



Midland Orthodontics

Limits on NHS Orthodontic treatment

The new dental contract came into force on the 1st of April 2006.

All dentist and orthodontic specialists must now have a contract with their local Health Board in order to be able to provide an NHS service to their patients.

The Local Health Board is responsible for deciding what NHS treatment should be available in their area and for funding. However every patient has the right to an orthodontic assesement by a specialist.

In the past, orthodontists were able to see as many patients as they wanted. What the government is attempting to do is target limited NHS resourses to those children with the greatest oral health need rather than cosmetic need.

Unfortunately it appears that the government has failed to provide enough funds for orthodontic treatment. The introduction of the new contract means that only a fixed number of treatments can be carried out which means that waiting lists to see an orthodontist on the NHS will lengthen. It is of concern to the British Orthodontic Society as it is normally best for patients to receive treatment when they are teenagers. The British Orthodontic Society is putting pressure on the government to ensure that children who are eligible for treatment do not have a long wait but in the end it is a political decision.

An additional restriction has also been placed on orthodontic services by the new dental contract. Orthodontists are required to assess a patient's need for treatment before acceptance as an NHS patient. The system which has been introduced, the index of treatment need (IOTN), measures the patient's dental health need on a scale of 1 to 5. Only patients who score above 3.6 on this scale would be eligible for NHS funding