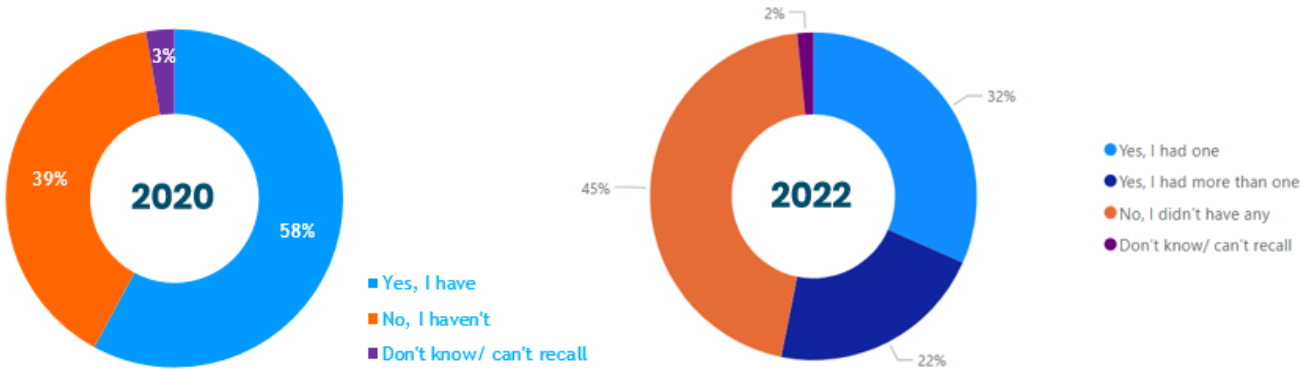


Key findings from Healthwatch England’s national dental polling in 2022

The poll of 2,026 adults (aged 18+) based in England was carried out by Yonder Data Solutions, February 2022.

1. Access to NHS dentist appointments is closer to pre-pandemic levels overall and some even managed to get more than one dentist appointment.



Charts showing the proportion of people who had or didn't have an NHS dentist appointment in the last two years in 2020 (figure on the left; N=1,878) and 2022 (figure on the right; N=2,026). Nearly 3 in 5 people (58%) in 2020 had had an NHS dentist appointment in the previous two years. In 2022, the figure is at 54%, and more than 1 in 5 (22%) reported to see a dentist more than once.

2. Even though access rates have improved, people still found it difficult to book appointments and get all the treatment they needed. This was despite going to the dentist more than once.

