

Update on NHS Orthodontic Treatment

Please read the following regarding an update on NHS Orthodontic treatment at Cedar House Orthodontics. The purpose of this is to inform you of the current situation. **Please do not call us to discuss the below as the answers shall be no different to what is detailed below – our staff need the time to concentrate on seeing patients as efficiently as possible. Of course, if there is an issue which you feel is unrelated to the below, then please feel free to call.**

Covid 19 has impacted all walks of life, including orthodontic treatment.

Social distancing, stricter cross infection control measures and procedural restrictions have meant that our capacity to see the number of patients that we used to see per day has been drastically reduced.

This reduction in the number of patients per day that we can see has had a negative impact on treatment times, especially for those waiting to start treatment. This is nationwide and has affected all aspects of healthcare and not just orthodontics.

Who are we currently treating?

Due to the limited number of patients we can see per day, our focus is on completing treatment on those patients already in 'active treatment' i.e. patients in braces. Our clinical obligation lies with those cases so that active treatment is not neglected and left unmonitored. Taking on new cases when we are already struggling with capacity is not currently possible. Hence, generally, no routine assessments or reviews (**with exceptions based on clinical need**) are being seen under the present circumstances.

What does this mean for my child if they were awaiting treatment?

Unfortunately, this does mean that if your child was on a waiting list to start treatment in the NHS financial year 20/21, treatment is likely to be significantly delayed until the impact of the pandemic has reduced on us all. We shall be slowly introducing new cases, but these shall be when capacity allows. In order for this to be fair, this shall largely be based on clinical need.

For those patients previously assessed and awaiting clinical records/treatment planning for future 'waiting to start treatment' list, the impact of this pandemic has meant that waiting times/lists have increased by a large amount. This is a common situation throughout the country.

What if my child turns 18?

As long as the referral is/was received before their 18th birthday, your child shall not be disadvantaged by the COVID – 19 situation and shall be able to start treatment when their turn arrives.

My General Dental Practitioner has referred my child for assessment for orthodontic treatment. When will they be seen?

We are still accepting referrals and these shall be monitored to ensure anything urgent is not missed. The vast majority of orthodontic cases are of a cosmetic nature and not urgent. If a case is deemed urgent, we shall be in touch to book an appointment. All other cases shall be seen when we resume seeing routine assessments, and when their turn arrives. We shall be in contact when capacity allows. As mentioned, the cumulative effect of the coronavirus pandemic has meant that waiting times/lists have increased dramatically.

For those already in treatment, how long shall treatment take in the current situation?

Due to social distancing, enhanced cross infection control measures and other COVID 19 related restrictions, our capacity to treat patients has decreased significantly. This means that intervals between appointments in the current climate will be longer than before. Consequently, treatment shall take longer than initially predicted.

Which type of cases shall be seen first when new treatment resumes?

The majority of orthodontic treatment relates to appearance concerns which may affect the self-confidence of patients. **Please bear in mind that almost every case assessed here has the same complaint – a disliking of the appearance of the teeth and seeking treatment.**

A number of cases shall start treatment over the next few months (when capacity allows us to do so) but these shall be initially chosen on clinical need. The majority of orthodontic cases are cosmetic in nature. There are some which require treatment to be carried out at a very specific time and other rare cases where there is a dental health related need. These cases shall be given priority over the majority of cosmetic cases. So, if you hear of somebody starting treatment before your child/yourself, this is because they have a clinical need and it is not a case of them jumping the waiting list.

What shall happen if there are further lockdowns/restrictions? Could there be further appointment cancellations and delays?

The simple answer to this is, yes. We have to be realistic.

Please do not forget that COVID 19 affects us all; this includes the staff and families of those working at Cedar House Orthodontics. Factors beyond our control could lead to appointments being cancelled.

Our capacity to treat shall be influenced by factors like possible local lockdowns, our staff showing sign/symptoms and having to self – isolate and hence cancel appointments. If a staff member were to test positive for Coronavirus then we may have to cancel patients and close down for a period as per national guidance.

Should staff have to self-isolate at short notice, appointments shall have to be cancelled and rescheduled. Rearranged appointments shall not be for several weeks as the nature of orthodontic appointments means that we book many weeks in advance. It is not possible for us to plan for the many unexpected changes and lockdown measures that may arise over the next few months. Please bear with us. We all have to accept the situation and the inconvenience that may arise.

Please be respectful of Cedar House Orthodontics staff at all times

The fallout from COVID 19 has had a damaging effect on waiting times and waiting lists. We understand and we empathise with you. There are a number of us in the practice whose children, or whom themselves, have had medical procedures cancelled due to the COVID 19 situation and shall not be seen for an extremely long time.

Please be mindful, however, of the fact that this situation is not of our making; COVID 19 has affected us as much as anyone else. Instances of parents being unreasonable and rude to staff are not

acceptable. Respect for staff trying to help in an already challenging situation is essential. Please do not direct your frustration in our direction. **Rude or abusive behaviour shall not be tolerated.**

What if I have a severe problem with my brace?

Anyone with a severe problem with their brace shall be given advice to make them comfortable as soon as practical. Please call/email us – details can be found on the website.

Patients not in braces with a general dental problem should contact their general dental practitioner.

And finally....

We share your frustration during this time and wish that we could go back to things as they were before. The simple fact is that we cannot. We are trying our best to work within the constraints of the current environment but we cannot meet unrealistic expectations.

We look forward to the time when we can resume treatment as normal and, in the meantime, we shall try and help where we can, as we have always done so.

Take care and stay safe.

Best wishes

Cedar House Orthodontics