

## Update

We would like to reassure all our patients that we are open but still restricted and what we can do in practice at the moment and how many patients we can see in a day. Dentists need to prioritise patients who are in pain so we have emergency appointments/review appointments and treatment appointments (aerosol procedures using the drill, air or water). We are hoping the guidelines will change soon and we can book patients back in for routine check-up appointments and we will be in touch with patients as soon as we can do this.

If you have a dental emergency (severe pain or swelling), please give us a call during opening hours and a member of the team will be able to assist you if it's out with or working hours please call NHS 24 on 111, If you have concerns about an area in your mouth please call the practice during our opening hours and the receptionist will speak to the dentist and you will be called back by the dentist or receptionist with an appointment.

We only have two dentist working each day the moment so we can maximise the use of all the surgeries as after any treatment appointment we need to close the surgery down for 30 minutes to fallow before the staff can re-enter to clean the surgery.

With patient and staff safety being our number one priority, we have introduced new measures we have now put in place at our practices.

- Appointments are booking to ensure that the practice is not overcrowded making sure that patients can attend the practice while maintaining a safe distance from one another in accordance with government guidelines.
- Where possible, you will receive a link by email or text to confirm your appointment and to fill in all relevant forms online from a computer or mobile phone. This means that you will not have to touch a pen, paper when you attend your appointment. This crucial step greatly reduces touch points at the practice. You will find you will keep getting reminders up to your appointment even if you have completed your forms this is in case any circumstances change and you need to update anything on your forms, if nothing has changed you do not need to update anything when you receive the reminder forms. If you are unable to complete the forms online don't worry we will be able to give you paper copies and the pens and clipboard will have been wiped clean before you use them.
- We have created hygiene stations for all of our patients to use when entering and exiting the practice and dental surgeries.
- We have plastic boxes at reception for outdoor coats and bags and they are kept safe at reception when you are in the surgery seeing the dentist or hygienist and are cleaned after each patient has used them so they are ready for the next patient.
- When patients need treatment the dentist and nurse need to wear different PPE they have to wear surgical gowns, different masks to allow them to complete treatments, visors & gloves, treatments appointments have to be planned as they are not allowed to open any drawers or cupboards during treatment and appointments are booked in for longer. Dentist are only allowed to do 5 treatment appointments each day.

- Between all appointments the dental team will thoroughly disinfect the dental surgery, reducing the risk of patient exposure to anything harmful while they are in the chair and at the end of our day all areas get a deep clean. Please don't feel overwhelmed by these changes, they have been put in place to ensure our patients and staff are as safe as possible.
- Opening Hours at the moment Monday - Thursday 9am – 4pm, Friday 9am – 3pm and close each day 12.15 – 12.45 for lunch

## New patients

Unfortunately due to the guidelines at the moment we are still unable to see new patients but if you have been added to our system we will be in touch to make an appointment as soon as our guidance has been updated or if you would like to be added to our system please complete the contact/new patient enquiry section on our website and we can add you to the system and send a link for the other forms and as soon as we can see new patients we will be back in touch.



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Letter to all people in receipt of NHS Dental Care in Lothian

Dear NHS patient,

### Delivery of NHS dental care

You will be aware that the Scottish Government moved the population of Edinburgh and the Lothians to level zero in terms of their Coronavirus Protection Levels on the 19<sup>th</sup> July. This has resulted in further easing of restrictions in both private and public settings, and I am writing to you about dental care in this context.

The change to level zero has had no effect in terms of the current infection prevention and control measures that dentists are required to take when delivering dental treatment. These preventative measures are designed to protect both the public and the dental team from proliferation of the virus as a result of dental treatment. When dentists work in your mouth they often create fine sprays or aerosols of water and saliva which can carry the virus and potentially support its spread from one person to another (in the same way a cough or sneeze can). As a result dental teams continue to work under very strict protocol to prevent viral transmission that in turn mean that the dentist can see fewer people in a given time period.

Scottish Government has tasked all NHS dentists with prioritising the care they can deliver in this situation to ensure that people are not experiencing pain and discomfort first, and also to prioritise those people for care for whom a dental infection might make another health condition worse. Any remaining capacity can then be used to address more general patient needs.

This will mean that some of the routine care you were used to prior to the pandemic may not be available from your practice at present, or may occur with reduced frequency, so for example a dental check which you used to have every 6 months may now take place at 12 or more monthly intervals unless you are experiencing pain or discomfort.

Please be assured that your dentist and their team are doing their best to see as many people as they can and resolve as many problems as they can while working in very difficult conditions.

Yours sincerely

Angus Walls