



ORAL  
HEALTH  
SERVICE  
Lothian



23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021

Angus Walls,  
Director of Dentistry

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

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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 means 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.

Vours sincerely

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Angus Walls