
- Eight respondents were extremely dissatisfied with the level of NHS dental services in their constituency.
- Nine MPs had been contacted by constituents about dentistry.
- Ten of the 12 respondents thought the current access figures for adults and children were unacceptable.
- There was universal support for contract reform, integrating dental services with the rest of the NHS, and for clarity on the use of the term "primary care".
- Eleven of the respondents supported the rest of the dental team having access to NHS benefits and for LDCs to be mandatory members of Primary Care Collaboratives.

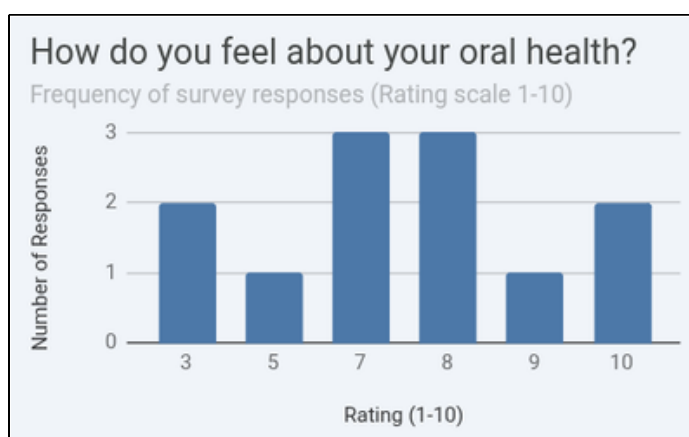
# Findings

## 1. Perception of Oral Health

- **Clear importance of oral health:** The majority (9) responded that their oral health was very important to them, with only two respondents appearing ambivalent about their oral health.



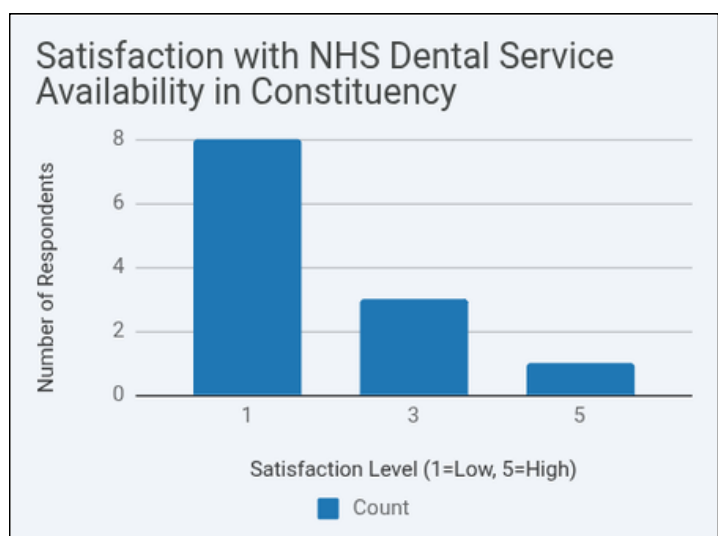
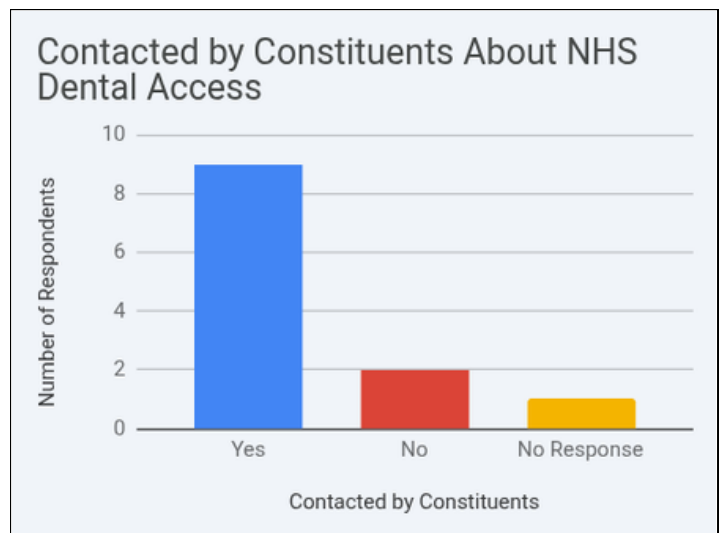
- **Mixed feelings about their oral health:** There was a clear spread of how respondents felt about their oral health, with half (6) picking a rating of 7 or 8 out of 10 indicating reasonable satisfaction, while two respondents rated their feelings as a 3 out of 10 suggesting dissatisfaction.



