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Welsh Government

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# NHS dental services, October to December 2023

Number of patients receiving NHS dental treatment, the type of treatments provided and the numbers of NHS dentists for October to December 2023.

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# Background

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance recommends that adults are recalled for check-ups at intervals of 3 months to 24 months depending on the individual's oral health status, and that children are recalled for check-ups at intervals of 3 months to 12 months. Therefore, when analysing adults treated, the primary statistical measure should be based on adults treated in a 24-month period; but when analysing children treated, the primary statistical measure should be children treated in 12-month period.

If a patient is treated more than once in the period, only the latest treatment is counted so there is no duplication of patients in these statistics.

## Summary

Activity levels and the number of patients treated reduced sharply at the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in March 2020 but subsequently increased as more treatments resumed. Over the last year, dental activity has broadly levelled out while the number of patients treated has increased modestly.

The number of courses of treatment performed in the quarter that ended on 31 December 2023 was slightly lower than in the previous quarter but higher than in the same quarter in the previous year.

The percentage of adults treated in the 24-month period that ended on 31 December 2023 was slightly higher than in the previous quarter but nearly 4 percentage points higher than in the same quarter in the previous year.

The percentage of children treated in 12-month period that ended on 31

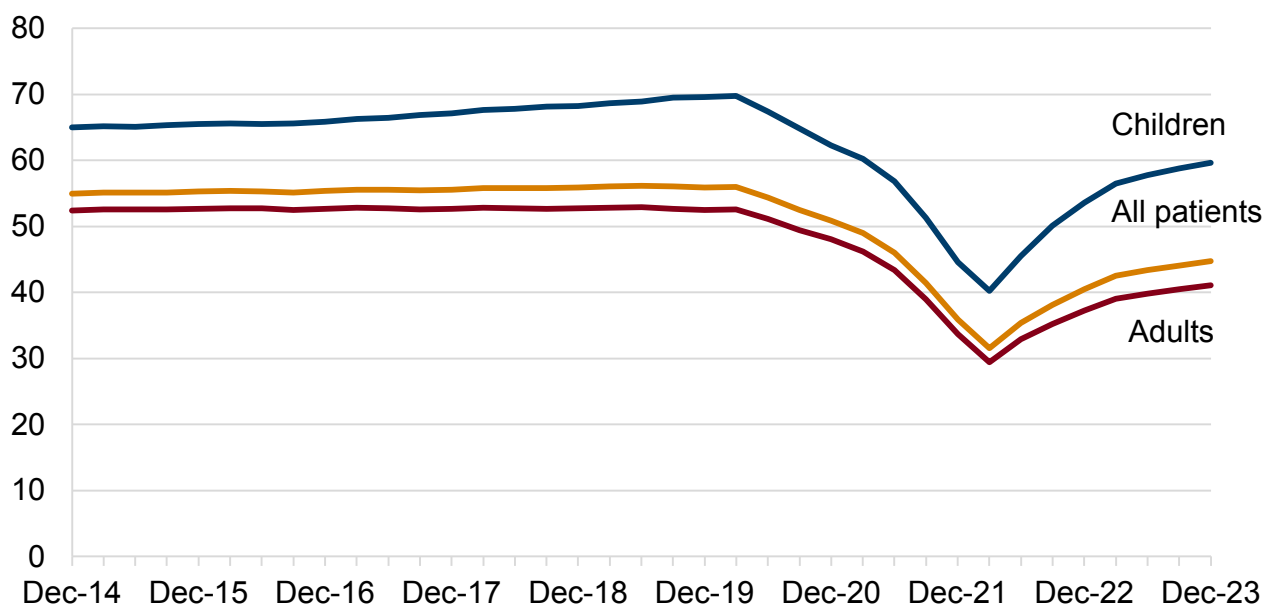
December 2023 was marginally higher than in the previous quarter but nearly 4 percentage points higher than in the same quarter in the previous year.

Note that the adult 24-month measure has taken longer to recover than the child 12-month measure as the time periods most affected by COVID-19 remained in the 24-month measure longer than the 12-month measure.

## Main points

### Patients treated in a 24-month period

**Figure 1: Percentage of the adult and child population treated in each rolling 24-month period, 31 December 2014 to 31 December 2023**



Description of Figure 1: Line chart showing a slight but consistent increase in the percentage of the population treated in a 24-month period until March 2020, which was followed by a sharp decline until June 2022. Since then the

percentage has increased but remain lower than pre-pandemic levels for all groups.

