

Ref	Comment
1	<p>The difficulty in speaking to a gp is virtually zero as most of the time people cannot even get through to the receptionist as you get the line busy tone, if you are lucky enough to get through all appointments have gone, in cases of urgency then you may sometimes get a appointment with a nurse practitioner when the reason you are ringing is to see a gp, sometimes nurse practitioners can help but more than not they can't, it is virtually impossible to have a face to face appointment, and there is no chance of actually seeing your own gp that's a thing of the past, the joining of the 5 surgery's was a colossal mistake on Dr mcgeeveys part, it was never going to work and never is going to work, people are actually dying, people cannot be diagnosed over the phone by a nurse practitioner or even a GP, this needs sorted with a matter of urgency more people are going to die, more people are suffering in silence please do something about this and stop people suffering.</p>
2	<p>I have moved to near Maryport three years ago. I could not find an NHS dentist and I have two children age now 11 and 14. I cannot find a nhs dentist and so I have to pay for a private dentist plan which I really can't afford. It should be possible - even if not for me but for my children to be able to access an NHS dentist.</p>

Ref	Comment
3	<p data-bbox="208 188 421 220">Dental services</p> <p data-bbox="208 228 1962 300">As found during your own research, I too was unable to locate a dentist surgery open to new NHS patients following the closure of Belvedere surgery. I repeatedly telephoned every surgery in Cumbria but with no success.</p> <p data-bbox="208 339 2047 491">I raised the issue with NHS England's Customer Contact Centre who weren't able to help source a Cumbrian Dentist, but did record my complaint which highlighted how zero support was offered to those whose dentistry care had been withdrawn. I question why the NHS directs people to the Customer Contact Centre in the first instance if they aren't able to assist with allocating a new dentist but doubt that my complaint will lead to any change.</p> <p data-bbox="208 531 1973 603">Whilst I understand that emergency care is available, removing access to routine appointments is only going to increase the use of emergency care in the future and have a detrimental impact on oral health in the long run.</p> <p data-bbox="208 643 2047 834">I felt I had no choice but to join a private practise if I wanted to maintain a good standard of oral health. This additional monthly cost only adds to the financial pressures that I am facing given the current climate. In order to cover the monthly payments, I've have to make financial sacrifices elsewhere and I worry how I will afford dental care for my children once they reach an age where payment is required. My husband, also a former patient at Belvedere surgery, is unable to accommodate private costs and is therefore without a dental care provider.</p> <p data-bbox="208 874 1294 914">In addition, my new surgery is out of town and now requires 30 minute round trip.</p> <p data-bbox="208 954 2063 1026">Whilst I'm describing my circumstances, I know others are also facing the same situation of being forced to pay for dental care or sacrifice their health due to the added financial pressure of private dentistry and lack of local NHS providers.</p> <p data-bbox="208 1066 2002 1137">Given that I was a former patient, I know that little support was offered by Belvedere in finding NHS slots and worry how the elderly or those without internet access have been able to seek out a new care provider.</p>

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4	<p>I live in Cockermonth where our only GP Surgery is Derwent & Castlegate Surgery based as the community hospital.</p> <p>During the pandemic I fully understood the principle of non face to face appointments with the GP but after 2 and a half years you can still not book a face to face consultation with your GP despite "patient choice". As recently as last week I was told that it is not possible to book a face to face appointment you need a telephone consultation in the 1st instance where a doctor will decide if you really need face to face or not. Nurses are and always have done face to face why not a GP? What makes them any different.</p> <p>I regularly go for bloods done and always the surgery is empty.</p> <p>I hope you find the content of this email useful for your purpose.</p>
5	<p>Hi</p> <p>I have called to make a routine appointment to discuss some issues and ask for some help.</p> <p>I have been advised routine appointments can no longer be booked in advance. You have to ring daily for access to a clinician.</p> <p>Often you ring, are on hold for a longtime, then get cut off.</p> <p>You can be in hold for over an hour, which when you work you just can't sustain. When you do get through, no appointments are available on most occasions, and as it not a hasty need for an illness it gets nowhere.</p> <p>If you do get an appointment because of illness, its via telephone and rarely face to face.</p> <p>I have spoken to the nurse practitioner about my issue and asked for help and told I need to see a GP. And I cant because I can't get a routine appoinent.</p> <p>This is why people will go to A&E and stretch those services further. I currently need to speak to a doctor but know A&E can't help so I'm in limbo.</p> <p>If I can't help with anything g further please do get in touch.</p>

Ref	Comment
6	<p data-bbox="203 185 286 217">Hello,</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 1240 296">I read with interest the article in the Times and Star about access to dentists.</p> <p data-bbox="203 344 1995 456">I moved to Cumbria in February 2020 and was able to register with a dentist (Curzon Street Dental Practice, in Maryport) as an NHS patient. Unfortunately, in Sept 2021 they announced they were no longer providing dental care for NHS patients, and that if I wanted dental care, I would have to pay for it.</p> <p data-bbox="203 504 1966 568">I'm on Universal Credit and cannot afford to pay for dental care, and I struggle to access dental services because I am autistic and sometimes find it difficult to find and communicate information, and my needs.</p> <p data-bbox="203 616 2051 722">I have been without a dentist since Sept 2021. I regularly check the NHS Find-a-dentist webpage but every single dentist within a 30 mile radius is either not taking NHS patients, or will only take them if referred. I do not know how to get a referral to a dentist. Ideally, I'd like to find one nearer to where I live in Flimby, Maryport, because I don't have a car and rely on my disabled persons bus pass to get about.</p>

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	<p data-bbox="203 185 2072 295">I'm told from an 'insider' that it's predicted that NHS dentists will be phased out over the coming years due to the lack of NHS funding. I hope that if this is the case, the local area has a contingency plan in place which takes responsibility for sourcing dental care on an individual basis.</p> <p data-bbox="203 379 376 411">GP services</p> <p data-bbox="203 419 1263 451">I am also a patient of a Workington practice that was part of the recent merge.</p> <p data-bbox="203 496 2051 606">Obtaining a GP appointment is difficult from the onset, having to ring often more than 100 times in a morning just to get connected to the telephone line. Following which, your faced with an extensive wait in the telephone queue. For those with school age children such as myself, this is extremely challenging to carry out alongside school drops offs.</p> <p data-bbox="203 651 2022 722">Getting through to the surgery via telephone has always been an issue that is only worsened by an increased volume of people calling the same line following the merge. Should you wait until after the initial rush your informed that no appointments are available.</p> <p data-bbox="203 767 2067 839">It's also both unsettling and confusing to be asked to visit a different surgery each time. For example, one surgery to see a GP, another to see a nurse or an additional location to collect documentation.</p> <p data-bbox="203 884 2047 956">In addition, it's frustrating that patients are unable to book appointments further down the line and seems emergency care is again given a priority over preventative care.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1000 1962 1072">Following a recent bereavement, I am also in communication with NCPC about the lack of continuity in care my relative received. I question whether the organisation is too big to handle the health needs of such a large amount of patients.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1117 1516 1149">I'm also aware that absences due to Covid is causing significant gaps amongst GPS and nurses.</p>

Ref	Comment
7	<p data-bbox="208 188 246 220">Hi,</p> <p data-bbox="208 268 2042 335">I'm a resident of Seaton and have been affected by the last of NHS dentists in the area. I've previously moved around a lot for work and always managed to see a dentist every couple of years or so, but it has been impossible in Cumbria.</p> <p data-bbox="208 383 2027 491">I am pregnant and my midwife has advised me to go to the dentist as I've started to have chipped teeth from the pregnancy. I've never had a filling or any dental treatment apart from braces and I'm almost 30. I should be entitled to free NHS treatment as a pregnant woman, it is not my fault my teeth have started to deteriorate.</p> <p data-bbox="208 539 2065 603">Not a single dentist in Maryport, Workington, Cockermouth or Whitehaven said they would see me without paying £95 or more for the first appointment.</p> <p data-bbox="208 651 2011 718">I'll be going on Statutory Maternity Pay soon (which is just over £600 a month) and despite being a secondary science teacher, I can't afford to sign up to a £16 a month dental plan in Workington.</p> <p data-bbox="208 766 2033 833">I am worried about my child when he grows up, how will I get him to an NHS dentist, I am paying national insurance for this reason. The waiting lists for children are over 5 years and they require me to join as a private patient.</p> <p data-bbox="208 880 2038 989">I am more financially able to pay to be a private patient in the future so my son can get treatment, but what about others? If children do not have good oral hygiene now, what will it be like when they're adults? The reason my teeth are in good condition is because I saw an nhs dentist and orthodontist as a child. I left my teenage years with no decay at all, setting me up for the future.</p>

