

Record number of 111 calls for dental problems shows desperate state of NHS dentistry

Nearly five million people called NHS 111 for dental problems in the last five years as millions of patients have nowhere else to turn.

The crisis in NHS dentistry has been laid bare by new data acquired from the Government by the Labour Party, which shows 111 calls made this year for dental problems are at a record high, at over 1.2 million.

Data show a whopping 3,327 calls a day were made on average for the year 2023/4 compared to 2,024 calls made in 2019/20. These sky-high figures even trump the number of 111 calls made during the pandemic (1.1 million in 2020/1), when patients could not see an NHS dentist.

Over the last five years, just shy of 4.8 million calls were made to 111 about dental problems. Many people who ring 111 call with issues that are classified by the NHS as 'urgent', like severe dental pain.

These figures expose the consequences of being unable to access an NHS dental appointment after 14 years of Conservative government. The crisis in NHS dentistry is well-documented, with 8 out of 10 dental practices no longer accepting new NHS patients and 1 in 10 people having been forced to attempt their own dental work. As people are unable to access dental care, their symptoms deteriorate, and they are forced to rely on emergency services once their condition has significantly worsened.

Preet Kaur Gill MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Primary Care and Public Health Secretary, said: 'The sky-rocketing number of 111 calls shows the Tories' destruction on NHS dentistry is putting the rest of the NHS under greater pressure.'

'After 14 years of Tory neglect, patients are desperately queuing around the block to see a dentist, literally pulling their own

teeth out, and tooth decay is the number one reason young children are admitted to hospital. It's time for a change.

'Labour has a plan to rescue NHS dentistry, and reform it for the long run. We will fund 700,000 extra urgent appointments a year; deliver a targeted recruitment scheme for dentists in left-behind areas; and we will get straight to work on reforming the outdated NHS dental contract.'



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Date for the diary

Setting up a dental practice

What: A practical guide to setting up a new practice

When: Friday 28 June 2024

Where: BDA, London

6 hours CPD

Prices:

→ Member - £295

→ Non member - £395

→ DCP - £245.

For further information and how to book, visit: www.bda.org/learning-and-development/courses-and-events/setting-up-a-dental-practice-a-practical-guide-to-setting-up-your-own-dental-practice/.



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Annual report delivers 'resilient performance' in challenging market

The 2023 annual report from Dentists' Provident has revealed it distributed £7.5 million as bonuses to its members and paid £5.2 million in claims last year.

In 2023, the Society paid out sickness claims of £5.2million, with a new claims to paid ratio of 99%. The number of COVID-19 related claims fell significantly bringing sickness claims back in line with where we were before the pandemic.

The Society's interest and loyalty bonus rates remain unchanged and the mutualty dividend for Income Security Plan holders rising by 11%.

Giles Kidner, Chairman of Dentists' Provident, said: 'Dentists' Provident has skilfully navigated a challenging year and I am very pleased with these results. Our continued strength lies in putting our members at the heart of everything we do and doing what is right, not only for our current membership, but also for future generations.'

Farrukh Mirza, CEO of Dentists' Provident, added: 'We manage our business conservatively. Our solvency position remains strong and we have worked hard to keep our costs under control despite inflationary pressures and without compromising our service or the quality of our plans.'

The annual report, will be presented for approval at the Annual General Meeting. This will be held at Dentists' Provident's head office on Friday 24 May 2024, where all members are invited to have their say on important matters affecting their Society.

To find out more or read the full 2023 Annual Report visit: <https://www.dentistsprovident.co.uk/media/1865/annual-report-2023.pdf>



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