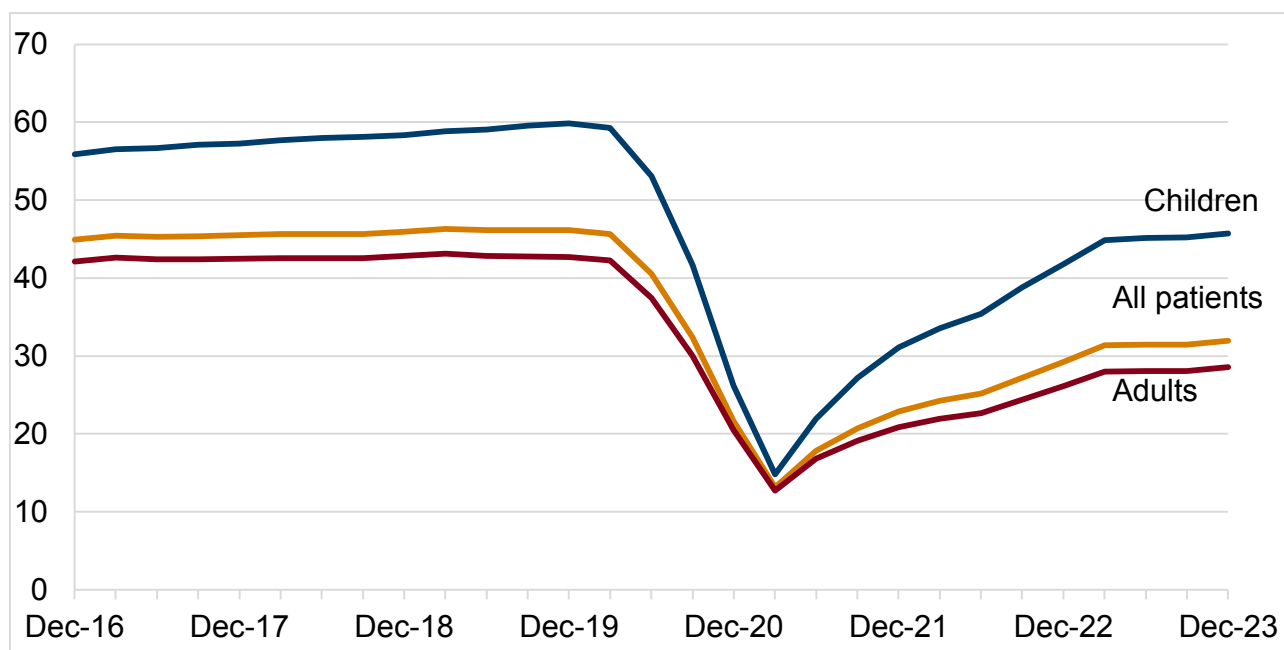
Source: FP17W form, NHS Business Services Authority

### **Percentage of the adult and child population treated in each 24-month period ending March each year (StatsWales)**

- Treatments were recorded for more than 1.4 million patients overall (1,401,769) in the 24-month period ending 31 December 2023. This is equivalent to 44.8% of the population and is 4.3 percentage points higher than in the 24-month period ending 31 December 2022.
- Treatments were recorded for more than 1 million adults (1,032,003) in the 24-month period ending 31 December 2023. This is equivalent to 41.1% of the adult population and is 3.8 percentage points higher than in the 24-month period ending 31 December 2022. This is the primary measure for adults treated.
- Treatments were recorded for nearly 370,000 children (369,766) in the 24-month period ending 31 December 2023. This is equivalent to 59.7% of the child population and is 6.1 percentage points higher than in the 24-month period ending 31 December 2022.
- The number of all patients treated for the 24 months ending December 2023 was 18.9% lower than the last period largely unaffected by the pandemic (24 months ending March 2020).

## Patients treated in a 12-month period

**Figure 2: Percentage of the adult and child population treated in each rolling 12-month period, 31 December 2016 to 31 December 2023**  
[Note 1]



Description of Figure 2: Line chart showing a slight but steady increase in the percentage of the population treated in a 12-month period until March 2020, which was followed by a sharp decline until June 2021. The percentage has increased since, but has broadly levelled out in recent quarters and remains lower than pre-pandemic levels for all groups.

