

# Changes to orthodontic services in England



NHS England is responsible for funding and buying orthodontic services (that is treatment using braces) for children in England.

Some of the individual agreements in place within the North East and Yorkshire to provide these services will be coming to an end during 2021/22, which means that NHS England has to carry out a procurement process to put in place new agreements from when the current agreements come to an end.

The procurement process, which aims to ensure equity of access across the North East and Yorkshire, will provide an overall increase in capacity for patients.

This includes additional capacity for patients in North Cumbria; County Durham; North of Tyne; Gateshead; and parts of Teesside, North Yorkshire and Humber, South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw and West Yorkshire to reflect the independent orthodontic needs assessments undertaken by colleagues within Public Health England.

New contracts have been awarded for North Cumbria, County Durham and Darlington, Calderdale, Kirklees and Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Batley, Hambleton and Richmondshire, Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale, Selby, York and Harrogate with the process on-going for the remainder of the areas.

The procurement process could mean a change to orthodontic providers in your local area.

As the procurement is not yet concluded we do not yet know which practices will be providing orthodontic services in the remaining part of the North East. Once this is known, we will let you know if this will mean any change for your child's orthodontic care.

## Why is this happening?

Orthodontic practices providing treatment under the NHS need to have an agreement

with the NHS to do this work. This agreement is called a Personal Dental

Services (PDS) Agreement. This is a time limited arrangement and some of the current agreements come to an end in 2020. As a result, the NHS has to carry out a procurement process to award new agreements to provide orthodontic services.

All bids put forward as part of this process are fully reviewed and assessed before the new agreements are awarded.

## What does this mean if my child has been referred for an orthodontic assessment by my dentist?

If your child has an appointment for an orthodontic assessment before the new agreements are put in place, then this appointment will take place as already arranged.

If your child is still awaiting an assessment, then depending on waiting times they may need to be re-referred to a new orthodontic provider.

When agreements have been awarded, should the orthodontic practice your child has been referred to no longer be providing NHS orthodontic services your child will be transferred to a new orthodontic practice. You will be informed by the NHS England local office should this be the case.

### **What does this mean if my child has already had the assessment but is now waiting for orthodontic treatment to start?**

Until the procurement process is complete it is unclear which practices will be continuing to provide NHS orthodontic

services. If your child has already been assessed and is on a waiting list for orthodontic treatment, then they will continue to be on the waiting list but may need to transfer to a new orthodontic practice to receive treatment. You will be kept informed if this needs to happen.

If this is the case, with the support of the NHS England local office, your existing and new orthodontist will work together to make the necessary arrangements to transfer your child's care and will keep you up to date with information on the transfer of your child's treatment.

### **My child is already having orthodontic treatment; will they need to change to a new orthodontist?**

We don't yet know which practices will be awarded new agreements and be able to provide NHS orthodontic services as the procurement process is not yet complete.

Please be re-assured that this decision will in no way affect your treatment.

For most patients there may be no change and you will continue to be treated by your current orthodontist. Whether successful or not your orthodontist can if they wish, continue the treatment/and or retainer checks for your child to completion.

This approach has been agreed and supported by the British Orthodontic Society and the British Dental Association.

If your child's current orthodontic practice is unsuccessful in the procurement process, and they decide not to continue any NHS treatment beyond the end date of their NHS agreement, it will be necessary to transfer your child to another orthodontic practice.

Should this need to happen, with support from the NHS England local office, the existing and new orthodontic practices will work together to make the transfer as smooth as possible and will keep you informed about any changes.

There will be sufficient time for this handover and wherever possible you will be given a choice of where you would like your child to receive NHS treatment.

### **How do I know that my child will receive the same quality of care and treatment from a new orthodontist?**

All bids for orthodontic contracts are assessed to ensure that practices will provide consistent high quality of services and good outcomes for patients.

### **Will my child's treatment still be funded by the NHS?**

NHS orthodontic treatment for children is free and there will be no change to the funding of treatment. If your child is assessed as needing orthodontic treatment, this will continue to be funded by the NHS.

### **Who do I contact if I have any queries or questions that are not covered within this leaflet?**

If you have a comment or concern about a dentist or orthodontist, in the first instance you should discuss your concerns with the practice. If your concerns cannot be resolved locally with the practice, you can contact NHS England using the details below.

NHS England  
PO Box 16738  
Redditch  
B97 9PT

Telephone number: 0300 311 22 33

Email: [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)