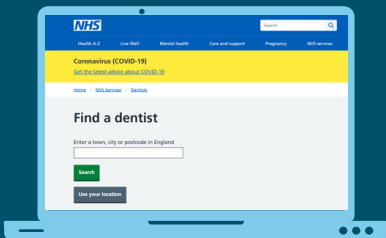# Finding it hard to get a dentist appointment?

Dental practices are recovering from backlogs due to strict hygiene measures to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19 to patients and staff. The situation is improving but we are hearing that Derbyshire residents without a regular dentist are still finding it difficult to get an appointment. Read our steps below on accessing NHS dentistry.

1 If you have a dentist you usually visit phone them to make an appointment. Appointments will be available according to your individual situation and dental need. Be prepared to **wait longer** than usual for a routine, non-urgent appointment. You can also take personal steps to maintain healthy teeth.

2 Unlike registering at a GP practice, NHS dental practices are available to everyone to attend a course of treatment regardless of where they live. Visit the NHS Find a Dentist website to search for a dentist in your area. You should also consider **widening your search area** to where you can travel to.

3 Is your dental need urgent? Phone or go online to NHS 111 to check your symptoms and see if you need urgent help. You will be advised if you need to visit your hospital emergency department (A&E) or advised of your nearest NHS dentists providing urgent appointments. The number of urgent appointments available each day is limited. When phoning a dental practice, clearly describe your symptoms, any pain or swelling and the impact it is having on your daily living.

111

4 If you can't find a dentist for urgent treatment, call NHS England's Customer Contact Centre on 0300 311 2233 stating your situation. Keep sharing your experiences with us, positive and negative, the more information we have the **more we can help**.

What is Healthwatch Rutland doing about this issue? We regularly monitor the access to NHS dentistry in Rutland sharing our findings with dental commissioners to **influence positive change**.