- One respondent was unsure if they attended their practice as an NHS or private patient and one reported not attending a dentist at all. Of those that attended an NHS dentist (four), two reported being satisfied with their care and two reported not being satisfied. Both of those were not satisfied with their NHS dentistry did consider that it was very important (5 out of 5) that dental services be available on the NHS. Of the remaining six who accessed dental care privately, one was dissatisfied but also indicated that they access care privately because they were no longer able to access it on the NHS. One respondent, who accessed care privately, suggested that the NHS should be abolished, and with it NHS dentistry. The remainder all considered it very important the dentistry be provided through the NHS.

## 2. Critical Dissatisfaction and High Constituent Concern Regarding NHS Dental Availability

- Severe Dissatisfaction with Local Availability:** A stark majority of respondents (8 out of 12) expressed the lowest possible level of satisfaction (rating it a 1 out of 5) with the availability of NHS dental services in their constituency. Only 3 respondents rated it a 3, and just 1 rated it a 5. This widespread concern is visualized below in the 'Satisfaction with NHS Dental Service Availability in Constituency' chart.
- High Volume of Constituent Grievances:** The issue is highly prominent among the public, as 9 out of 12 respondents reported being actively contacted by constituents regarding access difficulties since the General Election. Only 2 responded "No" and 1 did not provide an answer, as shown in the 'Contacted by Constituents About NHS Dental Access' chart opposite.
- Current Access Rates Deemed Unacceptable:** When presented with official NHS figures showing that only 40% of adults and 57% of children saw an NHS dentist recently, 10 out of 12 respondents explicitly stated that these access rates are unacceptable. The remaining 2 respondents chose "Neither agree nor disagree", as illustrated below in the 'Perception of NHS Dental Access Rates Acceptability' chart.



- **Forced into the Private Sector:** Out of the 6 MPs who replied who currently use private dental services, several explicitly noted that this was due to a lack of options rather than preference. Specific reasons provided include: "No NHS service available", "Lack of NHS dentist", "No NHS Dentists", and "Because I couldn't find an NHS dentist that would register me".

### 3. Unanimous Consensus on Systemic Reforms and Contract Modernization

- **Universal Support for Contract Reform:** There was a 100% consensus (12 out of 12 respondents) that the current NHS dental contract is not fit for purpose and requires immediate reform.
- **Integration into Modern Care Models:** All 12 respondents unanimously agreed that any future changes to the dental contract must be designed with the objective of supporting integrated neighbourhood working, ensuring dentistry is no longer siloed from the rest of health and social care.
- **Clarity and Recognition in Professional Language:** Every respondent (12 out of 12) backed the call for all official documents to be completely explicit when they mean just GPs versus the entirety of primary care.

### 4. Strong Backing for Workforce Equity and Local Dental Committee (LDC) Engagement

- **Expanding NHS Benefits to the Whole Dental Team:** 11 out of 12 respondents agree that a sustainable workforce requires extending NHS benefits to dental nurses and dental therapists who treat NHS patients, with 1 respondent answering "Don't know".
- **Mandatory Representation in Planning:** 11 out of 12 respondents support making the membership of Local Dental Committees (LDCs) mandatory on all Primary Care Collaboratives to ensure dentists have a statutory voice in regional healthcare planning (1 respondent answered "Don't know").

- **Geographic and Regulatory Hurdles:** Qualitative feedback from open-ended responses highlighted deeper structural issues, with respondents noting that "Coastal & rural towns are dental deserts", that a "total rethink [is] needed", and that the "General Dental Council operates restrictive practices... to the detriment of the NHS".

## Conclusion

While this was a small survey with only 12 respondents, the findings support much of what was seen in our Public Attitudes Survey. Those MPs who replied are in broad agreement with the importance of oral health, the importance of dentistry being available on the NHS and on ensuring that systems work fairly and in support of one another.

### Methodology and limitations

The survey questions were written by the LDC Confederation. The survey was only available online and was emailed to all sitting MPs via a public affairs agency. Follow up emails were sent directly to those MPs who spoke at the Parliamentary debate on NHS dentistry on 15 June 2026, and to those MPs representing constituencies covered by member LDCs. All responses were anonymous and no data was collected on geography, political party, gender, race, religion, age etc.

