



Ein cyf/Our ref: WQ83357

Darren Millar MS
Senedd Member for Clwyd West

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29 September 2021

Dear Darren

Thank you for your recent Written Questions asking me when NHS patients in North Wales will be able to access routine dental check-ups.

We are making good progress with the recovery of dental services but dentistry is one of the most complex areas of primary care in terms of the reinstatement of services. As COVID-19 is still in circulation public health measures – physical distancing, enhanced PPE, and infection control requirements – mean fewer patients can be ‘seen’ in a clinical session.

We have not stopped routine dental examinations but there is a clear requirement to see patients according to need and practices have been asked to treat people who have experienced problems during lockdown first. We also need to prioritise care for those who have had treatment delayed as a result of the pandemic.

If capacity allows in a practice which has been active in addressing urgent problems to date, ‘routine assessments’ can be offered. However, there is a need to manage patient expectations as throughput is reduced and practices could be overwhelmed by requests for routine check-ups.

We have worked with Health Boards to ensure that as part of the recovery of services, measures are included to ensure dental practices see new patients. If dental treatment is urgent or the patient is in pain there is provision in place to provide care quickly. However,

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

there will be a delay for new patients looking for routine care. Management of the expected longer waits many patients will experience is unfortunately an inevitable consequence of the pandemic.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services