NHS
Lincolnshire
Integrated Care Board

Proposed new NHS dental services in Lincolnshire: Engagement Report

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Engagement Period: 25 June 2026 – 19 July 2026

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Executive Summary

Between 25 June 2026 – 19 July 2026, NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (LICB) carried out an engagement exercise which included a countywide survey to gather feedback from residents on proposed new NHS dental services in **Lincoln, Boston** and **Skegness**. Alongside the survey, LICB received feedback from groups supporting people who experience health inequalities. This report presents the findings of the engagement exercise.

About the proposal

As part of plans to improve access to NHS dental care across Lincolnshire. The ICB is proposing to introduce new NHS dental services for Lincolnshire residents based in **Lincoln, Boston** and **Skegness**. These locations have been identified as the areas where there is unmet need for access to services and where oral health is the poorest. The service will be accessible to residents across Lincolnshire, within the capacity of the services, not just those living in these areas. Care will be delivered by fully qualified dental professionals, alongside dental care professionals in training where appropriate, with the necessary supervision and support.

The new services will focus on: Early intervention and prevention; NHS dental treatment and advice; signposting to specialist dental services and targeted oral health promotion programmes.

Response to county wide survey

- **Survey structure:** The survey covered: Current access to NHS dental care; experiences of current dental provision and views on the proposed new services.
- **Survey response:** A total of **1,780** survey responses were received, reflecting substantial participation in the engagement exercise.
- **Response by District:** Responses were received from across all Lincolnshire districts, East Lindsey has the highest number of responses (528/1,780; 30%). The report breaks down the results by district in graphs. Percentages show the proportion of respondents in each district who selected each option. Data labels are shown for the Lincolnshire total only, to keep charts clear and easy to read.
- **Promotion:** The survey was promoted through targeted email communications, the ICB website, social media channels, and partner networks.
- **Reach:** Free-text comments indicated wide reach, most commonly via email, Facebook and online sources, supported by NHS Lincolnshire ICB communications, community networks and sharing by friends across multiple platforms.

Respondents did not answer every question; the number of responses per question will be shown throughout the report.

Executive Summary

Overview of survey results

- **Strong support for the proposal:** 90% (1,455/1,615) of respondents strongly agreed (79%) or agreed (11%) with introducing additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness. All districts remained supportive, but South Kesteven and South Holland showed lower levels of agreement compared with the rest of the county (South Kesteven: 65% (122/186), South Holland: 76% (57/75), compared to 92–98% agreement in Boston, Lincoln, North Kesteven, East Lindsey and West Lindsey districts).
- **Access to NHS dental care is very difficult:** Across Lincolnshire, people find it overwhelmingly difficult to access NHS dental care, with 81% (1,430/1,766) saying it is difficult (18%) or very difficult (63%), and only 15% (265/1,766) reporting any ease of access. South Kesteven district reported the highest difficulty in access with 89% (182/204) describing access as very difficult (14%) or very difficult (75%). South Holland also reported an equally high level of difficulty, with 89% (69/77) of respondents describing access as difficult (23%) or very difficult (66%). This was closely followed by East Lindsey, where 85% (440/517) of respondents said access was difficult (14%) or very difficult (71%).
- **Barriers to accessing NHS dental care:** Across Lincolnshire, the most common difficulty reported was not being able to find an NHS dentist accepting NHS patients -78% (1,047/1,342)
- **What matters most to people when accessing NHS dental care:** Across Lincolnshire, the most important factors for people are quality of dental care (74%, 1,214/1,642) and reasonable cost of treatment (64%, 1,051/1,642), followed by ease of booking and waiting time (both 45%, 739/1,642).
- **What would make accessing NHS dental care easier:** Across Lincolnshire, people said access would be easier with affordable costs (50%, 816/1,637), more short notice appointments (39%, 631/1,637), being able to book online (39%, 638/1,637) and longer opening hours (30%, 491/1,637)
- **Preferred opening times for proposed services:** Across Lincolnshire, the most common response was no preference for opening times (43%, 703/1,636). Among those who did express a preference, people most often selected evenings (39%, 638/1,636), weekends (37%, 605/1,636) and weekday daytime (35%, 573/1,636), with fewer choosing early mornings (15%, 245/1,636).
- **How far people are able to travel for NHS dental care:** Across Lincolnshire, most people said they could travel 6–10 miles (33%, 537/1,626), followed by 0–5 miles (30%, 488/1,626). Smaller proportions were willing to travel 11–15 miles (19%, 309/1,626), 16–20 miles (10%, 163/1,626) or 20 miles or more (9%, 147/1,626). District differences show Boston and Lincoln with the strongest preference for shorter travel distances.
- **Mode of travel people use most often for healthcare appointments**: Across Lincolnshire, most people said they drive themselves to healthcare appointments (70% 1,141/1630). A further 13% usually travel by car with someone else driving, while only small proportions use public transport, taxis, walking, or other modes. This was fairly consistent between all districts.
- **Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services:** 78% (1,240/1,590) of respondents said they were very likely (64%) or likely (14%) to use the proposed new NHS dental services.18% (286/1,590) said they were unlikely (9%) or very unlikely (9%).4% (63/1,590) said they don't know. The main reasons for not being likely to use the proposed services were that respondents already had an NHS dentist, preferred to stay with their current practice, or felt the proposed locations were too far from where they live. Some comments also mentioned district-specific preferences for provision closer to home, for example, Spalding/Pinchbeck (South Holland), Grantham/Stamford/Bourne (South Kesteven), Louth/Mablethorpe/coastal villages (East Lindsey), Gainsborough/Market Rasen (West Lindsey), or Sleaford/Grantham (North Kesteven).

