

WESSEX AREA TEAM

POLICY FOR PROVISION OF ORTHODONTICS

MAY 2013

Orthodontics is a corrective treatment for misaligned teeth. There is evidence that orthodontic treatment is clinically effective and can benefit patients at an individual level. However, public funding needs to be directed to best meet the identified health needs of the population which includes taking a view on the population level prioritisation of relevant interventions and treatments. The priorities for the Wessex area are to improve the poor dental health locally, particularly in young children, and increase access to and utilisation of primary dental care services, particularly within high-needs and vulnerable groups.

Orthodontic treatment is therefore considered to be of low clinical priority i.e. in general orthodontic treatment relates to aesthetic as opposed to functional need.

Orthodontic treatment is available on the NHS for:

Those who are aged under 18 years at the time of referral or at the time they were placed on a waiting list AND

within categories 4 and 5 of the Dental Health component of the Index of Orthodontic Treatment Need (IOTN)

OR

within category 3 of the Dental Health component and 6 and above of the Aesthetic component of the IOTN.

Orthodontic treatment may be provided to those outside these categories on the basis of exceptionality, i.e. where there is evidence that:

- the patient is significantly different to the general population of patients with the condition in question;
AND
- the patient is likely to gain significantly more health benefit from the intervention than might be normally expected for patients with that condition.

It is up to the requesting clinician to demonstrate why the patient should be considered as an exception. The fact that a treatment is likely to be effective for a patient is not in itself, a basis for exceptionality.

Orthodontic treatment is not available for aesthetic reasons alone. Social and psychological circumstances, whilst recognised, are not considered decisive factors in funding.

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