

NHS Reform Programme

Change to NHS dental service in Wales

From 1st April 2022, the structure of the NHS dental service has reformed as part of Public Health Wales' policy to provide dental access to those that are in most clinical need.

What is the principle of the reform?

NHS dental access and care is prioritised on needs and risks rather than demand. Our focus remains on providing preventative dental care, so whilst patients highlighted as 'at risk' are treated as a priority, they are required to fully commit to their dental care and engage in their treatment plan to eventually graduate to a low-risk patient.

Treatments Available to our NHS patients

Due to the level of NHS funding, practices are required to meet targets based on number of patients seen and essential and preventive care delivered. This means that provided patients "engage" in the prevention messages given by the dental team, they can access basic dental care treatments including

- fillings • dentures • crowns • bridges
- tooth removal • fluoride varnish application

Patients will also be given care and support for any oral medical issues such as oral cancer.

Your Routine Check-up

Check-ups have been replaced by individual Risk Assessments to establish whether you are at high, medium or low risk of tooth decay, gum disease or any other mouth issue. Your dentist will then refer you for further treatment or set a recall date for your next assessment, following NICE guidelines. This may mean that patients with healthy mouths and low risk will have longer intervals between assessments than they previously had for routine check-ups.

Your Treatment Plan

Your dentist will offer you a personal prevention plan that is clinically appropriate and will make clear which treatments can be provided on the NHS. If you are not satisfied with the results of your dental assessment and your proposed prevention plan, you have a right to consider seeking alternative care.

Your Clinical Care

Your treatment will be carried out by various clinicians, not just a dentist. At Ruabon Road we are proud of our broad skill mix to deliver the best dental care to our patients. You may encounter one or several members of our clinical team during your patient journey.

- Dentist • Therapist • Dental Nurse
- Oral Health Educator • Fluoride Nurse

What if I have a dental problem?

If you are experiencing pain or have any dental issues you can book an appointment with your dentist. You are not expected to wait until your risk assessment for these issues to be investigated.

How long will I have to wait for treatment?

We will endeavour to see you as soon as we can but please be mindful that waiting times for care will vary depending on treatment required. Same-day appointments are available for dental emergencies. If you require urgent dental care then please call between 8.30am and 9.30am to be triaged.

What about children?

It is essential that children learn and adopt healthy oral habits to take through to adulthood. This can only be achieved with the support and commitment of their parent/guardian. Children will be invited to receive fluoride application every six months and will be assessed at least twelve monthly. The Welsh government has put in place safeguarding measures for children and we are obliged to inform the relevant authorities of children repeatedly not brought to their booked appointments.



NHS v Private Dental Service

It is advisable to understand the differences between the reformed NHS service and our private dental care. The table below outlines those differences to help you make an informed decision as to which is most suitable for you.

	NHS	Private
Is Private better than NHS?	NHS can be seen to provide a basic level of care but should not be considered inferior. Patients will still be provided with a risk and need assessment and prevention with simple and effective care from the team to promote and maintain dental health.	Private care is considered comprehensive and not better than the NHS. It is, however, very different. Designed for patients that prefer to guide their own care it offers flexibility in terms of appointments, be it length of session or time of day. It puts you in control of your care, supported by your dentist and their team.
Are all dental treatments available?	No, treatments are based on risk and need. Dental care is provided to maintain oral health and requires the patient's engagement, as set out by NHS Wales.	Yes, you have access to comprehensive care that is fully discussed between you and your dentist and a bespoke Treatment Plan is provided.
How often can I be seen?	Depending on your risk and need, an assessment (previously known as check-up) will only be carried out once a year or less frequently.	You are seen at an interval that suits you. Most patients choose to be seen for a comprehensive check-up or assessment every 6 months.
Can I have NHS and Private care at the same time?	Yes, but only if the treatment you require is not offered by the NHS.	Yes, any aspect of your care beyond the need for health can be provided along with all treatment options and their risks and benefits.
Can I get a scale and polish?	No. This has been removed by Welsh Government and is no longer funded. If you have a need for gum care, this will be undertaken by our therapy team on the NHS but is determined during your assessment.	You are welcome to book a hygiene appointment with our Dental Hygiene Team for a full scale and polish. You can be a NHS patient and you do not need to be seen by a dentist for a referral to a hygienist.
How much does my treatment cost?	Your treatment is heavily subsidised by the NHS. Fees are set out each April by NHS Wales. They are displayed on our website and in our practice. If the required treatment is complex it may need more than one Course of Treatment/fee. If you are eligible for free NHS treatment then you must provide proof of exemption.	Private treatment fees are set by Ruabon Road Dental Practice and are reviewed annually. They can be viewed on our website and are also displayed in practice. Your treatment cost and payment timescales will be agreed and signed off in your Treatment Plan.
Which option is best for me?	NHS is a great service to provide a broad assessment of your dental risks and need. It will address any issues with the simplest and most cost-effective way to achieve health. If you don't mind who you see and perhaps waiting for care, this might suit you.	Private care is designed to provide comprehensive assessment and treatment options for patients to make the best choices for their care. It is not in competition with NHS care and can be delivered alongside it. If you want a comprehensive dental care package, choose Private.