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8	<p data-bbox="203 181 2072 336">Dear Sir/Madam, I am responding to the article in the News&Star with the request of wanting feedback for your panel. I no longer have a Dentist since the practice I used went fully private and as you know there are no NHS places available in the area apart from emergency appointments.</p> <p data-bbox="203 379 2072 448">As you will already know the GP appointments in the Allerdale area has reached a farcical level ever since the change of joining up together. I've not had a GP appointment for over a year now despite being in Hospital and had Hospital appointments within that time.</p> <p data-bbox="203 491 2072 560">It is impossible to get an appointment. You either phone up at 8AM and stay in a queue for three hours if you are lucky not to get cut-off or get through when the available appointments are allocated.</p> <p data-bbox="203 603 2072 671">I know someone who tried to ring 38 times before they got through and another elderly gentleman who went in at 09:15 only to be told they couldn't make an appointment at the desk and to try again the next morning.</p> <p data-bbox="203 715 2072 783">The GP practices will not book appointments even if you are there in person and tell you to ring the number which you cannot get through and all this despite there being no one patients in the surgery.</p> <p data-bbox="203 826 2072 874">The system was much better before the changes made and it needs replaced post haste.</p>
9	<p data-bbox="203 879 2072 1054">Hi me and my daughter had a nhs dentist Nook street Workington went private and couldn't even offer my daughter who's 16 a nhs place, I've found myself now without a dentist at all as I can't afford to pay the monthly fee £16, as like everyone at the minute I have no spare money, I've got my daughter still in there at £7 a month which I'm trying to afford as I'd feel guilty if I can't pay for her to have a dentist. This is a worry as I've now no dentist and wouldn't have a clue what to do if I needed one. How had this got to this I can't find a nhs dentist even as far as Carlisle</p>
10	<p data-bbox="203 1059 2072 1214">We are a family of 4 who were all registered with an NHS dentist at Nook Street and had been for years. Following privatisation and Nook St. no longer having NHS patients, I contacted a few dentists to be told none were taking on NHS patients, some didn't even have a waiting list that we could be added to. All of us have been added to Bupa Keswick Dental NHS waiting list, at the time we were added (May/June) I was advised the children would probably have to wait about 4 months and adults 18 months. I haven't heard anything since.</p>

Ref	Comment
11	<p data-bbox="203 181 1411 213">I am writing to help you with your enquiries into the lack of an NHS Dentist in Workington.</p> <p data-bbox="203 261 2051 331">I have not seen a dentist for about 4 years, as I was in Belvedere Street dentist for 2 years and was told my dentist had left, but I was still on the books.</p> <p data-bbox="203 339 474 371">I've contacted them</p> <p data-bbox="203 379 1998 450">numerous times over the last 4 years, to find out what was going on but was just told they are waiting for a new dentist and would be contacted in due course.</p> <p data-bbox="203 496 1998 566">I asked about seeing another dentist in the practice but was told that would only happen in an emergency, none of the other dentists would see us otherwise it was an emergency.</p> <p data-bbox="203 612 1411 644">Both my children are in the same surgery and have thankfully been treated by Dr Davies.</p> <p data-bbox="203 691 2063 761">The most annoying part was I was in the same dental surgery at Whitehaven for 35 years (since I was 3), I never missed an appointment, or had any problems.</p> <p data-bbox="203 769 2007 839">I only left there to join Belvedere, so we were all in the same surgery, plus I thought it would free up a place for someone who actually lives in Whitehaven. Bigger fool me !</p> <p data-bbox="203 885 2051 956">Then we all received a letter from Belvedere practice to say the whole surgery is going private and if any of us wish to stay in the practice we must join their practice payment plan, even the kids.</p> <p data-bbox="203 963 2069 1034">So now I must pay £7 each for the kids and £16.20 for me. That's over £30 a month that our family has to find, on top of the cost of Living going up.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1080 2007 1150">I've tried to find another dentist, but there is nobody taking on NHS, not even children. So technically I'm over a barrel and who knows what problems the dentist is going to find after 4 years, I'll hazard a guess he'll find some problem that's going to cost more money.</p>
12	<p data-bbox="203 1185 2024 1329">Every time you go on Maryport practise to book a appointment it says no appointments available it has been like this for month after month.covid has not gone away completely but it is not the killer it was.open these surgeries back to normal now, the service offered is terrible.why do you have to phone up to see if your prescription is ready then go to some back door to collect it.seems to many doctors iust want to work from home.everywhere else is back to normal whv not the doctor's</p>

Ref	Comment
13	<p data-bbox="203 185 248 220">Hi,</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 1473 300">I feel our gps have been better than average but still far from the services we used to receive.</p> <p data-bbox="203 344 2065 568">I have several health conditions which require regular blood tests etc, I used to have them every 3 months or so but now I have to request them. I was told I would have them annually around my birthday which is next month. I had my 4th heart attack last November and I haven't seen a cardiologist since leaving hospital. I had another stent and lots more medication and was told I had damage to a valve as a result of the MI. I also suffer from asthma, diabetes, IBS, Diverticulitis, hiatus hernia, arthritis and a few minor ailments. My gps where good when they thought I had cancer and referred me quickly. I just think we don't like bothering them everything is more or less done by phone. I wish it could be back to normal, why are some industries more sheltered and protected than others.</p> <p data-bbox="203 612 757 647">Can't expect more money for doing less.</p>
14	<p data-bbox="203 660 1055 695">To the committee investigating NHS dental and GP availability:</p> <p data-bbox="203 740 2047 963">We are registered with an NHS dentist in Keswick (me, husband and two children). Since the start of this year they have cancelled my and my children's annual checkups four times, all due to genuine reasons (death in the family, illness of dentist, etc) and each time have not been able to provide us with another appointment for months, due to lack of dentist availability. We have now scheduled appointments for December and January, so the children and I won't have seen a dentist for two years - assuming those appointments aren't cancelled as well. With children aged 12/14 this is far from ideal as their mouths are growing and changing all the time. I would hope that in the event of an emergency they would find an appointment for us, but this isn't good.</p>
15	<p data-bbox="203 979 2056 1094">It's almost impossible to get past the reception staff if at all you can get that far. I'm on a pay as you go phone and it has cost me £8 to access the reception after being in a queue number 19. Then I'm told to ring back at 8am next day when I do it costs another few pounds and am told all the appointments have been taken.</p>

Ref	Comment
16	<p data-bbox="203 181 1196 213">Good Morning I hope the information will help you with your investigation.</p> <p data-bbox="203 261 2033 293">My wife and I are registered with the Maryport Practice and are both active pensioners. We still need to speak to/see a Doctor at times.</p> <p data-bbox="203 341 1845 373">During the pandemic we understood the reason for the system that was set up in Maryport and the issue of prescription's.</p> <p data-bbox="203 421 2063 564">Unfortunately we have problems trying to see a Doctor, we have to phone the Practice and wait for someone to pick up, you then have to tell the receptionist what your problem is. They then decide if you speak to a Nurse or a Nursing Practitioner and they will then decide if you need to see a Doctor. It is not unheard off to wait more than an hour only to be told all phone appointments are full and you have to phone the next day.</p> <p data-bbox="203 612 2007 676">We are unable to see our registered GP and must go through the system to be told that a Nurse decides who we see and it is not our Doctor.</p>
17	<p data-bbox="203 697 517 729">Hello ,my experiences.</p> <p data-bbox="203 737 2063 880">1.Dentists are nearly impossible to see unless you pay to go private then miraculously there they are.My wife and I both got a letter recently from nook street practice saying they would longer be providing dental to us unless we paid nearly 17 pound per month each.this is a disgrace why should we pay for what should be a free services funded through our taxes.I have email our MP twice but no action there.</p> <p data-bbox="203 888 2063 1120">2.doctors.we are in James street practice,(practicing is what they are doing).can't get appointments unless you ring at 8 o clock and what to fill in best part of a hour trying to talk to someone.My friend is in same pratice she called one afternoon about a issue,told she needs to speak to the doctor and would need a appointment she said she would book it there and then but was told she would have to ring back at 8 am next, morning.hardly customer focused .Final example,my wife visited Penrith hospital to meet specialist.they were on time,good start .he said they would up her tablets,that took over four weeks sending letters ,phone calls etc,why take so long(be sensible to have specialist give prescription there and then,good cost saving).the NHS as we new it is gone. Time to start again .Thank you.</p>
18	<p data-bbox="203 1133 1995 1208">I don't live in Allerdale, but obviously work here. My dentist surgery (Nook Street – Whitecroft Surgery) changed to a private practice recently so I no longer have an NHS dentists.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1216 853 1248">GP practices in Allerdale are not relevant to me.</p>
19	<p data-bbox="203 1244 1189 1276">Have been unable to get a dental appointment when requested recently.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1284 2018 1359">I was informed by the receptionist, that due to not attending for 5? years, I was no longer on their list. (Due to family issues, had been preoccupied). Did not wish to make a scene with the reception staff, although I became emotional, so left. (Station road practice).</p>