Source: FP17W form, NHS Business Services Authority

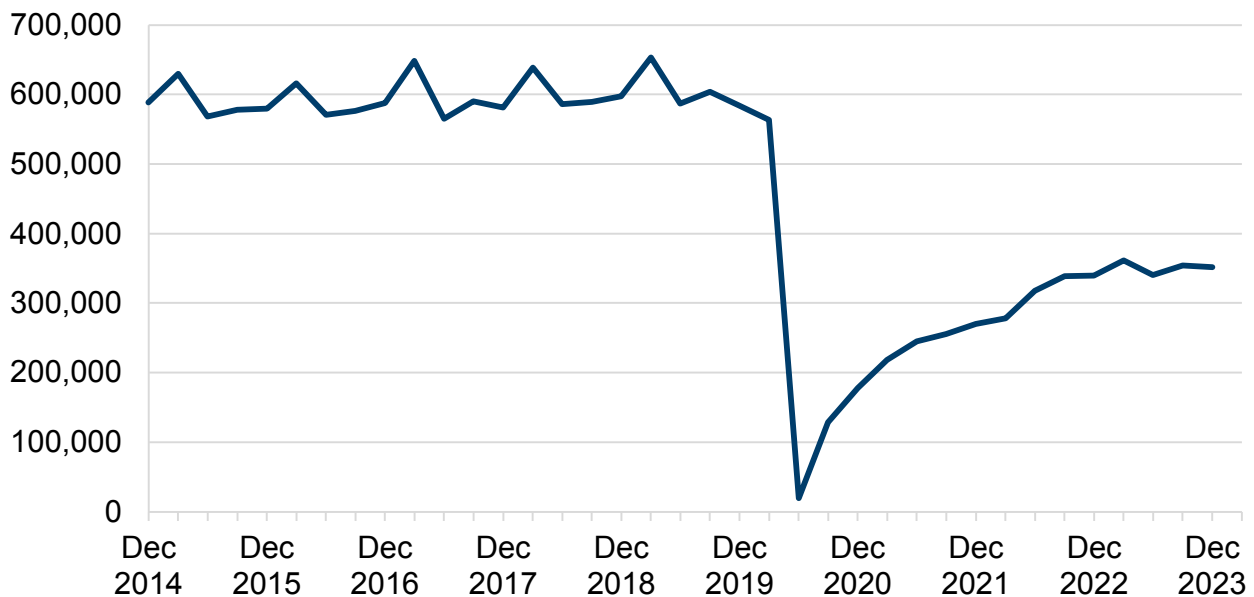
[Note 1] Data for patients treated in a 12-month period is available from June 2016 onwards.

## Percentage of the adult and child population treated in each 12-month period ending March each year (StatsWales)

- Treatments were recorded for a little more than 1 million patients overall (1,001,785) in the 12-month period ending 31 December 2023. This is equivalent to 32.0% of the population and is 2.7 percentage points higher than in the 12-month period ending 31 December 2022.
- Treatments were recorded for more than 283,000 children (283,199) in the 12-month period ending 31 December 2023. This is equivalent to 45.7% of the child population and is 3.9 percentage points higher than in the 12-month period ending 31 December 2022. This is the primary measure for children treated.
- Treatments were recorded for nearly 719,000 adults (718,586) in the 12-month period ending 31 December 2023. This is equivalent to 28.6% of the adult population and is 2.5 percentage points higher than in the 12-month period ending 31 December 2022.
- The number of all patients treated for the 12 months ending December 2023 was 29.0% lower than the last period largely unaffected by the pandemic (12 months ending March 2020).

## Activity

**Figure 3: Number of courses of treatment by quarter, quarter ending December 2014 to quarter ending December 2023**



Description of Figure 3: Line chart showing that the number of courses of treatment followed a broadly upward trend until January-March 2020, followed by a very sharp decrease in the period April-June 2020. Since then the number has increased and broadly levelled out in recent quarters.

Source: FP17W form, NHS Business Services Authority

### Number of courses of treatment by quarter ending March each year (StatsWales)

- During the quarter October to December 2023, there were nearly 352,000 individual NHS dental courses of treatment delivered (351,757). This is a decrease of 0.7% (2,413) compared to the previous quarter, but an increase



of 3.6% (12,319) compared to the same period last year. Note that data for all quarters in 2023-24 will be revised at the year end and this may result in a small increase in the numbers presented.

- The number of courses of treatment in the quarter October to December 2023 was just over 62% (62.4%) of the number in the last quarter largely unaffected by the pandemic (January to March 2020).

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