



# Caring for Smiles

A guide to dental services, treatment charges and exemptions for care home residents

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# Introduction

A clean, healthy mouth is fundamental to everybody's quality of life. Caring for Smiles is the oral health training and support programme designed to help care home staff provide the best day-to-day oral care to residents and help prevent oral diseases and conditions. However, there will be times when residents will need professional care from the dental team.

This guide is intended to give care home managers, staff and residents' families the essential information to help them ensure residents receive the most appropriate and timely dental treatment from the dental service that is best suited to their needs.

It explains the differences between the types of dental services available in Scotland and includes information on the role of the NHS Public Dental Service (previously known as the Community or Salaried Dental Service). There is a section on what care homes should do when a resident needs to see a dentist and another on the dental charges and exemptions most likely to apply to residents. An explanation of the forms and exemption certificates is included, as is information on automated checks conducted by NHS Counter Fraud Services.

Residents who are not registered with a dentist should contact their local NHS helpline for more information on appropriate dental services in their area.

This guide is intended for guidance only; the information contained within is subject to change and should not be considered binding.

# Types of dental service

The main types of dental services are:

- **General Dental Service (GDS):** commonly known as the ‘high street dentist’. Most GDS dentists carry out a mixture of NHS and private work and may also provide additional services. Not all available treatments are provided by the NHS so some options may need to be paid for privately.
- **NHS Public Dental Service (PDS):** previously known as the Community and/or Salaried Dental Services. The PDS provides general dental services and sometimes additional services including specialist treatments for people with additional needs. This service may also act as a temporary safety-net service for people who are not registered with a GDS dentist. Some PDS dentists work within hospital clinics.

NHS treatment carried out by either the General Dental Service or the Public Dental Service will provide the treatment that the patient requires to secure their oral and dental health.

- **Private-only dental services:** dental practices that offer privately funded treatment only.

Residents of care homes may use any, or a combination, of these services. Although the *National Care Standards Care Homes for Older People*<sup>1</sup> (which is currently under ongoing review with an anticipated completion date of 2017) states that a resident has a right to remain with their preferred dentist, this applies only if both parties agree. Some GDS dentists will continue to provide a service to a person once they become resident in a home, but others may not be in a position to do this. A resident’s circumstances or needs may mean that a referral to the PDS for some or all of their treatment is advisable, as this service can often provide the additional support and specialist care that residents may require. Unless exempt, NHS patients contribute towards the cost of their dental care. The same charges and exemptions apply whether treatment is provided by a GDS dentist or the PDS (see page 5 for more information).

1. Scottish Government. *National Care Standards Care Homes for Older People*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government; 2007.

# When a resident needs dental care

## Attending a dental clinic

### Routine care (pre-arranged appointments)

If the resident is able, it is best that they attend a local dental clinic for routine or planned appointments. For any treatment, a medical history will be required. Please ensure the resident is either able to complete a medical history or that the person accompanying them has this information. The resident or accompanying staff or family member should bring:

- full medical history including list of medications and any allergies
- name and contact details of resident's GP
- next of kin contact details
- contact details of any person acting on behalf of the resident, e.g. continuing or welfare power of attorney or a nominated guardian
- DNA CPR (do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation) order if in place.

It is helpful to take evidence of exemption status (e.g. HC2 or HC3 certificates or a copy of a resident's Pension Credit–Guarantee Credit award letter). If this is lost contact **0345 606 0265**.

### Dental emergencies

What is considered to be a dental emergency:

- severe pain that cannot be controlled with ordinary painkillers
- swelling that makes it difficult for a person to breathe or swallow
- bleeding that will not stop after a tooth has been taken out
- an injury to the mouth.

If a resident is experiencing a dental emergency:

**During clinic opening hours:** if the resident is registered with a General Dental Practitioner, the NHS Public Dental Service or a private dentist, and the emergency is during regular opening hours, contact the practice as early in the day as possible. If the resident is not registered then contact the dental helpline in your area (see page 9).

**Outside clinic opening hours:** if a resident has a dental emergency out of hours, first contact their registered practice as most will provide automated advice on what to do in an emergency. If you are unable to access this information contact **NHS24** on **111** (free) or visit **www.nhs24.com**. It is helpful to have a pen and paper to hand to note any information given.

## Domiciliary dental care

Some dental services will provide a domiciliary visit to a person's home (this includes care homes) if the person is especially frail and/or has significant medical or mental health problems that would make it particularly difficult for them to attend a clinic. However, because of limitations in infection control, patient safety and transportation of equipment, the treatment that can be provided within a domiciliary visit is very limited. The dentist may decide that the dental treatment can only be completed within a clinic.