Ref	Comment
20	<p data-bbox="203 185 405 217">Good morning</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 1995 336">My experience is that my NHS dentist cancelled all 3 of our family appointments during the time of writing to inform us that they were going private.</p> <p data-bbox="203 379 2024 451">I have tried every dentist on the NHS find a dentist webpage. None were taking NHS patients. Two practices in Cumbria both about 40 miles away so 80 mile round trip would take me and my 14 year old if I was to join them privately.</p> <p data-bbox="203 494 2047 566">I contacted the listed email for if you could not find an NHS dentist and have even received an acknowledgement let alone any guidance or help.</p> <p data-bbox="203 609 2058 681">I am particularly upset about my son. I am a bereaved single parent and could tolerate privatisation by stealth but to have to pay privately for my school age child is beyond the pale.</p> <p data-bbox="203 724 1055 756"><u>I do hope you get some resolution and that this email is helpful</u></p>
21	<p data-bbox="203 751 2072 1059">I live at Westfield Workington concerning dentists. I was registered at maryport on Curzon Street maryport from my early teens over 55 yrs ago I never missed a appt and went every 6 months with my children now grown up, and for 8 yrs with my autistic grandson who lives with me aged 10 until last yr I got a letter that they were going private ,by the time I got the letter I tried to ring all around to get on a NHS list to no avail as all said they were full and not taking NHS but could go private if I pd for me and grandson we don't have a dentist Im a disabled pensioner and don't drive so I cannot go miles. To find a dentist , and as for the doctors I'm sick of trying to get through on the fone says im 25 or more get down to maybe 3 and it cuts of our NHS has gone to wreck and ruin with dentistry and doctors also other parts of NHS is dwindling away it's a shame as I was so proud of our NHS but this government is ripping it apart and I see us not having a NHS in the very near future 😞</p>

Ref	Comment
22	<p>ive been trying to get into a dentist for years. i had brilliant teeth until one day in 2019 i bit into something and i heard my 4 front teeth crack they didnt break but i heard them crack. i rang every single dentist in cockermouth workington whitehaven and maryport every week from then trying to get into one and no luck. covid hit still no joy my front teeth were getting looser and looser. one of my top teeth fell out by its self rang for an emergancy appointment to see if they could do anything couldnt get an appointment had to try the next day still nothing that next day by then it was too late one receptionist told me i only had a certain amount of hours to try get it back in and them hours had passed.</p> <p>so still tried getting a dentist every week even enquired about private but still no one was taking on. finally got an emergancy appointment for my other top front tooth that was loose there was no saving it so they took it out</p> <p>2021 one dentist rang me and asked if i was still needing a dentist i said yes they said well put you on our waiting list. still to this day nothing and my 2 bottom front teeth are on the way out. i also have gum disease and type 2 diabetes which i have told the dentist receptionists when ive rang them, which can cause heart disease if not treated properly. so here i am at 37 years old embarrassed to hell walking round with no top front teeth and both bottom front teeth on the way out</p>
23	<p>Hello</p> <p>My experience is:</p> <p>I have just sat on the phone for 20 minutes, where at the start I was 7th in the queue. This didn't seem as bad as usual, as normally when I have rang in the past, I have been nearer to 17th. I was number 1 for aprox. 3 minutes, then started hearing the engaged tone. This went on for 30 seconds before the call disconnected itself. I am too frustrated to ring back, as when I do, I have to listen to the whole message at the start again. I am not unwell, but for people who are to have to go through this every time they want an appointment must be terribly upsetting.</p> <p>They pushed the MyGP app years ago but do not seem to be using it to its full capacity. It would be helpful for me to be able to make an appointment for my routine requirement in advance. My friend is at a doctors in the Eden district and she is able to send messages to her doctor regarding concerns/queries. Why can't we do that? It would save peoples time on both sides having to sit and answer the phone for something that could be resolved in a few words.</p> <p>If they are willing to invest in the technology, things may be easier in the long run</p>

Ref	Comment
24	<p data-bbox="208 188 277 220">Hello</p> <p data-bbox="208 264 1783 296">I saw on Instagram that you were wanting local residents opinions with regard to the doctors and dentists in the area.</p> <p data-bbox="208 341 1980 453">With regard to doctors – only today my partner went to doctors for a hearing appointment to be told that it was the day after and the appointment would be over the phone – even the receptionist laughed – how can you assess hearing over the phone? I do not understand why now we are out of the covid pandemic many appointments are still over the phone</p> <p data-bbox="208 497 2013 641">Dentists – I have lived in Allerdale for over 14 years and still cannot get an NHS dentist. I have a child aged 5 and 11, I have to pay privately for both of my boys and myself. I think it is really important that children should be able to receive free dental care – it will just mean that there will be a generation of people with bad teeth. I am perfectly fine with paying for myself but my children (and any other children) should be an NHS priority</p> <p data-bbox="208 686 544 718">Many thanks for listening</p>

Ref	Comment
25	<p data-bbox="208 188 286 220">Hello,</p> <p data-bbox="208 264 1742 296">Following on from a post I have seen on Facebook regarding having a committee set up - I really hope this works!</p> <p data-bbox="208 341 2060 528">To start off with my son had braces (this is with the orthodontists) put on in 2018, but with COVID there has been a huge delay for them to be removed. This resulted in him having to wear them for an extra 4 months to rectify them the over-correction. I totally understand this delay, but we have both not seen a dentist in nearly 4 years now, even though my son should be having check-ups every 3 months to check his braces. Asking the orthodontist, its a case of shrugging their shoulders as they don't know what else to say. Our original dentist no longer see NHS patients, and no matter how many phone calls I make, there aren't any will to take on.</p> <p data-bbox="208 572 2060 679">As to doctors, this is a total nightmare. I suffer with depression and anxiety and getting to speak to someone, or even get an appointment, is impossible. I have managed to keep my head above water, but I feel for those that are struggling with their mental health. They are left to fend for themselves and if you know what it's like to be in the depths of depression, often fighting for help isn't an option.</p> <p data-bbox="208 724 2060 911">Ringling 101 seems to be the preferred option and I have used on a few occasions, but don't find them overly useful. On the few occasions I have felt I needed the services, answered all the questions, to be told that a GP appointment is necessary, but there aren't any available. I could have told them that without wasting time answering questions! You are advised not to use A&E and an ambulance unless its life threatening, but I fear that because we cannot access our local GP's and dentists, that A&E and the ambulance service is going to continue being overwhelmed.</p> <p data-bbox="208 956 2060 1106">I only use, and have always had the same mindset, the GP service when I feel it's a situation, I cannot deal with myself. I contracted COVID about 6 weeks ago now and really struggled to breathe, was extremely dizzy and even fell over unconscious in the garden. I have had constant headaches since then, but I didn't feel that I could contact my doctor or any other medical professional, even though I felt I needed it at the time, because I knew what the response would be.</p>

Ref	Comment
	<p data-bbox="203 185 2072 300">Our local pharmacy (Seaton) has really been our lifeline and has helped wherever he could. He managed to get an antibiotic prescription for my son (for a severe throat infection). This was after trying our GP (said they couldn't help and that there was no availability at the Workington Hospital either) and 101 (who advised an appointment was needed, but there weren't any available).</p> <p data-bbox="203 341 2072 488">Trying to make a GP appointment is impossible. You are asked to phone at 8am for appointments available that day, but when you get through at 8:01am and 8:06am (the twice I have attempted this service as you could be on hold for 30mins to an hour), all the appointments have been allocated! I would be more than happy to book an appointment in advance and wait my turn, but this is no longer available.</p> <p data-bbox="203 529 2072 606">I really fear for myself and my son should we need the service of a GP or Dentist. It feels like we have been left to 'get on with it' without any support or guidance.</p> <p data-bbox="203 647 2072 683">Thank you for taking the time to read this email.</p>