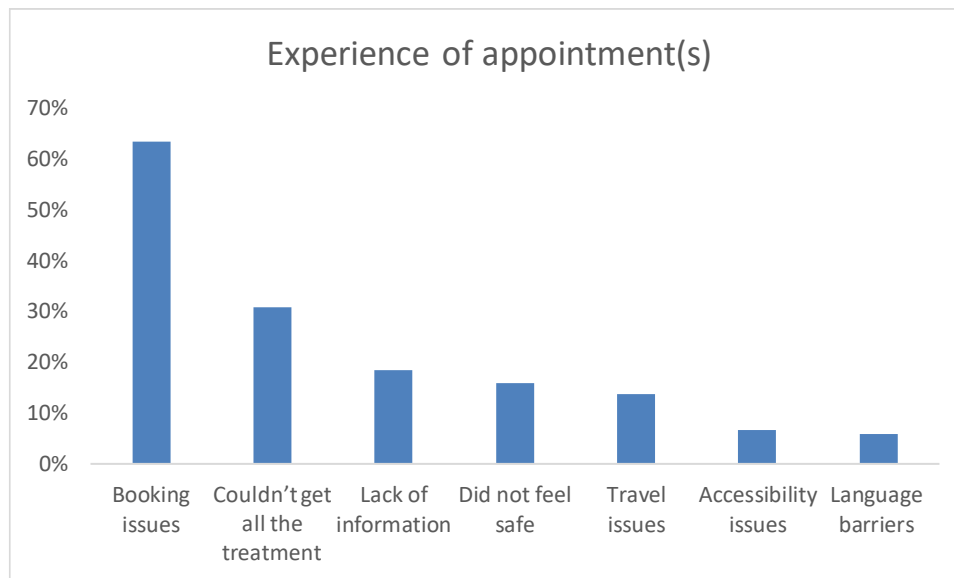
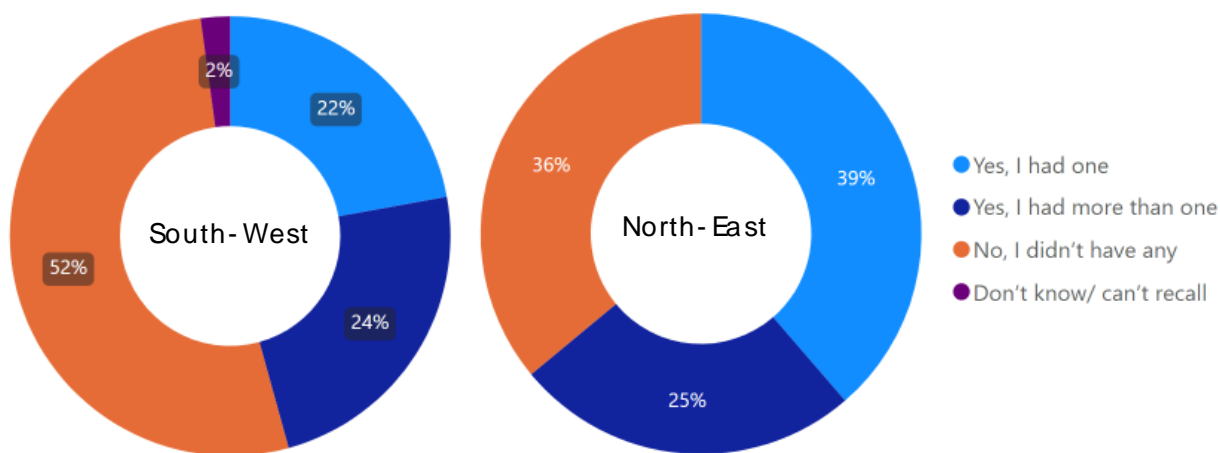
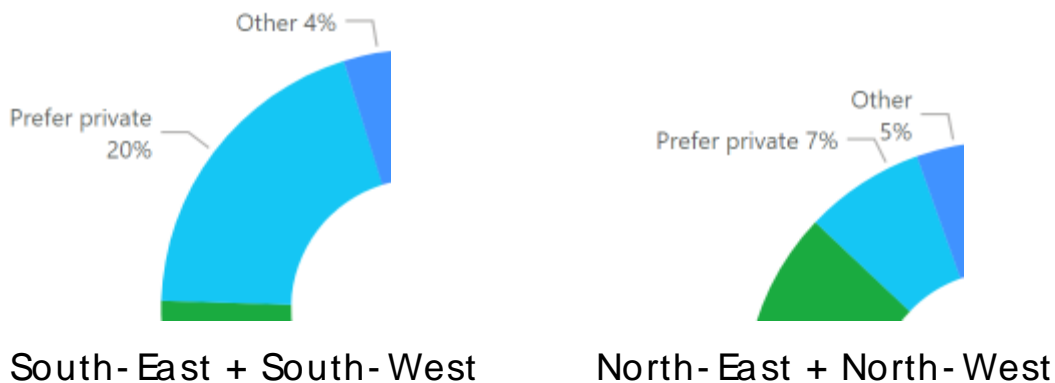


Chart showing the experiences of people who had one/more than one NHS dentist appointment in the last two years and had a problem during their appointment (N=579). More than 3 in 5 people (63%) said they found it difficult to book the appointment(s), and more than 3 in 10 (31%) said that they couldn't get all the treatment they needed from their appointment(s).

3. People accessing NHS dentistry is the lowest in the South-West, with more people going private in the region. However, it is not an option for many living in the North where a few say they prefer private care, highlighting a regional disparity.