If a resident with mobility limitations does require treatment in the clinic and is unable to use a taxi, handicab service or family-provided transport, ambulance transport may be available.

## Dental charges and exemptions

There is often confusion over dental charges and exemptions for care home residents. The exemption status with regard to dental charges depends on which benefits the person (and their partner) receives, **not on a person's age**. Residents in receipt of the relevant benefits will be either fully or partially exempt from NHS charges, but others will have to pay. Residents who previously received their treatment free of charge from the Community Dental Service may now find they need to pay towards their treatment. Those who are not exempt will pay 80% of the cost of their treatment up to a set maximum per course of treatment (£384 at spring 2015).

For more comprehensive information on all NHS charges and exemptions see the online document HCS1, *Are You Entitled to Help with Health Costs?*

[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)  
(search for 'Help with health costs Scotland')

This gives full details of exemptions for optician charges and hospital travel costs in addition to dental costs for all age groups.

Alternatively, call NHS Help with Health Costs on **0300 330 1343**.



## Exemptions from dental charges

The benefits that will most likely apply to people living in care homes:

- being in receipt of Pension Credit–Guarantee Credit
- being named on a valid HC2 certificate (see page 9).

Other examples of when residents would receive free treatment include:

- when the treatment starts they are a hospital inpatient
- if their dentist refers them to a dental hospital for the treatment
- if they are an NHS hospital dental service outpatient.

Residents may receive only partial exemption if they are named on a valid HC3 certificate (see page 9).

War pensioners may be able to get money back for dental treatment if the treatment, or the reason for travel, is for their pensionable disablement. Contact: The Treatment Group, Veterans Agency, Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3WP.

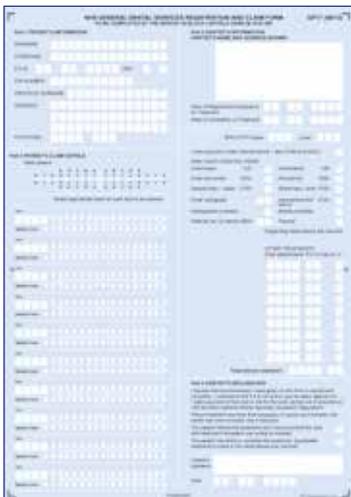
A person (or their partner\*) may also be entitled to free dental treatment if they are:

- in receipt of income support
- in receipt of income-related employment and support allowance
- in receipt of income-based jobseeker's allowance
- entitled to, or named on, a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate.

\*To qualify for free treatment because a partner is in receipt of benefits, it must state on the award letter that the exemption relates to the partner.

# Forms and exemption certificates explained

## GP17 patient declaration form



A GP17 is the blue form that is completed and signed at the beginning and end of treatment on which the person, their guardian or carer states whether the patient pays for treatment or not.

**When a resident is to receive dental treatment, it is very helpful to the dental team if the benefit and exemption status of each resident is established prior to treatment and this information kept on file.**

If the care home manager cannot access this information, then the details of the financial proxy need to be given to the dentist.

If the resident lacks capacity to sign financial or legal documents, the person acting on their behalf with regard to their finances would need to give instruction to the care home. If instruction has been passed to the care home, and the exemption status of the resident is known, care home staff can sign the GP17 on behalf of the resident if required.

## Claim forms

### HC1(SC) Claim for help with health costs – shortened version



This short version was purposely developed for people living permanently in a care home and receiving local authority support. It should be completed to establish whether a resident qualifies for full or partial exemption from NHS charges. A care home manager or member of staff who knows the benefit status of a resident can complete this form on their behalf.

## HC1 Claim for help with health costs – full version

**HC1** **NHS**

**Claim for help with health costs**

Do you find it difficult to pay for health costs?  
You may be entitled to help through the NHS Low Income Scheme

Use this form if you need help with paying for:

- NHS dental treatment
- glasses and contact lenses or
- travel to receive NHS treatment if referred by a doctor (GP or hospital doctor) or dentist.

You might also have to pay, or you could be entitled to some help towards the cost.

You can claim at any time. You don't need to pay your usual fees.

You can claim for:

- yourself
- your partner or
- your children.

If you need help to read this document, about filling in this form, you can check our customer support line on 0800 707 7000. If English is not your first language, about this number, you will provide an interpretation service over the phone.

