

NHS ENGLAND · EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 2026

NHS Dentistry: Quality & Payment Reforms

Contractual Guidance

A visual guide to all 8 reform areas — for dental contractors, dental teams and commissioners

• From 1 April 2026

• GDS & PDS Contracts

• For: Contractors, Teams & Commissioners

• Published 26 March 2026

• Summary of published NHSE Guidance — <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-dental-quality-and-payment-reforms-guidance/>

These reforms mark a significant step in improving both **access to NHS dentistry** and the **quality of care** patients receive. They respond to concerns about contractual arrangements that limited optimal clinical care delivery. Several reforms take effect from **1 April 2026**, with further changes to complex care, dentures and discretionary payments to follow later in 2026.

[NHS dental quality and payment reforms : guidance →](#)

[Dental Contract reform →](#)

8 Areas of Change

REFORM 1 1 Urgent Care Mandatory minimum urgent treatment requirements for practices with 100+ UDAs. New split payment: £15 fixed + £60 activity per treatment. Clinical Guidance → SDCEP guidance → BSA guidance →	REFORM 2 2 Complex Care Pathways Details to follow later in 2026. Watch for updates to this guidance.	REFORM 3 3 Denture Modifications Details on relining, rebasing and repairs to follow later in 2026.	REFORM 4 4 Fissure Sealants Reclassified from Band 1 to Band 2 from April 2026. Now earns 3 UDAs (Band 2a) or 5 UDAs (Band 2b). Clinical Guidance → DBOH Guidance →
REFORM 5 5 Fluoride Varnish by Nurses New Band 1 standalone course for children under 16, delivered by appropriately trained dental nurses under prescription. Earns a UDA credit of 0.5 Clinical Guidance → GDC Scope of Practice → Contractual guidance →	REFORM 6 6 Quality Improvement Voluntary 3-year QI programme for eligible practices. £3,400/year for full participation. Year 1 topic: dental recall intervals. NHS guidance → Year 1 topic guide →	REFORM 7 7 Appraisals £213 funded contribution per annual NHS appraisal for eligible dentists, dental therapists and dental hygienists. NHS guidance → Appraisal template →	REFORM 8 8 Ethnicity Recording Updated categories in the Contract Management and Payment System to align with 2021 census codes. 2 new values added.

Urgent Care — New Requirements & Payments

Calculating Your Required Number

Formula: $(RCV \div £10,000) \times 11 =$
Required Treatments
Round up to nearest whole number

RCV = NACV or NAAV minus:
Orthodontic + Sedation +
Domiciliary + Public Health
payments

Example:

RCV £30,000 → $(30,000 \div 10,000) \times 11 = 33$
treatments

RCV £510,500 → $(510,500 \div 10,000) \times 11 =$
561.55 → **562 treatments**

£15 + £60

With Required Number

£15 fixed credit per required treatment
(monthly) + £60 activity credit per urgent
treatment delivered (up to required number)

£75

Above Required Number

£75 activity credit per urgent treatment
delivered above the required number

£75

Without Required Number

£75 activity credit per urgent treatment
delivered (practices with <100 UDAs)

Note: Commissioner can reduce requirement
by up to **15%** between 30 Oct–31 Mar if need
is demonstrably low, to enable funding for
UDC to be transferred to general care.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For full clinical guidance on triage pathways, SOCRATES
pain assessment, disease management and antimicrobial
stewardship in unscheduled urgent and non-urgent dental
care, see the NHS England Clinical Guidance document.

[View Clinical Guidance →](#)

Preventive Care Changes

4 Fissure Sealants — Re-banded to Band 2

From 1 April 2026, all fissure sealants are Band 2 (previously Band 1). Supports use in children with a history of decay.

Band 2a — Up to 2 teeth **3 UDAs**

Band 2b — 3 or more teeth **5 UDAs**

Claim as Band 2 via Contract Management and Payment System as usual. UDAs count toward contract delivery.

Clinical Guidance : Use of Fissure Sealants

- For high risk children (typically linked to caries risk and previous experience of caries)
- Use resin based fissure sealants
- Applied to permanent molars on eruption (or as soon as you see a patient for the first time who is at high risk of caries)

[Clinical Guidance →](#)

5 Fluoride Varnish by Dental Nurses

New Band 1 standalone course — suitably competent dental nurses can apply fluoride varnish to children (under 16) without a dental exam.