Charts showing that fewer people living in the South-West (N=140) of the country had an NHS dentist appointment compared with those living in the North-East (N=75). More than 1 in 2 people (52%) from the South-West said they didn't have any NHS dentist appointment in the last two years. The figure was 4 in 11 (36%) for those living in the North-East.



The sections of two charts highlight the greater preference for private care in the south of the country, compared with the north. The figure on the left shows that 1 in 5 people (20%), who did not have an appointment, living in either the South-East or the South-West (N=208) prefer private dentistry. However, it was 1 in 14 (7%) for those who either live in the North-East or the North-West of the country (N=147), as shown in the figure on the right.

4. Some felt pressured to pay privately and ended up paying private fees. Others said they were charged more for the treatments than the advertised NHS charges or charged extra for PPE.

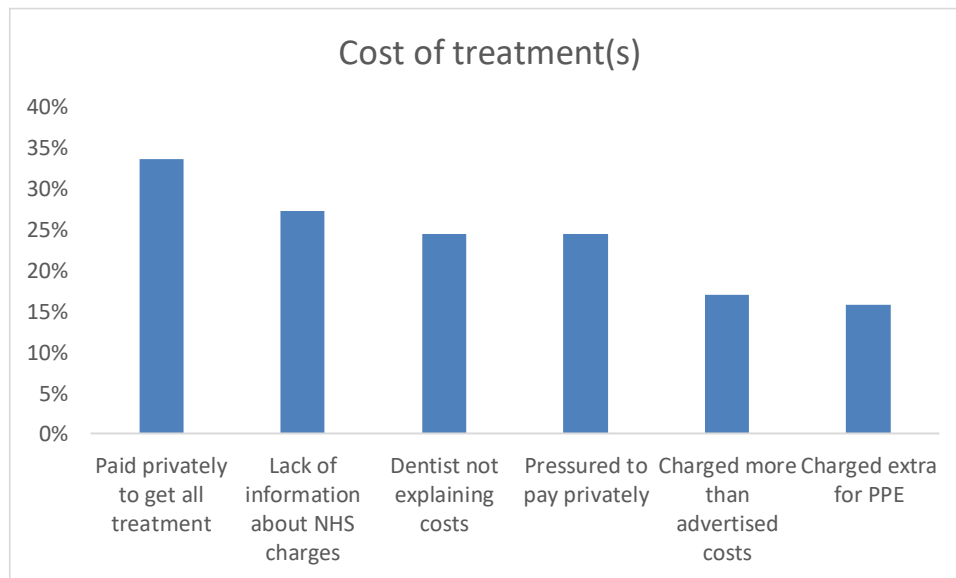


Chart showing what people thought about the costs of their NHS dental treatment in the last two years (N= 499). Nearly 1 in 4 people (24%) said that their dentist did not explain the costs before starting their treatment. Similar numbers (24%) reported that they felt pressured to pay private fees to access treatment. More than 3 in 9 (34%) of those who had an NHS dentist appointment said that they had to pay privately in order to get all the treatment they needed.

5. When people couldn't access NHS dental care, they had to put up with the problems they had. For some, it became more serious, while for others, it impacted on their health and wellbeing.

