



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1512
Ein cyf/Our ref JMHSC/01231/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair
Petitions Committee

03 June 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 2 May about Petition P-06-1512: Call on the Welsh Government to recognise and address the dental crisis facing patients in Wales.

I want to be clear that I, and my predecessors, have acknowledged that access to dentistry is not where we and the public want it to be. We have also acknowledged that the issue is more pronounced in some parts of Wales and there is no quick fix.

We are committed to whole-system reform in NHS dentistry. We are embedding the principals of prudent healthcare by moving away from the much-criticised Units of Dental Activity (UDA) model and reorientating NHS dentistry towards prevention and providing care on a risk and needs basis. By doing so, I believe we will increase quality of care and access for patients.

We have launched a consultation on proposals for a new NHS dental contract. This comes after 13 months of detailed discussions with the dental profession's representatives and the NHS to shape those proposals. Concluding this process and implementing a new NHS dental contract is the most important step we can take to ensure the provision of NHS dental services is attractive to the profession and therefore sustainable for the long term.

We have also recognised that people are experiencing difficulties accessing NHS dentistry if they do not have an ongoing relationship with an NHS dentist. Since April 2022, dental practices have been offered a variation to their existing contract, which includes the requirement to provide treatment to new patients. This has enabled more than 400,000 new patients to receive a full course of NHS dental treatment.

Finding a practice that is accepting new NHS patients is also an issue we are working to resolve. We have developed an all-Wales system to enable people to register their interest in receiving NHS dental care. This will provide health boards with a clear understanding of need in their area and enable them to manage the allocation of people to dental practices as capacity becomes available. It also removes the need for people to have to ring around

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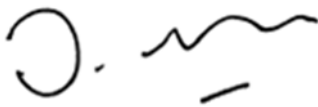
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

practices to find an NHS dentist. People can register their details on the Denal Access Portal by following this link: [Dental Access Portal - Digital Health and Care Wales](#)

Finally, seeing a dentist will not prevent oral cancer. Stopping smoking and reducing alcohol intake are the key actions people can take to reduce their risk of getting oral cancer. It is important people are able to access a dental examination when they suspect something might be wrong. Although oral cancer can sometimes be picked up by a dentist, we do not routinely screen for most cancers, indeed there is no recognised screening process for oral cancers. If a patient suspects they have symptoms of oral cancer they should get an urgent appointment with a dentist or their GP. If a person is concerned about anything in their mouth, urgent care is available either through their regular dentist or through the NHS 111 service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a wavy line and a short horizontal stroke.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care