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26	<p data-bbox="203 185 1429 217">I am writing in regards to my view on the access to GP and dental practices in Workington.</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 2060 603">Firstly I would like to point out the lack of both GP and NHS dental treatment in the area most dental practices have gone private which as this may help with ease on the NHS this unfortunately does not help residents like myself who find it difficult to get into a dental practice that take on NHS patients. Some dental practices with them going private have tried to keep a low cost solution so people can still stay with the practices however with the cost of living being hit so hard paying even £16.50 a month is still a knock due to your paying for staying in the practices but no need for the appointment, the NHS advises see your dentist at least twice a year but then you have the cost of dental treatment on top of that which again affects how people like myself live if however you do need an appointment you have to travel for emergency treatment and not many residents including myself have that ability to pay for the cost of travel if you ring to put on a waiting list for NHS dental treatment your dental surgery could be further away from where you live if that's the only place accepting NHS patients and this again all costs money.</p> <p data-bbox="203 651 2060 1161">Secondly I would like to give my view on lack of GP access in Workington alone before the pandemic hit most times you could ring up and get fairly good access to a GP appointment you could book in advance and there was enough appointments for everyone, but unfortunately the pandemic hit and yes while the GPs, nurses, hospitals all took a hit here we are in 2022 and we are worse off than ever before. Since all the practices merged during a pandemic may I add this has not helped anyone I see what the ease of the idea was at the time but we are still here with barely any appointments if any at all there is no actual appointments to see a GP which if you need medication checked, changed or prescribed you have to wait for a call this is not suitable or medically safe if a GP has to see you. If however you are lucky enough to get a appointment you are unfortunately sent to see a nurse and while these are medical professionals some unfortunately are not able to help and send you to see a GP and again your back to square one this is not acceptable again we are in 2022 the GP surgeries should be back to normal by now however most are going to A&E in the hope a Dr will see them and this puts another strain on NHS , some patients are becoming more ill due to the lack of GP access in Workington and something needs to change we need more GPs, NHS dental practices, appointments and to have access to treatment instead of putting more pressure on hospitals, pharmacies and nurses the idea of putting all GP practices in one was a idea that I think has now shown it shouldn't have happened in the first place</p>

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27	<p data-bbox="203 185 2072 256">I'd love to share personal experiences regarding access to my GP and dentist. If you share comments online or in the paper please could my name remain anonymous.</p> <p data-bbox="203 300 1671 335">Overall I've been incredibly disappointed with the services provided in Allerdale regarding GPs and Dentists.</p> <p data-bbox="203 378 2072 564">I haven't been seen at my doctors surgery since 2019. The only appointments available are for blood pressure and blood samples taken. If you want to be seen for anything else is virtually impossible. The only route we've been able to take for health issues is via choc and A&E. Each of these times were for life threatening conditions or illnesses that wouldn't go away on their own, so required access to a GP or Nurse. What my biggest concern is, is that if the only way to see a GP or a nurse is via choc or A&E, this is going to have a detrimental impact on the standard of service they can then provide. They will become more and more stretched the fewer GPs we have in the area.</p> <p data-bbox="203 608 2011 719">Both of my children have health conditions, one which was supposed to be reviewed in 2019, the other was supposed to be reviewed monthly since October last year. Neither of my children have had letters sent or appointments arranged. I've got several medical conditions that require reviews every 3 months. I haven't been seen about those since 2021 either.</p> <p data-bbox="203 762 2072 1027">On top of this, our Dentist - Nook Street - have now gone private, as have a few other dentists. Now we have no provider for this service either. The only way they would let us stay was if we paid monthly, not only for my partner and I, but for our children! Children who should recieve free NHS treatments until they're 18 - utterly appalling. I did not see the letter regarding this until I'd got home. I'm a Teacher and work until late. By the time I saw the letter I had to wait until the next day to see if any other Dentists would accept us. Unfortunately I was too late. I phoned every Dentist in allerdale, copeland and surrounding areas. Not a single dentist in the whole of Cumbria was taking on new patients. I checked the NHS website and the nearest Dentist was in Lancaster which is totally impractical. My children attend school my partner and I both work full time - we would need to take a day off to access these Dentists.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1070 1998 1142">So as of now, my family have not accessed a GP since before lockdown and we are out of a dentist too! Basic care needs that you'd expect to be met in our society are unable to be met. It really is a big issue.</p>

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28	<p data-bbox="203 225 398 260">As requested.</p> <p data-bbox="203 300 1473 335">I moved to the Wigton area in October last year. Previously I lived in East Lothian in Scotland.</p> <p data-bbox="203 375 1995 451">I have tried numerous dentists and still cannot get taken as a patient. I am seriously considering going back to my previous dentist in Scotland, a commute of 120 miles.</p> <p data-bbox="203 491 1514 526">The provision of dentistry is extremely poor in the area. There is no central waiting list or register.</p> <p data-bbox="203 566 360 601">Thank you.</p>
29	<p data-bbox="203 665 398 700">Good evening</p> <p data-bbox="203 740 2002 817">I have just seen the post on Facebook about the concerns over GP and dentist appointments. I moved to West Cumbria in 2018 and have struggled since then getting in an NHS dentist.</p> <p data-bbox="203 857 2069 892">My dentist back in Manchester is happy to still cover me but aligning an appointment with a routine trip to visit family is nigh on impossible.</p> <p data-bbox="203 932 2063 1043">I have managed to get a routine check up at Kerry Park in Working but I have to pay £65 then they want me to set up a plan of about £15 a month which covers 2 x check ups and 2 x hygiene appointments in a year. They have emergency appointments but I don't feel the issues I have warrant a more costly appointment and treated as an emergency.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1083 2036 1160">Hope this information helps with your investigations, more NHS dentists would be a god send here, even born and bred Cumbrians say they have always had issues with dentists. I have to say no issues with getting in a GP surgery and the cover has been fine.</p>

Ref	Comment
30	<p>I would like to complain about access to dental services in West Cumbria. We were with Nook St dentist who are no longer offering NHS dental services. I have contacted all dentists in the West Cumbria area and Carlisle and none are taking NHS patients. My adult son hasn't had a check-up for 2 and half years, partly due to all the COVID cancellations. I have sent a complaint to NHS England and the reply said they are aware of the issue but that practices are prioritising urgent dental care and are responsible for managing their own appointment books. But they didn't seem to understand that our dentist Nook St Dental is not offering NHS services at all. So we are in a black hole now. I keep ringing local dentists but none are taking NHS patients. I don't know what else I can do now.</p> <p>I have also written to Mark Jenkinson MP sand haven't had a full response yet.</p> <p>This is a disgraceful and very unfair situation, people who are lucky to be with an NHS dentist are still getting NHS services, but we are unable to access the same service. We can't afford to sign up to the monthly payment plan, so currently don't have any dental service at all, along with many other people in the area.</p> <p>Urgent action is needed to resolve this very serious problem.</p> <p>I look forward to your reply and an update on your plan of action.</p>

Ref	Comment
31	<p>My wife and I (74 and 81 years of age) searched online for an NHS Dentist when Belvedere Dental Practice informed us by post that they were ceasing to treat NHS patients from 1st Aug 22.. We were unable to find a dentist in Cumbria willing to take on NHS patients. As a consequence we were left with no choice but to reluctantly sign up for private treatment although we are pensioners with limited income. The reason I signed up against my principles is because I have a history of tooth abscesses and could not risk not being able to get treatment when in agony.</p> <p>The irony is, my wife only has 7 of her own teeth remaining but still needs dental treatment occasionally.</p> <p>We have to pay £16.20 each per month and this only covers 2 check-ups and 2 hygiene treatments per year. Any dental treatment is extra at seriously exorbitant prices. Fillings ranging from £70 to £145. Needless to say, I will be opting for extractions rather than treatment. Could be a case of eat, heat or treat teeth this winter.</p> <p>GP. Practice</p> <p>Since the merging of the GP practices in Workington, my wife and I have noticed a sharp decline in the service provided. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get a face to face appointment when required. Telephoning at 8am only to be told you are 18th (or thereabouts) in the queue means that by the time you speak to a human, all appointments have been allocated - please ring back tomorrow at 8am. The following day the same usually applies. Going up to the surgery to book an appointment doesn't help as the doors don't open until 8.20 and the same usually applies - all appointments have been allocated. Telephone appointments when available are no help to me as I have severe hearing loss and find telephone conversations extremely difficult.</p> <p>I know you have stated that you did not want individual cases highlighted but I would like to inform you of a recent event. On Thursday 25th July my wife was feeling ill so I rang the practice at 8am only to be told that there were no appointments left. The same applied next day on Friday 26th July. I was told each time that if it were an emergency ring 999. I did not think it was at that time. Over the weekend her condition deteriorated so I rang 111 who arranged for Choc Doc to ring. After I explained the circumstances I was told to take her to West Cumberland Hospital for checking. This was at 10.30 pm on Sunday 24th July. From there she was admitted to A&E Assessment ward. The following day she was transferred to Intensive Care Unit with dangerously low sodium levels where she remained for 3 days. Fortunately she made a good recovery and was discharged on 2nd August.</p>
	<p>I have nothing but admiration for the treatment she received at West Cumberland Hospital but feel badly let down by the GP practice. I fear for the future specially for the younger generation as it seems like NHS GP practices will end up the same way Dental practices have in West Cumbria.</p> <p>I hope you find this email of use in your studies.</p> <p>Kind regards.....</p>