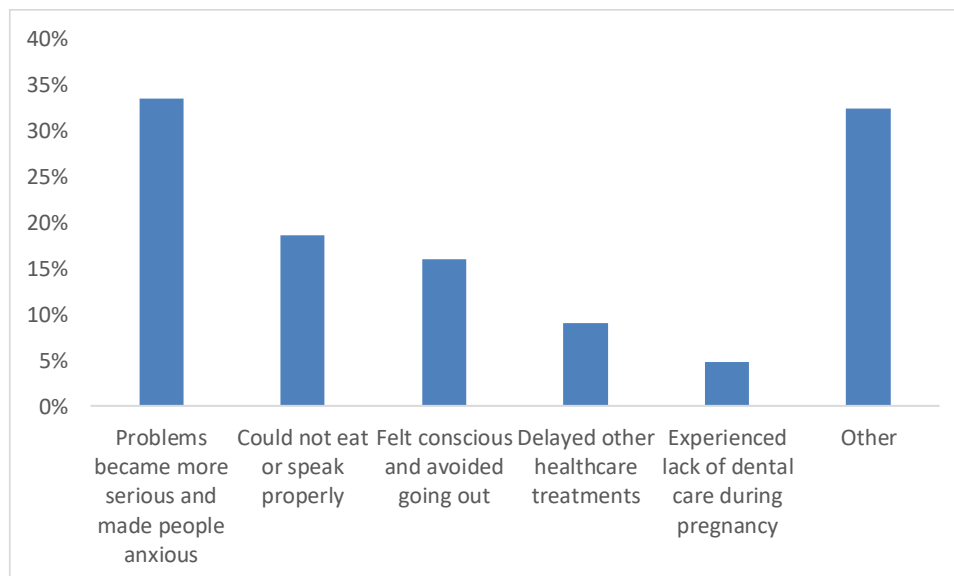
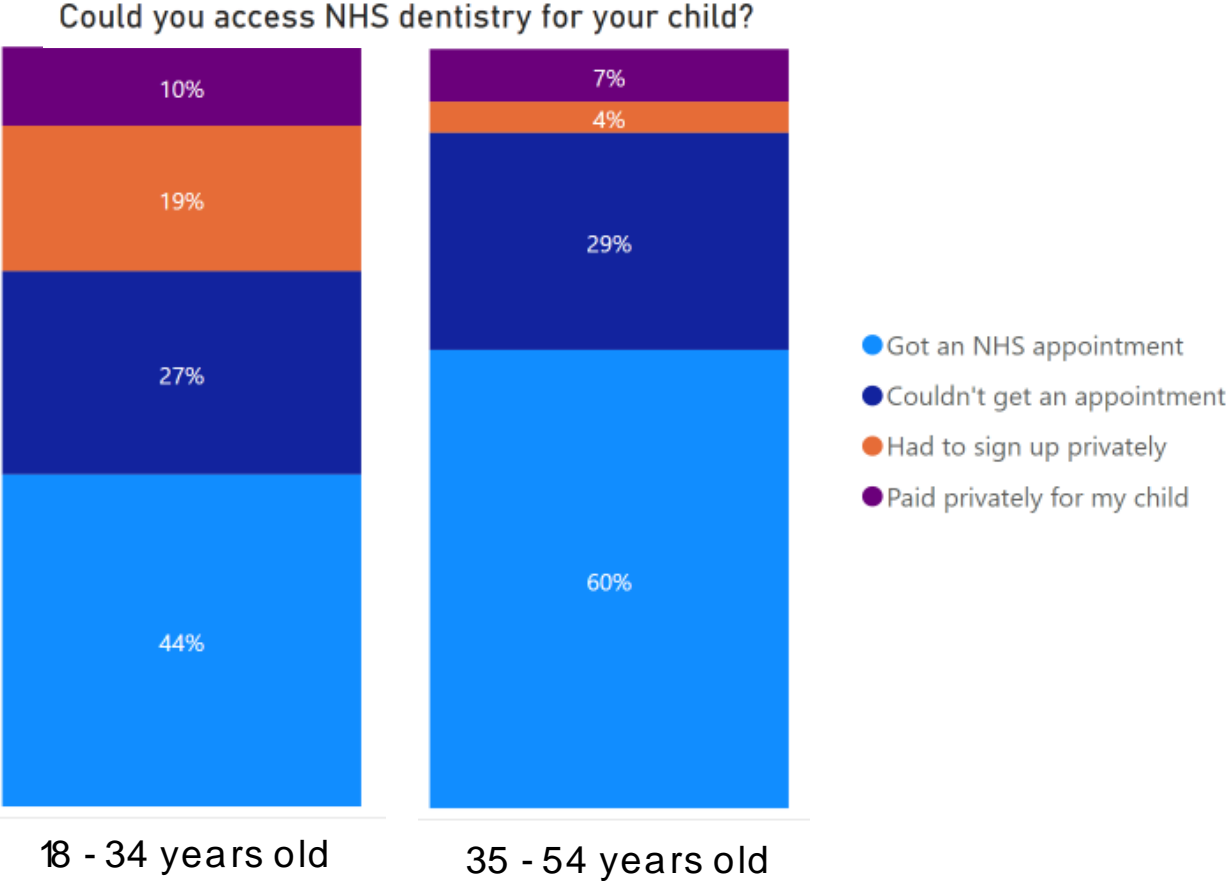


