



## **Communications script for NHS dental practices**

Practices are welcome to use the suggested scripts below. Please note that these are correct as of **Friday 16 July 2021**.

### **Key messages to communicate to patients:**

- When you come into the surgery for an appointment, please remember that social distancing remains in place in the dental practice and you will need to wear a face mask upon entering the practice.
- This is because the Government's latest COVID-19 guidance states, "*Health and care settings will continue to maintain appropriate infection prevention and control processes*".
- The infection control process for dentistry have not changed with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.
- It's very important we continue to follow this guidance as we are a healthcare setting, and we are doing everything we can to ensure your safety when you come to the practice.
- Every dental practice is working extremely hard to provide care to our patients within the restrictions and guidance.
- All NHS dental practices are following the guidance, and private dental practices are recommended to follow by the health regulator, the Care Quality Commission.
- Similar public health measures are still in place for hospitals and GP practices, too.
- If you would like further information, we can send you copies of the guidance we are working to [see email below].

### **Suggested website or social media post:**

Title: An update on NHS dental services at our practice

As you will know, the Prime Minister has confirmed that public restrictions [will/have] [be/en] significantly eased on 19th July.

Under the Government's guidance "*Health and care settings will continue to maintain appropriate infection prevention and control processes as necessary and this will be continually reviewed. Guidance will be updated based on the latest clinical evidence this summer.*" You can find this online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/covid-19-response-summer-2021#contents>

In line with the Government's guidance, England's Chief Dental Officer Sara Hurley has informed us that the infection prevention control measures in dentistry should continue to be followed until further notice. These are important measures from Public Health England aimed at limiting the spread of the virus in dental settings. We're also continuing to follow NHS dentistry's standard operating procedure which helps us make this guidance work.

This means three things for patients:

1. If you need to come into the surgery for an appointment, please remember that social distancing remains in place in the dental practice and to wear a face covering upon entering the building.
2. We will continue to have restrictions on leaving time between patients to ventilate rooms if we perform an aerosol generating procedure. An aerosol generating

procedure (AGP) is a medical procedure that can result in the release of airborne particles (aerosols) from the respiratory tract when treating someone who is suspected or known to be suffering from an infectious agent transmitted wholly or partly by the airborne or droplet route. In dentistry, for example, this means the use of something like a high speed drill. This impacts how many patients we can fit into a working day.

3. We are also following the Chief Dental Officer's advice that we should prioritise patients for treatment based on urgency and priority groups, such as those more at risk of dental disease or children.

Similar public health measures are still in place for hospitals and GP practices, too.

Every dental practice is working extremely hard to provide care to our patients within the restrictions and guidance to ensure it's safe to visit the dentist.

We hope that this helps clarify why these measures are in place for every NHS dental practice.

Please do give us a call if you think you need to see us, we're open for patients .

Best wishes,

[insert practice]

**Suggested answer machine message:**

Thank you for calling [insert practice name].

We are here to help you.

Our opening hours are [insert]

If you need urgent dental care that cannot wait, please call NHS 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk

In line with official government advice, including after 19 July 2021, public health measures remain in place in health care settings, including dental practices. If you need to come into the surgery for an appointment, please remember that social distancing remains in place in the dental practice and to bring a face covering with you. Under advice from the NHS and the Chief Dental Officer, all NHS dental practices are treating patients in order of clinical priority, so we can see the sickest patients first.

**Suggested pre-appointment text message script:**

Dear [patient name], your appointment is on [insert date and time]. In line with official public health advice there are measures in dental surgeries to limit the spread of COVI-19, including after 19 July. These include social distancing and patients wearing a face covering. Please remember to bring your face covering with you. Best wishes, [insert practice].

**Suggested email script following patient query of public health measures:**

Dear XXX,

Thank you for your email regarding the public health measures in our dental practice. We would like to reassure you that it is safe to visit the dental practice and we are doing all we can to ensure our surgery offers the very best care and support, in the most safe and convenient way possible.

As you will know, the Prime Minister has confirmed that public restrictions [will/have] [be/en] significantly eased on 19th July. It should be noted that the Government's 'COVID-19 Response: Summer 2021' guidance states *"Health and care settings will continue to maintain appropriate infection prevention and control processes as necessary and this will be continually reviewed. Guidance will be updated based on the latest clinical evidence this summer."* You can find this online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/covid-19-response-summer-2021#contents>

In line with the Government's announcement, England's Chief Dental Officer Sara Hurley has informed us that the infection prevention control measures in dentistry should continue to be followed until further notice. We're also continuing to follow NHS dentistry's standard operating procedure which helps us make this guidance work.

These measures include restrictions on leaving time between patients to ventilate rooms if we perform an aerosol generating procedure. An aerosol generating procedure (AGP) is a medical procedure that can result in the release of airborne particles (aerosols) from the respiratory tract when treating someone who is suspected or known to be suffering from an infectious agent transmitted wholly or partly by the airborne or droplet route. In dentistry, for example, this means the use of something like a high speed drill. This does have an impact on how many patients we can fit into a working day.

The measures also include the need for patients to socially distance in the waiting room and wear a face covering. The full guidance can be found online and the measures for patients are on page 6:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/965686/Infection\\_prevention\\_and\\_control\\_guidance\\_Dental\\_appendix\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965686/Infection_prevention_and_control_guidance_Dental_appendix_.pdf)

As a dental practice, we are regulated by the Care Quality Commission, which can assess us on the extent to which we are providing an appropriate level of safety within the context of this guidance. You can find the regulator's statement online here:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/dentists/current-position-dental-care-services-regarding-covid-19-updates>

We are also following the Chief Dental Officer's advice that we should prioritise patients for treatment based on urgency or if they are a priority group, such as those more at risk of dental disease or children.

Similar public health measures are still in place for hospitals and GP practices, too. Every dental practice is working extremely hard to provide care to our patients within the restrictions and guidance.

We hope that this helps clarify why these measures are in place for every NHS dental practice.

**ENDS.**