Ref	Comment
32	<p>I have a major problem with the way our GP surgeries are run. As someone who owns and runs 2 small family businesses as well as being an employee of another which runs at minimum staffing levels required for a service which requires customer appointments I am simply unable to see a GP using the current system. I can call on a morning but I am unable to make an appointment for a future date, only for the day I am calling on. This is simply impossible for those of us who work and aren't able to just leave work on the day due to customers appointments and other work commitments. This has left me unable to see a GP for a matter that can only be discussed with a GP at the surgery as I've been advised the Access Centre will not see me for the issue and pharmacists can not help either. It needs to be a GP. I was told that I had to decide which is more important, my health or my job which isn't really a feasible choice and is a disgraceful comment for them to make. I fully understand there is a shortage of GPs in Allerdale but something must be done about appointments being made available so those that work can forward plan as at the moment I have what could be a serious problem but because I'm unable to do a same day appointment I am left suffering. It's easy for receptionists to state I should leave work but I simply don't have that option having a business that has struggled through the pandemic and still recovering now. I can't close it for a day in the hope I'm lucky enough to get an appointment that day.</p>
33	<p>I have seen in the Allerdale newsletter that you are seeking residents views on access to GP and dental services.</p> <p>We (my wife and myself) moved to Keswick in May this year so my view is from a perspective of a new resident.</p> <p>We have had no problems with registering with the GP service in Keswick and fortunately have had no need to make use of their services.</p> <p>Where we lived previously there were very limited NHS dentists and we have for a number of decades paid for dental care. So when moving to Keswick our expectation was that we would have to register for private dental care and that is what we have done. By going private we also believe that it will free a NHS place for someone who is less able to afford private cover. So far we have found our Keswick dentist better than our previous one.</p> <p>We have, therefore, had no issues with access to GP and dental services.</p>

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34	<p data-bbox="203 181 2072 213">I understand you are looking into NHS dental provision in Cumbria and are calling for personal experiences to inform it.</p> <p data-bbox="203 261 2072 373">I have been with NHS dentists all my life and I am now 73. I have had regular checkups throughout my life, and have been with Nook Street surgery for many years. Earlier this year I received a letter from them saying that they would no longer be providing NHS dentistry from August so I looked to get on another NHS dentist provider list. This has proved impossible throughout Cumbria.</p> <p data-bbox="203 421 2072 564">I have rung dentists, contacted the NHS helpline and consistently checked on the NHS dentistry website for the last 3 months, and at no time have I found an NHS dentist who will take on new patients. In fact the NHS helpline couldn't even give an emergency contact for emergency treatment throughout Cumbria. I have contacted Cumbria healthwatch and written several times to my MP, Trudy Harrison, as well as speaking to her office. And still I am without a NHS dentist and no sign of when any would become available.</p> <p data-bbox="203 612 2072 676">I have now been forced to sign up to a monthly direct debit patient plan with Nook Street surgery as the only way I am able to access a dental checkup.</p> <p data-bbox="203 724 2072 788">I have enclosed an email trail of my correspondence to my MP and her replies for more detail. I have not received a reply to my last email and therefore feel there appears to be an acceptance that there is no NHS dental provision in Cumbria and no plan to change that.</p>
35	<p data-bbox="203 879 2072 943">I live in Seaton, I used to go to Nook st dental surgery as an NHS patient, that has now gone private and I don't know what I'm going to do, we can't afford the monthly charges they now want us to pay.</p> <p data-bbox="203 991 2072 1023">I also find it very difficult to get a doctor's appointment at John st clinic since it took over orchard House clinic.</p>
36	<p data-bbox="203 1075 2072 1139">We reside in Allerdale and my husband left the military in Nov 2020 after 22 years service. We have been unable to find him a local dentist to take him on.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1155 2072 1187">I was with Oasis in Maryport that is now Bupa and apparently I am not a registered patient!</p> <p data-bbox="203 1235 2072 1267">Aspatria doctors have been brilliant and took him on immediately.</p>

Ref	Comment
37	<p data-bbox="203 185 548 217">A truly terrible practice is:</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 2016 336">The practice of withholding medication (asthma medication in particular) WITHOUT informing the patient, until the nurse has seen the patient for a what seems, random checkup without, I might add, immediate appointment availability.</p> <p data-bbox="203 379 2049 491">This has to stop. It's potentially dangerous and life-threatening! After all, one rings for a repeat prescription when you are running out. To FAIL to be told that your medication is being withheld, especially by someone who is not a Dr., is in my opinion an appalling and a very dangerous practice.</p> <p data-bbox="203 534 2049 646">[An example. A relative worked shifts and ran out of medication after ringing up several times for a repeat prescription and didn't know why it wasn't at the chemist, so I gave them mine!. Yes you can cringe, it is a horrendous thing to do but asthma kills and when medication is withheld by the non GPs, not only is it a bad practice it encourages hoarding, the precise thing that it's supposed to stop!]</p> <p data-bbox="203 689 2038 761">Prescription supply: there's some people get 3 months of drug supply but if others ask for more than 28days they get treated as though they will sell their drugs on eBay.</p> <p data-bbox="203 804 2072 916">It's been scientifically proven (GP magazine article) that having to get a repeat prescription every 28days for patients on long term medication isn't good for the patient and their management of consistently taking a daily tablet, however certainly I suspect that it's better for the GP practice financially!</p> <p data-bbox="203 959 2060 1070">No one understands just how stressful it is, the not knowing if medication is going to be withheld by some random person at the surgery or whether you will actually receive it as prescribed. To have to repeat this process and angst every 28 days for the foreseeable future is undeniably nerve-wracking and causes untold anxiety.</p>

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	<p>Personally: As you can't get to actually see a Dr., I was told by the phone call taker, that my anti cancer drugs were not going to be coming from them, (Castlegate) that I had to get them from elsewhere "and anyway you can't take them with radiotherapy" ...wrong advice again, I was totally broken by the call. I was told that I would be rung back.</p> <p>While I waited, I was in a state of despair, I thought I had been given a death sentence by a receptionist. I did get the drugs after crying down the phone to the very professional nurse practitioner who had to ring me and patiently apologise for the non Dr "advice" given earlier and again, I strongly suspect the withholding of the drugs by that person, as they arrived very shortly after the phone call. What I went through should not be downplayed though the nurse practitioner was excellent, the whole debacle was unnecessary.</p> <p>You have to be really strong to be ill. You really must hoard drugs because anyone it seems at Castlegate, on a whim, can withhold a potentially life saving prescription, also in the case of asthma medication, while not having immediate availability for the check up and then "release" of said medication.</p> <p>I feel as though we are invisible and very dispensable as patients.</p>
38	<p>regarding GP services in the Workington Area, one of the problems I encounter is the fact that we can only book appointments on the day. This results in probably dozens of patients ringing up at 8.00am trying to get an appointment. To me it would make sense, both from a patient point of view and for the poor receptionists on the phones, if appointments could be booked at least a week ahead. With the current system patients may have to call back for several days in succession before they get an appointment, which is annoying for them, but also means the receptionists are having to deal with the same patient multiple times, adding unnecessarily to their workload. For example if I ring on Monday but can't get an appointment, I try again on Tuesday, Wednesday and finally get an appointment on Thursday. That's four phone calls the receptionists has had to deal with, whereas if on Monday, I'd been given an appointment for Thursday, it would have saved the receptionist three unnecessary calls. Multiply that by maybe 50 patients trying to get booked in, 150 time wasting calls. Also it makes the first hour more busy than it needs to be on the phones.</p> <p>Regarding dental services, I've recently changed practice as the dentist I was registered with was stopping NHS work. I could have paid and stayed at the same practice, but decided to register with another with cheaper rates. It must be a nightmare for parents with young children, and really all children under 16 should get NHS dental treatment. Possibly if, like housing where a certain percentage of houses built have to be "affordable" or social housing, each dentist should be obliged to provide NHS treatment for a specified number of children and low income families.</p>

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39	<p data-bbox="203 185 443 217">Dear Councillors,</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 1234 296">With regard to the consultation regarding access to GP and dental services.</p> <p data-bbox="203 344 2024 408">I have returned to Cumbria from Scotland and although pleased by the local GP services (Kirkbride) I am dismayed by the lack of NHS dental services within the area.</p> <p data-bbox="203 456 2063 647">Having grown up in Carlisle and been aware of the dental practices within the town in those and subsequent years I am absolutely astounded that there has not been an increase in service provision as part of the building developments both in the North and South areas of the city. We have moved from a new development at Bishopton on Scotland where there were a total of 4000 houses being built and the dental provision increased from 1 surgery for the old village to the three surgeries all accepting NHS patients, a new primary school and plans for an new (larger) health centre.</p> <p data-bbox="203 695 2047 759">Therefore I feel that the permissions for developments around the Carlisle area do not reflect the increased needs of the community with the provision of new services - I am sure the GP services around Carlisle may well reflect this too.</p> <p data-bbox="203 807 2069 871">We are at Port Carlisle, Wigton surgery has no NHS availability, and no where in Carlisle either - so we have remained registered with our dentists near Glasgow which frankly is unacceptable.</p> <p data-bbox="203 919 913 951">Thanks for setting up the task group to look into this.</p>
40	<p data-bbox="203 975 1980 1038">Many of us have been unable to get National Health dental treatment for many years and have had to pay private. Why can we not reclaim some of it back from the NHS.</p>