Chart showing the impact of lack of access to NHS dentistry (N= 188). More than 3 in 9 (34%) said that their problems became more serious which made them anxious. And it impacted people's health and wellbeing as more than 2 in 5 people (44%), who couldn't access NHS dental care, said they either couldn't eat or speak properly, or avoided going out because they were conscious about their teeth, or their other healthcare treatments got delayed because they couldn't get their teeth checked on time.

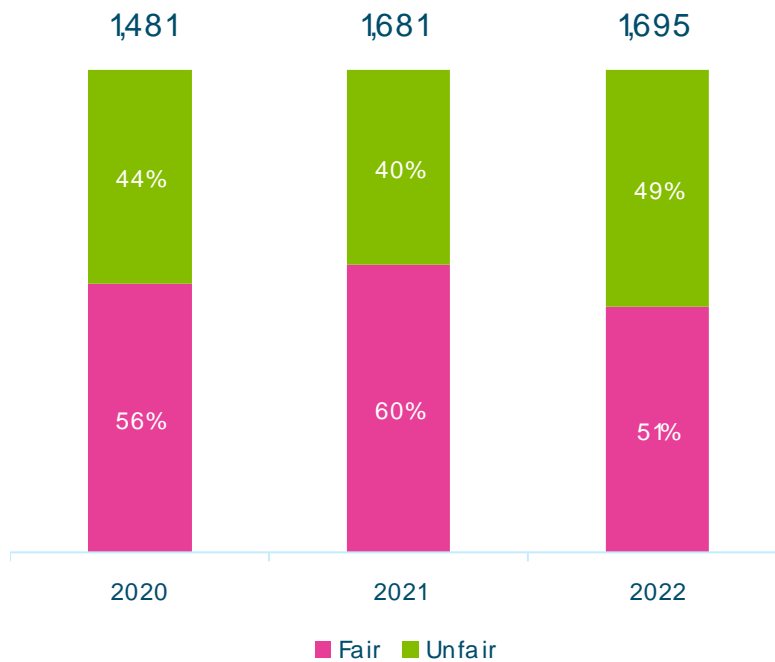
6. Some parents, especially those from younger age groups and those from minority ethnicities, had to sign-up privately in order to access NHS dental care for their children.



Charts showing that nearly 1 in 5 (19%) younger parents (18 - 34 years old; N= 183) said that they could get NHS dental care for their child only after they signed-up as a private patient with the dentist. The rate was nearly a fifth at 1 in 25 (4%) for parents aged between 35-54 years (N=318). It is also interesting to note that older parents were more successful in getting an NHS dentist appointment for their child as compared with the younger parents (60% vs 44%).

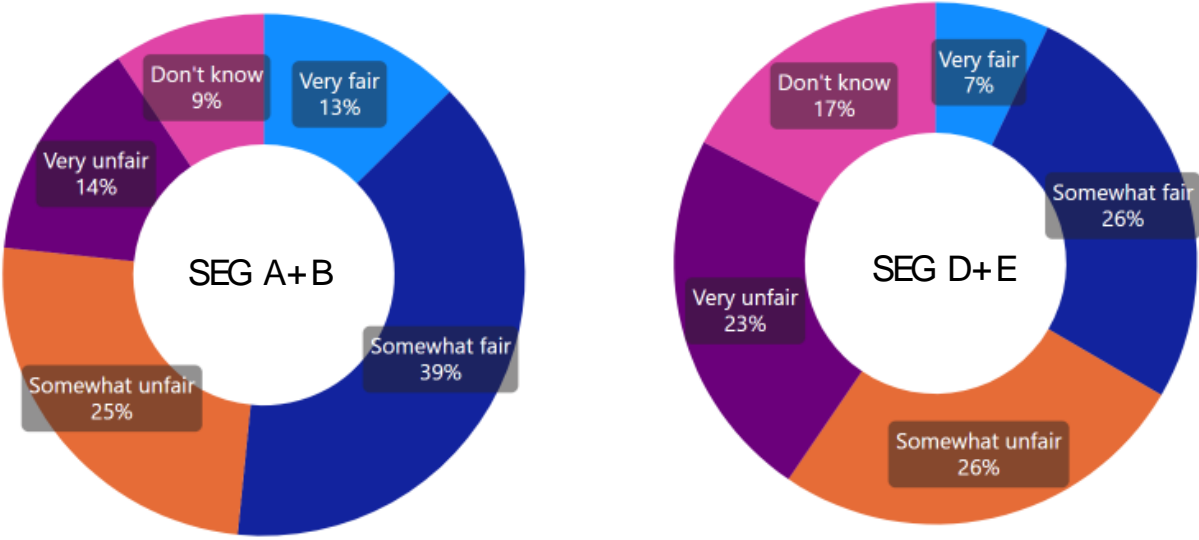
7. More people in 2022 think that NHS dental charges are unfair compared to the last two years.