Standalone Band 1 — per application **0.5 UDAs**

Setup required: Dental nurse must be GDC registered, trained, indemnified, and have a PIN in the Contract Management and Payment System — authorised by Commissioner before first claim. Fluoride varnish must be applied under a Patient Specific Direction (PSD) or prescription.

Claim using codes: 9151 + 9302 + 9160 + 9182 (value 3)

[Clinical Guidance →](#)

[Patient Specific Directions →](#)

[Add a DCP to a Contract →](#)

Quality Improvement & Appraisal Funding

£3,400

per year, per eligible practice

Quality Improvement Programme

- Voluntary — sign up by 8 May 2026
- Converted to UDAs at Nominal UDA Value
- Spread monthly from month after sign-up deadline
- Full participation required (no partial payment)
- Must submit year-end declaration by 31 May 2027
- Eligible: GDS/PDS contracts with 100+ UDAs/year

£213

per eligible individual, per year

Annual NHS Appraisal Contribution

- For dentists, dental therapists, dental hygienists
- Must deliver min. 2 working days/month NHS care
- Self-declare via Contract Management and Payment System
- Submit within 2 months of appraisal completion
- Max. 1 claim per financial year per person
- Not available to salaried NHS staff (DFT/DTFT etc.)

Ethnicity Recording Changes

Updated Descriptions (Values 1–16)

Existing ethnicity codes have been relabelled to align with 2021 census categories. Key changes include new colon-separated format and updated prefixes.

- Value 1** White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- Values 4–7** Now prefixed "Mixed multiple ethnic groups:"
- Values 8–11** Now "Asian or Asian British: [sub-group]"

2 New Values Added (code 9025)

Two new ethnicity values have been added to the Contract Management and Payment System:

- Value 17** White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Value 18** Other Ethnic Group: Arab

Replacement for 'Patient Declined' (code 99)

Code 99 is replaced by two separate codes to distinguish between different reasons for missing data:

- Value 97** Ethnicity Not Stated (asked but declined)
- Value 98** Patient Ethnicity Unknown (not asked)

AT A GLANCE

Complete Payment Summary

Reform Area	Payment	Method
Urgent Care — Fixed Credit (with requirement)	£15 per required treatment	Monthly via contract
Urgent Care — Activity (within requirement)	£60 per treatment delivered	On Band 1 urgent FP17 submission
Urgent Care — Activity (above requirement)	£75 per treatment delivered	On Band 1 urgent FP17 submission
Urgent Care (without requirement)	£75 per treatment delivered	On Band 1 urgent FP17 submission
Fissure Sealant — Band 2a (up to 2 teeth)	3 UDAs	Band 2 course of treatment claim
Fissure Sealant — Band 2b (3 or more teeth)	5 UDAs	Band 2 course of treatment claim

Reform Area	Payment	Method
Fluoride Varnish by Dental Nurse	0.5 UDAs	Codes 9151, 9302, 9160, 9182
Quality Improvement Programme	£3,400 per year	Spread monthly as UDAs from contract value
Annual NHS Appraisal	£213 per individual	Self-declaration as UDAs from contract value



Important: All Payments Come From Within Contract Value

UDA credits for urgent care, fissure sealants, fluoride varnish, QI and appraisals are all included within the contract value and are converted to UDAs using the Nominal UDA Value. It is the **Dental Contractor's responsibility to account for this within their contract capacity**. Payments are reflected in pay schedules and the Contract Management and Payment System — no separate invoicing is required.

IMPLEMENTATION

Actions for Dental Practices — 2026



URGENT CARE

Receive notification of Required Number from Commissioner by 15 March 2026



URGENT CARE

Update Directory of Services profile and patient info leaflet/website by 1 April 2026



FISSURE SEALANTS

Begin claiming as Band 2 (not Band 1) from 1 April 2026



FLUORIDE VARNISH

Set up dental nurse DCP record and PIN in Contract Management and Payment System before first claim



QI PROGRAMME

Decide whether to participate and sign up by 8 May 2026 via Contract Management and Payment System



QI PROGRAMME

Identify QI Lead and notify Commissioner of peer group membership by 31 May 2026



APPRAISALS

Ensure eligible DCPs have PINs and DCP records in Contract Management and Payment System before appraisal is completed



ETHNICITY RECORDING

Update practice system to use new ethnicity codes from 1 April 2026 (especially codes 97, 98 replacing 99)