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41	<p>The lack of access to NHS dentist services in Cumbria goes beyond tooth decay.</p> <p>Regular dental checkups are often the first place where oral cancers are detected and can be caught at the earlier stages when treatment is less invasive and has a higher chance of success, and lower cost to the NHS.</p> <p>This basic level of care should not be limited to those that can afford to access private practices in Cumbria, or who were lucky enough to register with a NHS practice in the past.</p> <p>It's shocking that this service that was available to my grandparents is now shut off for their great grand children.</p>
42	<p>Both my husband and I tried to get an NHS dentist in our local area with No success-</p> <p>Having previously lived in Scotland , We both attended the dentist (NHS) regular And we were keen to maintain our Oral health on our move to south of the border- We tried several Cumbrian Dentists but None were taking NHS patients-</p> <p>We paid to go privately for a check up (Derwent Clinic in Cockermouth) and I have since learned I need 2 teeth Repaired at a cost of over £1200</p> <p>I cannot afford this -</p> <p>And now I just don't know what to do -</p> <p>I am a 57 year old female and I work 22 hours a week in retail (receiving approx £200 per week) and I receive No benefits -</p> <p>Any Advice would be gratefully received</p>
43	<p>Prior to covid it was very easy to access a GP, you could do it online or by a telephone call.</p> <p>Now it's a minimum of a week and that's only a telecall,</p> <p>Unless you can convince the receptionist your appointment is urgent then hopefully you get a telecall that day (just looked online to book a telecall and the first scheduled appointment is not until the 21/09/22 18 days away).</p> <p>Then it seems a decision will be made as to whether you need to have a face to face consultation, you need to go to A&E or the telecall is sufficient.</p> <p>As covid rules are no longer in place why the drastic change in the service.</p> <p>We have no problems with the dentist that is all ok.</p>

Ref	Comment
44	<p>I would just like to say that you can't get through to the GP Surgery in Workington.</p> <p>If you are lucky to get through all the appointments for a telephone call appointments are gone by 8.15am. You are then told to ring back in the morning at 8.00am.</p> <p>There was once when I actually got through at 8.05am only to be told all the telephone appointments were gone as there was only two Doctors available to do the telephone appointments.</p> <p>Remember this is for the whole of Workington and in my opinion it's not good enough.</p> <p>Also, each time you call you are answered with a recorded message and you have press 1 for appointments. Then you get a line is engaged sound so you have to start all over again.</p> <p>This costs the patient money each time the phone is answered with the automated recording just to here the line is engaged sound again.</p> <p>If you are lucky and get onto the Doctors Surgery network you might be number 20 in the queue then get down to number say 5 and even number 1 or 2 only to be cut off. Then you have to start again.</p> <p>If you manage to get to number 1 I have sat and waited 15 to 20 minutes before I got answered.</p> <p>Even if you specifically ask to speak to a Doctor you usually only get either a Nurse or Nurse Practitioner. They do their best. Then they tell you that you need to speak to a Doctor as they can't deal with your problem. This is why I ask to speak to a Doctor as I have already been told that. I explain this to the Receptionist and then still get a call from either the Nurse or Nurse Practitioner. Then it all starts again.</p> <p>I also don't think that you should have to disclose to the Receptionist what you want to speak to the Doctor for before they will make you an appointment.</p> <p>That is confidential between you and the Doctor.</p> <p>I have asked for a referral for a department that I have had to go to for about 30+ years who now say that I have to have a referral from the Doctor every 3 years. I have asked for the referral since February. I have asked quite a few times for the referral. In the end I asked the Podiatrist if they could make the referral in the middle of August.</p> <p>I have still not got an appointment.</p> <p>I have also waited from 22nd May when the Doctors Surgery received a letter from Joanne Braniff the Optician to get me an earlier appointment for the Eye Consultant. I have asked the hospital when my appointment was and they hadn't received the referral from the Doctor.</p>

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	<p>The last time I rang the Doctors Surgery (which was a couple of weeks ago) I was once again put through to the Nurse Practitioner after asking the Receptionist to speak to the Doctor and explaining what it was for.</p> <p>The Nurse Practitioner was very nice and helpful.</p> <p>I explained why I needed to see an Eye Consultant and she said she would speak to the Doctor's Surgery Secretary and Mr Ainsworth's Secretary and see what they said.</p> <p>I have since had a letter to say I have to make an appointment only to be told there aren't any for at least 36 weeks. When I queried it at the hospital they had a look and said it is with the Consultant to see if he agrees it's urgent. I am losing my sight in my eye and this Consultant is the only one who does the operation I need. The Consultant only works for the NHS 1 day a week as he works privately the rest of the week.</p> <p>In my opinion another Consultant who can do this type of surgery should be employed instead of playing around with people's sight. Mr Ainsworth's is a brilliant Consultant and Surgeon but he needs help to see patients with this type of problem.</p> <p>I am sorry for using myself as an example but it is the only way I can get across what I want to say.</p> <p>The GP Surgeries in Workington are worse since they merged together.</p> <p>I understand it was difficult for them to recruit Doctors and were helping each others Surgeries out but you could still speak to or see a Doctor.</p>
45	<p>With regards to doctors it has become almost impossible to see or talk to one. At the end of may i started with an ear infection. I have had many over the years so know what i need to treat them but i have to get prescribed medicine. First nurse i saw decided she knew better. Dis not give me the correct treatment and then ended up in agony for two weeks because i has to wait to see another doctor all the time getting worse. The pain got so bad i was ready to end it and nearly did with the amount of painkillers i was taking. I am still waiting for a referral to see a specialist. Since that time i have also suffered from the aftermath but cannot get an appointment as i do not have time to wait over an hour on the phone.</p> <p>As far as dentist i recently, new year, went to my dentist. I need treatment but now because of their insurance i cannot be seen in their chair so i now have paid them just to be referred to another dentist who have another huge waiting list. This has so far taken 6 months and £100 for no progress.</p>

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46	<p data-bbox="208 188 2069 300">I am submitting observations on the current state of GP Services in Workington. I do this from a background of having been a GP in West Cumbria, A Medical Director for the Health Authority and Primary Care Trust and work as a sessional GP in the Workington Access Centre. I am now fully retired and am a patient of James Street Group Practice. I have used some subheadings to make comments.</p> <p data-bbox="208 339 2069 643">General: The changes to general practice in Workington were originally driven by the difficulty in recruiting GPs. A "consultation" took place but the project outlined in the consultation majored on merging of Practices but did not include details of the wholesale changes that have taken place and my opinion is that the public were not fully informed. There's always been a problem with capacity and demand in general practice. 20 years ago I was the lead Director for a programme called Advanced Access. This was a Department of Health initiative which recruited practices to test out ways of managing capacity and a number of West Cumbrian practices took part. The programme looked at different methods of consulting, better use of practice teams and how to manage appointment systems to create space for on the day and pre booked appointments. Two major lessons of this initiative were (a) Proper information to patients was vital and (b) changes should be made in small steps and tested out rather than wholesale upheaval.</p> <p data-bbox="208 651 2069 722">Neither of these principles have been followed in Workington. It is also strange that the changes were implemented during the pandemic which was a time of great stress for both the NHS and the public.</p> <p data-bbox="208 762 2069 954">Information: I do not feel that the public has been fully informed about the new ways of working. JamesStreet Practice Website gives information but not all of it is correct. For example the website suggests that appointments can be booked online. Clicking on this link takes the patient to another website called patientaccess.com . Logging in to this site eventually leads to a message which says that "there are no appointments available for online booking at this practice". There is no easily available information as to who the Workington GPs are.</p> <p data-bbox="208 994 2069 1145">Booking Appointments: All bookings require a telephone call. It appears that the telephone access has been centralised for all the previous surgeries. The capacity issue is controlled by a queuing system which will inform the patient of what number they are in the queue e.g number 12, number 10, number 8 etc. My experience of making calls is that it requires an average of 15 to 20 minutes on hold. Do the practices have any data on how many calls are abandoned.</p> <p data-bbox="208 1153 2069 1177">It would appear that the majority of available appointments are rapidly booked up between 8 am and 9.am. Have the practices mapped</p>

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	<p>A recent patient experience illustrates the challenges of obtaining an urgent appointment as follows:</p> <p>Patient is unwell and requires an urgent assessment Relative rings for appointment with either GP or Nurse Practitioner at 10.00am Receptionist informs relative that no appointments are available Relative is told to ring 111 Rings 111 at 10.15am 111 Call Handler undertakes a computer assisted assessment of the problem during a 14 minute conversation Call Handler agrees a GP Face to Face assessment is required Call Handler says she will pass the call to the local on call GP 11.15am The GP rings from Cumbria Health On Call in Carlisle He takes a history and agrees that a same day face to face appointment is required and asks if the patient's GP has been contacted After being informed that there are no appointments says he can authorise an appointment from a number kept in reserve and that the Practice will call with details 1.30pm no call having been received the relative rings CHOC to be told that the message has been sent 1.35pm Relative rings the practice and after another 15 minutes on hold is told that the patient is on the list and a call will be made 2.00 a Nurse Practitioner rings and offers an appointment in the Primary Care Centre with a GP at 2.45pm</p> <p>This is an example of a complex system for patients to navigate. It appears that there is now no local on call doctor in Workington. Why not?</p>