Opinion about NHS dental charges



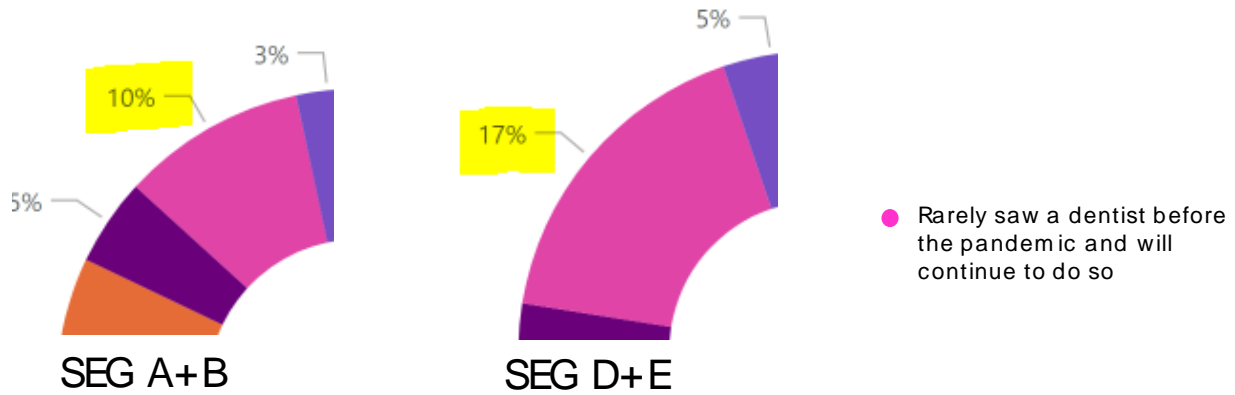
Charts showing that almost 1 in 2 people (49%) in 2022, who had an opinion about NHS dental charges, felt that NHS dental charges are unfair. It is higher than the figures we saw in 2020 and 2021. The figures above each column represents the number of people who answered the question “Generally speaking, how fair or unfair do you think NHS dental charges are?” as either fair or unfair.

8. People from lower SEG grades are more likely to think that NHS dental charges are unfair and less likely to see a dentist compared with people from higher grades.



Charts comparing how people from different SEG grades think about NHS dental charges. The chart on the left shows that more than half of people (52%) from SEG grades A and B feel that NHS dental charges are fair (N=690). On the contrary, the chart on the right shows that only 1 in 3 people (33%) from SEG D and E think the same (N=410). Moreover, while only 1 in 7 people (14%) from SEG AB

think that the charges are very unfair, the figure goes up to nearly a quarter (23%) for those from SEG DE.



Charts comparing the habits of people from different SEG grades when it comes to seeing a dentist regularly. The highlighted figure on the left shows that 1 in 10 people (10%) from SEG AB (N=749) said that they rarely saw a dentist before the pandemic and will continue to do so. In comparison, the figures are 1 in 6 (17%) for those who are from SEG DE (N=423).