

**North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Verne Road Dental Practice: Briefing for stakeholders**

28 August 2025

We are aware that many patients at Verne Road Dental Practice are worried following the letter they have received from the practice.

This is a difficult time for the practice, as three members of the dental team have left in the past two months. This has affected the practice's capacity to care for its usual number of patients.

We wish to provide as much clarity and reassurance as possible for patients, and our dental team has been working with the provider to understand the issues and offer support.

The practice has not asked to end its contract, and it remains an NHS service provider. Our dental team works hard to help stabilise practices when they face challenges, and we are linking with the team at Verne Road to urgently clarify what they can provide and the scale of their contract in the future.

In the meantime, the providers have assured us that they will continue to provide NHS treatment for patients within their available NHS workforce capacity, prioritising patients based on clinical need.

They have also assured us that access to NHS care for children will not be restricted to those whose parents sign up to a private dental plan, and have asked us to apologise on their behalf for any confusion and anxiety their statement may have caused.

We know that it is difficult to access routine NHS dental services right now, for most patient groups. The situation in North Tyneside is similar to the rest of the country, with difficulties recruiting and retaining dentists and the wider dental workforce, and many dentists struggling to afford the costs of delivering NHS services under the current national regulatory framework.

Here in the North East and North Cumbria, we are working to make it easier to get a routine dental access appointment while we await much-needed national dental system reforms. This includes increasing the rate we pay to dentists to deliver NHS dental care, offering practices the chance to be paid to deliver more than their contracted level of activity, and targeting funding to areas where NHS services have been lost.

Due to the lack of access to routine care, as an interim measure, we are seeking to improve access to urgent dental care in order to keep patients safe. This includes building a network of Urgent Dental Access Centres to treat patients with the greatest clinical needs, and providing additional in-hours urgent care appointments where available via our local incentivised access scheme.

In addition, we have secured more out of hours appointments and strengthened the out of hours dental clinical assessment and triage workforce within the NHS 111 service.

On a national level, the Department for Health and Social Care is [currently consulting on proposed interim changes](#) to the NHS dental contract in line with the government's 10 year plan. This includes improving the way dental services are funded and developing new clinical pathways that integrate prevention and treatment.

Patients who have been affected by Verne Road Dental Practice's decision can find details of local NHS dentists at nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist. The latest advice and guidance is available [on the ICB's website](#), where you can also find details of [our plans to improve access](#) while we await national dental reform.