

PE2187/A: Reinstate 6-monthly dental check-ups for state pensioners

Scottish Government written submission, 10 October 2025

Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable? If not, please explain why.

The Scottish Government set out its position on dental examinations when it delivered NHS dental payment reform in November 2023. The requests made by the petition are not aligned with current best clinical practice guidance relating to dental examinations upon which the Scottish Government's NHS dental policy is based.

The payment reform introduced the Extensive Clinical Examination, which is based on NICE clinical guidance around the appropriate recall for dental check-ups; this information is available online: [Overview | Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews | Guidance | NICE](#). The recall length can be set at 12, 18 or 24 months based on the overall oral health of an individual patient and clinical advice from the NHS dentist. This check-up cannot be claimed within an 11 month period from the last appointment.

An extended clinical exam can be provided to patients every 12 months but dentists are able to use their clinical discretion to recommend a longer recall frequency where this would be appropriate for the patient, or see them more frequently through a review exam. These changes, based on clinical best practice, allow dentists to use their clinical discretion so they can provide the best care possible to patients. This includes changes to examination recall times, which follow independent best practice guidelines set by NICE, allowing dentists to tailor recalls based on patients' individual oral health needs.

The key determinant of frequency of access to NHS dental services is need for care and treatment, as the policy does allow for patients to be seen more often than the Extensive Clinical Examination through the Review Appointment. The Review Appointment allows for a patient to be seen more frequently where additional risk factors have been identified that require additional oversight from the dentist.

There is an element of patient choice with regards to utilising either NHS or private care and this is a matter for discussion between the patient and clinician. However, the NHS dental service provides a full range of treatment options for NHS patient. Due to the focus under payment reform towards the clinical assessment of patients as being a key step on the way towards an NHS dental service which appropriately assesses, responds to and supports the oral health needs of every patient in Scotland.

In conclusion the NHS dental system provides for clinical best practice that is based on evidence that is reflected in the annual Extensive Clinical Examination to assess Oral Health and subsequent level of care required for each patient. No one will have reduced access to dental examinations resulting from dental reform because any patient may be seen as often as the dentist deems it clinically necessary through the Review Appointment.

What, if any, action the Scottish Government is currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

The Scottish Government does not consider that the issues raised in this petition require remedial action.

Annual examinations supported by needs based clinical review appointments provides NHS dental services with an extremely flexible ability to support individual patient oral health needs.