Ref	Comment
	<p>Continuity of Care: A large body of research points to the value of patients seeing the same doctor for chronic conditions. It leads to fewer referrals to hospital, more efficient use of tests and investigations and greater patient satisfaction. In the new Workington system continuity and choice are absent. If patients require follow up the onus is on them to book another appointment in the already congested system</p> <p>Anecdotally people have reported being discharged from hospital but with no clear idea who is meant to review their care or who to contact.</p> <p>In Summary: General Practice services in Workington have now been replaced by a complex and time consuming system which patients find confusing. Information appears to rely heavily on websites which are not always accurate and for the elderly and vulnerable may be difficult to navigate. Capacity and Demand are not matched. And the system appears to be presided over by a group of anonymous general practitioners.</p>
47	<p>Since being informed by Nook Street dental practice that it would not be treating patients on the NHS from August 2022 i have been searching to find a dentist within county reach who is taking on NHS patients. Needless to say this has proved unsuccessful.</p> <p>The galling thing about Nook Street going private is that they are strongly persuading previous NHS patients who find themselves with only two options either go private or fore go treatment that they need to put a dental plan in place to assure treatment will be available. The default monthly fee adds up to nearly £200 per annum. For this you get 2 check ups and appointments with a hygenist the latter which alot of people would deem to be unecessary and just a money generator for the practice.</p> <p>Further treatment still has to be paid for at extortionate private levels with the promise of a small discount if your on the plan.</p> <p>For a family with children Nook Street no longer offers free treatment for kids under 18, they to need to be on a plan. For a family of 2 adults 2 Children this will prove very expensive and is nothing short of scandalous.</p> <p>Successive Tory governments have failed to act on warnings from the BDA re failings of the current system and the blame lies almost entirely with them. One has to assume that this drive to private dentistry is the conservative party's underlying objective.</p>

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48	<p data-bbox="203 185 1308 220">My recent experience of accessing GP and dental services in Allerdale are below</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 2051 644">Dentist - My NHS Dentist (Nook Street, Workington) decided to go private in September 2022. Looking at the charges on their Private Plans it became clear the costs of Private Dentistry was something I definitely could not afford, so I immediately tried to locate another local dentist taking on NHS Patients. Within 30 minutes and numerous phone calls to EVERY dentist within Cumbria not just Allerdale, it became clear this wasn't going to happen. I extended my search Area as far down to Lancaster and still couldn't locate an NHS dentist taking on new patients. Eventually I did locate another NHS dentist taking on new patients which is in HEXHAM and is a 180 mile round trip for me to make each time I need to go to the dentist. This is the only one I came across within 3 weeks of searching. I find this situation very disappointing and frustrating that the government has allowed this to become a critical NHS service which is in jeopardy. As National insurance contributions go towards all NHS Healthcare Services, I wonder if the government will be looking at compensating those who no longer have access to this service and reimbursing the percentage of national insurance that goes towards dentistry back to those patients? Food for thought I'm sure!</p>
	<p data-bbox="203 793 2069 1289">Doctors - 1st issue was that when Workington Doctors practices all merged - my own GP Surgery (Solway Health Services) didn't inform me that they had actually closed. I called in to ask for results following an X-Ray only to find the doors locked, the Chemist in the hospital told me they had shut in February and told me to try James Street. Absolutely appalling. 2nd issue is that I'm sure the phones are broken as you ring and end up on hold for 25 mins then get cut off, ring again put on hold 25 mins and get cut off etc. etc. End up driving to James Street surgery to make appointment, get given date and time of appointment (not with a doctor but with a nurse) and turn up for the appointment only to find that the appointment was for John Street which I wasn't informed of at the time I made the appointment, shoddy service to say the least. I think Doctors need to get a grip with reality, they are paid an exceptionally good wage and need to start seeing patients and stop doing telephone call backs which I'm lead to believe they are being paid additional fees for too. If this is correct has nobody questioned why? They are being paid to work a set number of hours each week and if the phone calls are being made within those hours they have already been paid for their time as part of their salary surely? 3rd issue is that you never seem to be able to actually get an appointment with a doctor even when you specifically request one. You get told there's no appointments available for 2 weeks the next appointments haven't been released, call back in 2 weeks. You go back in 2 weeks and get told there's no appointments etc and the cycle begins again.</p>

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49	<p data-bbox="203 185 2060 217">I note the review the Council is undertaking on GP and dental services. I would like to comment on GP services</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 2060 488">When I and my wife moved to Workington from Whitehaven in 2016 we joined Orchard House Surgery. From what I recall there were three GPs in the practice and at least one nurse practitioner. Appointments could be made for up to a week in advance and of course urgent cases could be seen on the day. Things have certainly changed. Since then the GPs retired and were not replaced although some came back as locums. Demand from an increasingly elderly population is increasing and it is worryingly difficult to attract GPs – a national problem but worse in West Cumbria perhaps because of our relative remoteness. Without a commitment from central government to develop a national health strategy and then to fund that strategy properly this underlying shortage of GPs will continue.</p> <p data-bbox="203 536 2060 719">A couple of significant changes have been helpful: the coming together of the five Workington GP practices; and focussing same day appointments on the Primary Care Centre at Workington Hospital. These measures make best use of available staff and when we attract a new GP then he or she would benefit everyone in the town, not just one practice. On my limited usage of the system it is working reasonably well. There also seems to be a good interface with hospital outpatient services Hospital patient discharges, community nurses and GP/nurse practitioner visits are, in my experience, well co-ordinated.</p> <p data-bbox="203 767 2060 911">I do find it frustrating that appointments can be made for the current day only and on a first come first served basis. It is usually the case that all appointments for the day have been used up before 9am. There needs to be a protocol that allows the needs of someone who has missed out on an appointment to be reviewed by the GP practice before they resort to the option of going to West Cumberland A and E department. There does already seem to be some increase in flexibility in this respect</p> <p data-bbox="203 959 2060 991">Staff I come into contact with are invariably professional and normally positive and reassuring. I admire them immensely.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1038 2060 1102">I have not found that GP services have deteriorated since the Covid pandemic but it is clear to me and I am sure to everyone else that the town needs more GPs.</p>

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50	<p>My experience with dentists was prior to COVID very good. Since COVID there was delay in getting appointment but eventually seen, however I feel were put into a situation where we went private or nothing. No other option was offered eg pay as you needed treatment. I was unable to access any other NHS dentist so agreed to go private although it would be a struggle to pay and more so now with the economic crisis. I have fortunately managed to get on a NHS dental list even though it means a 40minute drive each way.</p> <p>GPS I am fortunate with my health and require to be seen rarely but I do resent having to do online consultations or having to send photos of problems. As a retired nurse being able to see someone in person gives you a whole picture of the patient and when they say I'm ok you can judge that ok is genuine or stoic. Many people do not have smart phones or computers or have hearing problems</p>
51	<p>Dentistry</p> <p>I appreciate I am lucky enough to have an NHS dentist.</p> <p>The service I have received has been excellent with good facilities, use of digital technology to remind me of appointments and a good ability to get an appointment at a convenient time. My only complaint would be the cost which is something they have little control over - and these are still more reasonable than going private.</p> <p>GP service</p> <p>I have seen some marked improvements to GP surgery services in the past few years. The use of telephone appointments means I can speak with a GP at a convenient time and place for me - and not travel to a surgery. I have been able to speak to a GP shortly after contacting the receptionist - usually within a few hours of my initial contact. When it was decided it would be better to see a doctor in person, I was able to get an appointment within a few days and the service was efficient and effective. I like the use of technology and new ways of working - such as telephone contacts - as it means I can have an initial conversation with the GP without going to the surgery. I would appreciate more weekend appointments - the vets are open Saturday mornings afterall.</p>