You do not need to fill in this form if you or your partner are:

- getting income benefits
- getting Pension Credit (Guaranteed Credit)
- getting Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- getting income-related Employment and Support Allowance or
- receiving, or entitled to, an NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate
- getting Universal Credit

You are already entitled to full help with health costs. However, if you need any health costs help and you're getting any of these benefits or you're not, you should still fill in this form. You can claim for dental costs, such as the NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate, and for dental costs that you don't claim for.

You cannot get help with health costs if you or your partner for health costs more than £10,000 in savings, investments or property that generating the income that you claim for. £10,000 in savings, investments or property, if you live permanently in a care home.

**Important note:** If you are living in a care home, or are aged 16 or 17 and have just left a care home, you may be able to use the Short Term HC1 form. Please see customer support line on 0800 707 7000 and we will tell you what to do.

This form should be used for people who are not permanent residents, or for those who do not receive local authority support (for example, if a resident's care home costs are paid for by relatives or a charity).

## HC5 Refund claim form

**HC5** **NHS**

**Claim Form For a Refund of NHS Dental Charges**

Please read this page before filling in this form - it will help you make the claim correctly. This is a support form for adult patients who have paid NHS dental charges or had NHS dental charges paid for them. NHS will only pay you back for completed forms. Before you do this, you must sign and date the declaration.

**NOTE:** The information on this page is for patients who are not entitled to other dental benefits or exemptions. For the purposes of assessing entitlement and processing a successful claim, some information may have to be provided on your return.

**HOW TO CLAIM YOUR CLAIM FORM**

You can claim to claim back the cost of NHS dental treatment. This form should only be used if the dental practice was in England. You have also been in receipt of an NHS dental form (see part 1).

You must pay for NHS dental treatment charges you must pay the dentist's fee (see part 1) for a refund. All fees must be paid when you pay. You can get your fees back when you claim for a refund.

If you have paid for other NHS charges you must use the claim form for the charge you have paid. There is a separate form for each type of charge (see part 1) for the upper cost, HC5/1 for NHS dental costs and HC5/2 for NHS dental treatment charges.

**HOW TO CLAIM FOR SOMEONE ELSE**

If you are filling in this form the someone else is responsible for making an application, you must sign and date the form. They should sign and date their copy of the form.

If someone else is filling in the form for someone with learning difficulties or an illness that prevents them from managing their own affairs, you are responsible for making sure the information is correct. You should sign the form yourself (see part 1).

**TIME LIMIT FOR CLAIMING**

You must ensure that this form is received by the relevant office identified in part 1 within 3 months of the date that you paid the charges. If you make the claim after 3 months, the NHS will not be able to refund the charges. There is a special section for a long time limit to be considered if this can be used with a written explanation with your form.

**SAVE SAVING INFORMATION**

Most dental charges can be found in section HC5/1. There will require dental assistance from any other NHS dental or orthodontic service (including dental surgery or denture repair) also claim them. The health care also include dental care services and dental services. If you have any queries or need help filling in this form you can contact us online or call our customer support line on 0800 707 7000.

This form is used to claim back any NHS dental treatment charges that have already been paid if an HC2 certificate is awarded and payments were made in the previous 3 months.

These forms are available from NHS NSS Practitioner Services on **0131 275 6386**. They may also be available from:

- community pharmacies
- your dentist
- opticians
- your GP
- Citizens Advice Scotland offices
- Caring for Smiles teams.

## Exemption certificates

### HC2 certificate (full exemption)

Following completion of the HC1(SC) or HC1 form, if the person qualifies for full exemption they are given an HC2 exemption certificate. Exemptions are valid for a limited time and need to be reapplied for when out of date.

### HC3 certificate (partial exemption)

Following completion of the HC1(SC) or HC1 form, if the person qualifies for partial exemption they are given an HC3 exemption certificate. Exemptions are valid for a limited time and need to be reapplied for when out of date.

To qualify for full or partial exemption, the course of dental treatment must begin during the period specified on the certificate.

## Exemption checks

To check that people claiming free dental treatment are entitled to the exemption, NHS Counter Fraud Services run automated checks. Older people living in care homes are not exempt from these checks and may receive automated letters if they claim free treatment. If a resident has received such a letter, and this is causing concern, there is a Patient Claims team who can discuss this with you – call **0845 601 2912**.

## Who to call for more information

For the number to ring in your area if a resident needs emergency treatment and is not registered with a dentist, go to **[www.scottishdental.org/public/emergency-dental-services](http://www.scottishdental.org/public/emergency-dental-services)**

For more general advice on dental services available in your area and the Caring for Smiles programme, use the phone number on the back page of this booklet.

If you have any questions regarding the Caring for Smiles programme, contact your local Caring for Smiles team: