



Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Health and Social Services

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Our Ref: WAQ29374, 29375 & 29376

Jonathan Morgan AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

12 November 2003

Dear Jonathan,

WAQ29374, 29375 & 29376

I am writing in response to three Written Assembly Questions that you tabled on 23 October.

Will the Minister confirm the total number of: (a) NHS dentists in 1999 and also 2003, and (b) registered dentists in 1999 and also 2003. (WAQ29374)

(a) The figures for 2003 are not available. However, the available numbers of NHS hospital and community/public health dental staff are provided below, together with the numbers of dentists working as independent contractors in the general dental service who treat at least some NHS patients. Data is provided for 1999 and the most recent available date September 2002.

Dental Staff 1999 and 2002				
(a) NHS dentists	1999		2002	
	Number	Wte	Number	Wte
Hospital dental staff	195	124.6	193	126.9
Community / Public Health dental staff	106	87.3	103	83.7
General Dental Service dentists (1)	998		1015	
of which principals	913		927	
(1) Independent contractors treating at least some NHS patients				
As at 30 September				



(b) I understand from the General Dental Council (GDC) that as at 1 January 1999 there were 1313 dentists registered with the GDC with an address in Wales.
(NB some dentists on the GDC register would not necessarily be practising).

According to information provided by the GDC in August/September 2003, using their post coded data, the number of dentists registered with the GDC with a Welsh post code was **1,317**.

**Can the Minister confirm whether NHS dentists are to be included as part of the new Primary Care Teams, to which patients will have access within 24 hours.
(WAQ29375)**

The Primary Care Team in this context means a doctor, a practice nurse or other health care staff within the 'practice'. It would be highly unusual for the team to include a dentist.

The Welsh Assembly Government is working with NHS Direct towards the provision of an all Wales system of access to emergency dental services available to all patients irrespective of registration status.

How is 'access' defined when providing patient access to a member of the Primary Care Team within 24 hours. (WAQ29376)

By 'access' I mean direct contact between the patient and the professional, in line with the practice's consultation arrangements. In most cases, this consultation will be face to face, but telephone consultation will be a useful alternative for many patients. Patients' wishes in this matter will need to be taken into consideration. A professional, clinical opinion and/or diagnosis is required in order to determine a further course of action e.g. to treat, to refer or to decide that no further action is required. This must be recorded in the normal way in accordance with terms and conditions of service.

I hope this reply is helpful.