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52	<p>Hi, I am contacting you with my experience of GP & dental services after reading the report in the Times and Star newspaper. Firstly, I have been registered with the same NHS dental practice for many years (Oasis in Maryport) but it is virtually impossible to get an appointment for anything as they never seem to have a dentist working there. I contacted them on Friday 2 September to enquire when it was likely going to be possible to make an appointment for a check up and was informed they were hoping to get a dentist at the end of September for 9 weeks. I was told they would be opening the appointment book on Monday so I had to phone back then. I phoned on Monday morning and was told the appointment book wasn't open yet as the contracts were still getting sorted and I had to phone back the following Monday to see if it was open then. It's an absolute disgrace that they cannot provide any sort of service and I feel as if we are all being forced to pay large monthly fees to go private which is not cost effective if you only go for a check up and a clean once or twice a year but it costs approximately £20 per month. Also my son needs an appointment with the same practice and he is a Uni student who cannot afford to go private.</p> <p>The system for making an appointment with your GP is very frustrating. If you have a non medical emergency why can you not phone to make an appointment for a date that is convenient for you if you have work commitments? At the moment, if you want an appointment you have to phone about 8 am on the day and try to get an appointment on that day. The lines are usually constantly engaged so by the time you get through, the appointments have usually all gone. Some people may really need to see a doctor on that day but some appointments have maybe been taken by people who would quite happily have made an appointment for the following few days or following week.</p> <p>I have worked full time for 37 years and paid my NHS contributions all this time, as has every other working person in the country, but feel I am now paying for something that is worthless as you cannot access the services they are supposed to provide.</p>

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53	<p data-bbox="203 185 2072 217">After yet another failed attempt to obtain an appointment with the Workington GP practice I feel I must contact your group.</p> <p data-bbox="203 264 2072 296">The bottom line is the GP service in Workington is broken and the health and well-being of local residents is being neglected.</p> <p data-bbox="203 344 2072 456">Two examples I can give are firstly, that of my 7 year old grand son who had a very high temperature and unable to swallow. After 37 minutes 43 seconds on the phone on Friday 9th September my wife finally spoke to a receptionist who stated that we needed to ring 111 or visit a pharmacy to get advice!!!!</p> <p data-bbox="203 504 2072 536">111 were just as unhelpful and we were left to our own devices.</p> <p data-bbox="203 584 2072 727">The second example I wish to draw to your attention is one when my auntie attended the access centre at the direction of the GP surgery. Upon speaking to the receptionist at the centre to confirm her appointment she was told that they cannot speak to her and all appointments must be made via telephone. She went outside, phoned and spoke to the same person who she had seen in the building, who then confirmed the appointment.</p> <p data-bbox="203 775 2072 807">This incident was brought to the attention of Mark Jenkinson MP for Workington and the NHS.</p> <p data-bbox="203 855 2072 919">It is very frustrating and unprofessional that it appears receptionist's are having to deal with such instances and using the 111 service as a 'one fits all' measure.</p> <p data-bbox="203 967 2072 1031">Surely the use of Nurse practitioners, if we have them, to triage calls would be a step forward instead of 'passing the buck' to the 111 service.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1078 2072 1142">National advertisements urge people to stay away from Accident and Emergency departments to safeguard the NHS, however no provision is available as an option in some cases.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1190 2072 1254">On a lesser note, my family are/were registered at the Oxford Street practice, this build has been shut and was done so without any notification to patients, other than a handwritten note placed on the entrance door.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1302 2072 1348">I am not sure if this is the sort of information/examples you need but hopefully it is. To repeat my earlier statement, the GP service in Workington is broken and not working. It is only a matter of time before a life(lives) are lost due to the situation</p>

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54	<p>Doctors app.could seperate numbers be used ,1 for docs app 2 for blood tests 3 for results of tests 4 for diabetic problems etc. So not all trying to get through on same line and being 26 in line .</p> <p>Also stupid system of having to ring at 8 am when your talking to receptionist they could have a list online .and email you.</p>
55	<p>I am writing to you to voice my concerns in regards to being able to see an actual physical doctor and to register at a dentist.</p> <p>I have 2 chronic medical conditions ever since covid I have not been able to see a GP in person, I have to give regular blood samples and I struggle to get an appointment to this also.</p> <p>In regards to a dentist, I was registered with Oasis however I got removed from their records due to them constantly changing appointments which resulted in me missing a changed appointment, I have been able to see a dentist for over 3-4 years, my teeth are now starting to be affected by this.</p> <p>Something needs to be done.</p>
56	<p>I am registered with a dentist and have regular check ups and access to emergency dental appointments - ring at 8am where they keep a small number of appointments for that day.</p> <p>Support was offered during the pandemic by telephone and a self applied kit which would help seal teeth that had been broken or lost a filling or crown.</p> <p>I am also registered at a GP practice, I have not dealt with the surgery for myself for a long time but do so regularly for my father who is 92 years old. I have difficulty getting appointments - ring the surgery to be told you are 17 in the queue, has been as high as 28, this queue does go down in number but frequently it gets down to you are 1 in the queue and then you get the ring tone and no one answers, so you start again by the time you get through there are no appointments available for that day and you are unable to make an appointment for another day!</p> <p>An additional issue that I am aware of from my fathers situation is that he has received a number of home visits from the community nurses - this can be several in one week - and each nurse is unaware of the following or previous nurses visit. This is inefficient for the nurses concerned and confusing for my parents. As these visits are mainly for blood samples some kind of coordination would save both the nurses time, petrol etc and my parents confusion as to what is going on.</p>

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57	<p data-bbox="203 185 2072 256">Re the write up in the Times and Star about GP Practices. once we all went into ont the service is disgusting. You can't see a Doctor now cand he tell you what is wrong over the phphone?.</p> <p data-bbox="203 300 2072 336">The phone line for appointment you can be 18th in the queue to get down to one after half an hour to be cut off and no one can say why.</p> <p data-bbox="203 379 2072 416">Please do not say it as to do with COVID we were like this long before it started at it isn't getting any better.</p> <p data-bbox="203 459 2072 531">i have been waiting for results from a brain scan done on the 28th July to be told they are short staffed. If anything had been wrong someone would have been in touch that was never the case.</p> <p data-bbox="203 571 2072 643">Do you think we will ever be back to what we were the answer to me is no. Why we all had to go into one i for one will never no unless someone got a Golden Hand Shake.</p> <p data-bbox="203 651 2072 687">Hope something can be done soon.</p>
58	<p data-bbox="203 735 2072 887">This comes on behalf of an elderly lady and other elderly ones who have expressed concerns with the difficulties of seeing or speaking to a doctor, the mix up with prescriptions etc. We have been waiting over an hour to see a doctor in a surgery and told that isn't long to wait! Elderly ones are being treated as though they are just a burden on the NHS so we would be better off dead. Compassion seems to have gone out of the window. James Street surgery is one of the worst.</p> <p data-bbox="203 890 2072 999">The dentists we use have gone private – what are we supposed to do. Previously, because of age an pension Credit elderly ones weren't paying for dental cost and now with everything else costing more this added expense is too much especially when elderly ones tend to have more dental issues.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1042 2072 1078">With our health issues to cope with the stress of the situation is crippling and worrying.</p> <p data-bbox="203 1121 2072 1158">Many elderly ones are not on the internet so can't access help with that. Many elderly</p>

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59	<p>I am writing after reading an article in the News and Star asking for the local public to share concerns about the local access to GP's and dentists. The article did not state if things would be kept confidential so I prefer to remain anonymous as I would be worried about negative repercussions from my surgery.</p> <p>First of all, I am with James Street surgery and if I am being totally honest well before the COVID situation and the amalgamation of the surgeries it was very difficult to see a doctor so the current situation has just made things a lot worse. Seeing a doctor face to face before the current difficulties didn't actually make my situation any better as I had problems getting the correct medications and getting referrals for surgery. I have now been left in the situation where I have been left with no choice but to pay for private treatment as I have been messed about so much by the NHS. I have been left waiting for blood test results and scan results by James Street and have ended up very ill and feeling vulnerable. To try and get an appointment for a telephone appointment even is hard work. I have to try and phone at 8 am each morning and then I am in a long queue and when eventually I speak to someone then all the appointments have gone. When you are ill then you just feel too exhausted to keep fighting for an appointment.</p> <p>I have only seen nurse practitioners at the surgery or at the local primary care centre which I am happy about as they have all been good. The only time I have contact with doctors is over the phone. In my situation I haven't minded that but the problem is that I can't even get a telephone appointment with a doctor now which is very frustrating. I have been trying for weeks to get an appointment with a doctor to discuss a medications review.</p> <p>Concerning dentists — I am with Belvedere practice on Station Road which has recently gone private. To be honest I wasn't particularly happy when I was paying NHS prices as they eventually only did the minimum and looked at my teeth and didn't even give me a scale and polish but still I had to pay the full NHS prices for it. Now they have gone private I explained that as I am already having to pay private for my medical care I wanted to be a pay as you go patient rather than take out their care plan where they charge a regular monthly fee. I was told by the receptionist I could do that if I wanted but that those patients who are in the care plan will get priority so I don't have a clue if or when I will be able to get an appointment with them. I don't think that is very fair as I am obviously going to pay for my treatment the same as everyone else but I am not opting for the plan.</p> <p>Obviously, this is a very stressful and worrying situation and your help would be appreciate.</p>