

## **Urgent Care Patients**

Under the 2026 Regulations, contractors are required to acquire urgent care patients through the 111 helpline, with a small number of exceptions.

It is recognised that a small number of urgent care patients may contact the practice directly rather than calling the 111 helpline.

Slots have been agreed with each practice and the Health Board in order to support the urgent care segment of the contract. The dedicated slots can be reviewed with the contract manager at mid-year.

If a patient fails to attend their urgent care appointment, this will be recorded and will count as urgent activity. The contract holder will receive the payment regardless of the patient attending or not.

## **Urgent Care Treatment**

Urgent care should provide relief from pain and/or prevent significant deterioration of a particular problem, with an onward referral if required. Urgent appointments should also include an oral health assessment (including soft tissue) and onward referral where appropriate.

This care should normally be done in a way that provides, whenever possible, a long-term solution, which may require more than one visit, for example, a patient in pain requiring incision and drainage at the first appointment and extraction at the second appointment.

Where appropriate, and with the patient's consent, urgent care should consist of permanent definitive treatment, including restorations. When definitive treatment is contraindicated or not possible, justification for any treatment or care provided will be recorded in the patient's clinical record.

For patients that do not currently have an existing relationship with the practice, the patient should be made aware of their responsibilities and requirement to seek further care to resolve the urgent issue or prevent a recurrence. When routine treatment is needed, they should be advised to enrol on the Dental Access Portal.

The urgent care package fee is only paid for patients who are not active patients of the practice, that is a patient that has received routine treatment in the previous 36 months.

For the active patient there are no care packages that cover temporary restorations, only definitive restorations.

## **Warranties**

Treatment provided for new urgent patients under an urgent care slot is warranted for a period of 12 months from the initial appointment. A patient should directly contact the practice if they continue to have issues with the same tooth. Patients do not need to go through NHS 111 Wales or the dental helpline. No further care package or patient charge can be generated.

There are times, for example, when a clinician sees a new urgent patients and may decide to extirpate the pulp and place a temporary restoration and advises the patient to go back to the DAP/seek a regular dental practice as the patient presented with a viable tooth and wished to attempt endodontic treatment. In this scenario, no warranty is available if the patient needed urgent care again they would need to go through the normal health board urgent slot process.

However, if a patient wished to have an extraction but for clinical reasons it could not be done at that appointment and the pulp was extirpated and temporary dressing was placed, this scenario would be covered by the warranty for new urgent patients.

## **Exceptions - New Urgent Patients seen outside of standard pathway**

- **Children in pain**  
If a child in pain is brought to the practice by a parent or guardian, then care can be provided without going through 111 or the health boards dental urgent line. The health board will need to be notified by the practice within 7 working days.
- **Adults in pain**  
Under normal circumstances the patient should be instructed to telephone 111. There maybe a few clinical scenarios when a patient presents with a true dental emergency that it is ethically inappropriate to delay their care. If a new urgent patient is seen outside of the normal pathway, then the health board should be informed within 7 working days to ensure that appropriate remuneration against the contract is confirmed.

**Please notify the Health Board of any adults or children seen outside of the normal pathway within 7 working days via email: [BCU.DentalContractingTeam@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:BCU.DentalContractingTeam@wales.nhs.uk)**



## NEW URGENT PATIENT PATHWAY

Patient contacts NHS 111 Wales requesting urgent care. Details sent to BCU HB dental helpline for triage. Does the helpline consider that the patient requires urgent treatment.

Yes

No

Does the patient have their own GDP or received urgent care at an NHS practice from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 (12 month warranty applies)

Dental helpline signposts to Dental Access Portal / non-urgent access session or alternative service.

Yes

No

Refer patient back to their own GDP / previous practice for an appointment unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Dental helpline team books patient in to designated urgent care slot.

Patient seen at their designated Urgent Care appointment. Do they require a further visit to complete the urgent treatment and address the presenting urgent issue?

Yes

No

Treat patient, advise that further treatment is required.

Practice confirms appointment with patient. This appointment should not be held in the slots reserved for the helpline.

Complete urgent treatment and explain that if there are any problems with the urgent treatment provided to contact the practice directly.

Submit FP17W.

Treat patient and explain that if there are any problems with the urgent treatment provided to contact the practice directly.

Complete treatment, submit FP17W.