

Freedom of Information request 222-23

Request

I am looking for information regarding the number of people attending your Emergency Dental Treatment Centre. As such, can I please request the following in Excel format:

1. The number of Emergency Dental Treatment Centres run by your NHS Board, including:
 - a) the opening hours;
 - b) eligibility for attending this centre/receiving an appointment;
 - c) the total number of dentists employed, and how many are on shift at one time; the total number of dental nurses employed, and how many are on shift at one time?
2. The total number of patients, with a breakdown by month, requesting an emergency dental appointment at the Emergency Dental Treatment Centre for the last three financial years (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23)?
3. The total number of patients receiving an emergency dental appointment for the last three financial years (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23)?
4. The total number of patients not being accepted for an emergency dental appointment for the last three financial years (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23), and the reasons for this?
5. How many of these patients were under 18 years old?
6. How many of these patients had been seen within the previous 12 months?
7. A breakdown of the dental treatment provided to those patients for an emergency dental appointment in the last three financial years (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23)?
8. What is the procedure for discharging someone after receiving emergency dental treatment? Are they referred on to another dental? Is there a follow-up?

Response

1. NHS Borders does not currently run any dedicated Emergency Dental Treatment Centres.

NHS Borders Public Dental Service (PDS) plays a crucial role in the management of Borders Emergency Dental Service (BEDS). This includes the provision of a weekday Dental Enquiry Line (DEL), facilitating access to urgent dental care for registered PDS and unregistered patients. Patients are provided with emergency care at either one of four PDS dental clinical sites (Galashiels, Hawick, Kelso, or Coldstream) or appointed to protected emergency appointments at a local General Dental Service (GDS) practice (unregistered patients only).

The PDS works in partnership with NHS24, Primary Care and local dental practices/practitioners to provide access at the weekends to emergency dental care for registered and unregistered patients.

NB - From March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and all dental practices being required to close, weekday and weekend services merged to a 7 day Urgent Dental Care (UDCC) model run by the PDS. In late June 2020, GDS practices opened to offer restricted treatments in their own premises and Monday to Friday. UDCCs reverted back to PDS, while accepting referrals from practices

for aerosol generating procedure (AGP) care. Routine non aerosol generating procedure (AGP) care commenced in July 2020 in GDS practices and from 17 August independent dental practices could provide NHS patients with urgent dental care which involved the use of aerosols.

- (a) From 8am – 6pm on weekdays a Dental Enquiry Telephone Line is available for registered PDS and unregistered patients with appointments being provided within these hours.

With respect to weekend unscheduled care. The patient pathway to access the weekend clinics is via NHS24 but patients who were triaged as urgent and needing to see a dentist within 24 hours are contacted by the BEDS team on duty to re-triage for any changes to respiratory pathway status and then offered an appointment at either Hawick Dental Centre or Coldstream Dental Centre with clinics on a Saturday and Sunday every weekend, with sessions running from 10am to 1pm.

- (b) Patients who contact the DEL complaining of a dental emergency, are triaged according to the endpoints set out by SDCEP Management of Acute Dental Problems guidance. If, after triage, patients fall under one of the following endpoints: Emergency (<60mins), Urgent (< 24hrs), Non – urgent (<7 days) **AND** are either unregistered or PDS registered or cannot practically access care at their own dentist then they are eligible to attend an emergency appoint within an appropriate time frame. [Acute dental problems | Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness \(sdcep.org.uk\)](https://sdcep.org.uk)

- (c) On weekdays NHS Borders employs thirteen dentists who are involved in the provision of emergency care. Varying numbers of dentists daily, will work across 4 sites, facilitating emergency care in combination with routine treatments. Weekly this number will vary dependant on annual leave and other clinical commitments. At weekends on a Saturday and Sunday, there is a single dentist who provides emergency treatment from either Hawick or Coldstream Dental Centre.

On weekdays NHS Borders 29 employs nurses who are involved in the provision of emergency care. Varying numbers of nurses daily will work across 4 sites, supporting dentists to provide emergency care in combination with routine treatments. Weekly this number will vary dependant on annual leave and other clinical support commitments. At weekends, there are 3 nurses who provide support for emergency treatment from either Hawick or Coldstream Dental Centre.

2. The number of patients requesting an emergency appointment is not recorded therefore this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

3. The total number of patients who received an emergency dental appointment are:

• 2020-2021	2959
• 2021/2022	4166
• April 2022 – February 2023	4196

4. The number of patients not accepted for an emergency appointment is not recorded therefore this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

5. For the patient numbers provided under Question 3, the number of patients under 18 years old are as follows:

• 2020-2021	294
• 2021/2022	405
• April 2022 – February 2023	355*

* Please note that due to a change in appointment types, the data for August 2022 is not recorded, therefore this information is not held, as defined in Section 17, Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

6. This information is not held electronically. The data may be held in a patient's record, but to extract this data would require a manual trawl of all patient records and the cost of carrying out this work would exceed the limit set in the Fees Regulations of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and under Section 12 we are not required to provide.

7. Below is a breakdown of the dental treatment provided to those patients who received an emergency dental appointment:

Dental Issue	2020-2021	2021-2022	Apr - Jul 2022
Problems	709	910	407
Toothache	1147	1835	642
Swelling	158	403	153
Trauma	50	64	21
Lost fill	372	315	202
Broken Tooth	457	570	241
Lost Crown	6	17	9
Recement Crown	60	52	20
Totals	2959	4166	1695

Please note, appointment types were changed to Unregistered Emergency Appointment or DEL (Dental Enquiry Line) Emergency Appointment in August 2022 and subsequently the dental treatment provided to the patient is not recorded electronically. The data may be held in a patient's record, but to extract this data would require a manual trawl of all patient records and the cost of carrying out this work would exceed the limit set in the Fees Regulations of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and under Section 12 we are not required to provide.

8. The procedure for discharging someone after receiving emergency dental treatment is:

If the patient is registered with the PDS:

- No follow-up required, if deemed clinically appropriate.
- Further appointment/ appointment waiting list entry made if follow-up or definitive care required.
- Onward referral for secondary or specialist care if clinically indicated.

If the patient is not registered with the PDS:

- No follow-up required, if deemed clinically appropriate.
- If registered with a GDS practice – advised to contact own dentist for further care if follow-up or definitive care required.
- If unregistered, signposted/advised to seek dental registration.
- Onward referral for secondary or specialist care if clinically indicated.

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **222-23** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.