Executive Summary

Summary of feedback from engagement activities: Feedback from organisations supporting people who may experience health inequalities highlighted severe and consistent barriers to NHS dental care across multiple communities. Overall, the feedback pointed to poor access and long waits, affordability challenges, transport difficulties, fear, shame and trauma linked to previous experiences, low trust in existing services, the need for trauma-informed and culturally competent care, and the importance of flexible or outreach-based provision. Feedback for each group is summarised as follows:

- **Homelessness and rough sleeping:** Services supporting people experiencing homelessness reported severe barriers to NHS dental care, with some individuals removing their own teeth or using substances to manage pain. Shame, trauma, and difficulty keeping appointments were major issues. Outreach models such as mobile dental provision were described as effective.
- **Drug and alcohol recovery:** Recovery workers highlighted high levels of anxiety and shame, difficulties making and keeping appointments, and people using substances to cope with dental pain. Trauma-informed, non-judgemental care was considered essential. Mobile or outreach services were viewed as particularly helpful.
- **Criminal justice and probation:** People on probation and those leaving prison face extremely limited access to NHS dentistry, with transport, affordability and lack of support to register with a dentist acting as major barriers. Some individuals reportedly re-offended to obtain dental treatment in prison. Evening and weekend appointments were considered vital due to irregular work patterns. Domestic abuse survivors faced unmet dental need affecting confidence and mental health.
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities:** Traveller support described very poor access to NHS dentistry, fear of judgement, previous negative experiences, and concerns about statutory involvement. Some families continued to remove their own teeth due to lack of care. Flexible appointment times and trust-building were seen as critical.
- **Ukrainian community support** Feedback highlighted unfamiliarity with UK dental systems, limited NHS availability, and reliance on private or overseas treatment. Under-employed Ukrainian dental professionals living locally were identified as an untapped resource. Clear communication and school-hours/weekend appointments were preferred.
- **Polish community support** Polish support reported long waits, reliance on private treatment and language barriers. Some families travelled abroad for dental care. School-based dental models were suggested to improve children's access in Europe.
- **Wider Eastern European language support** reported that residents from Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Poland and Russia reported very limited NHS access, unaffordable private treatment, and widespread travel abroad for care. Concerns were raised about the quality of UK dental work, lack of translation support, and low trust in NHS dentistry. High-quality, accessible services with flexible appointment times were strongly supported.
- **Children and young people:** highlighted poor access to NHS dentistry, particularly for families moving into Lincolnshire who struggle to find an NHS dentist. Concerns were raised that some practices only accept children for NHS treatment where parents register as private patients. Weekend and after school appointments were strongly supported to improve access for working families and reduce the need for children to miss school.

What's next? The feedback will help us better understand dental needs in Lincolnshire and support wider work to explore future improvements to NHS dental services.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey or share their views, and to the organisations and community partners who helped ensure that a wide range of voices and experiences were included in this engagement.

How the survey was promoted

Dental Survey

- Promoted through the ICB stakeholder database to over 12,000 residents
- Shared with GP and dental practices, stakeholders, and provider partners
- Digital poster with QR codes developed and circulated to support engagement
- Promoted via Healthwatch, voluntary sector organisations, and key stakeholder networks and local support groups
- Advertised on the ICB website, social media channels, Nextdoor and local village Facebook groups
- Shared through Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) across Lincolnshire
- Distributed widely through community networks and local contacts to maximise reach, with partner organisations also sharing the survey within their own networks.
- Directly contacted groups supporting people who experience health inequalities and invited them to share feedback in the way that suits them the best.
- Supported by a media campaign, including press releases that generated coverage in local media, including the BBC.



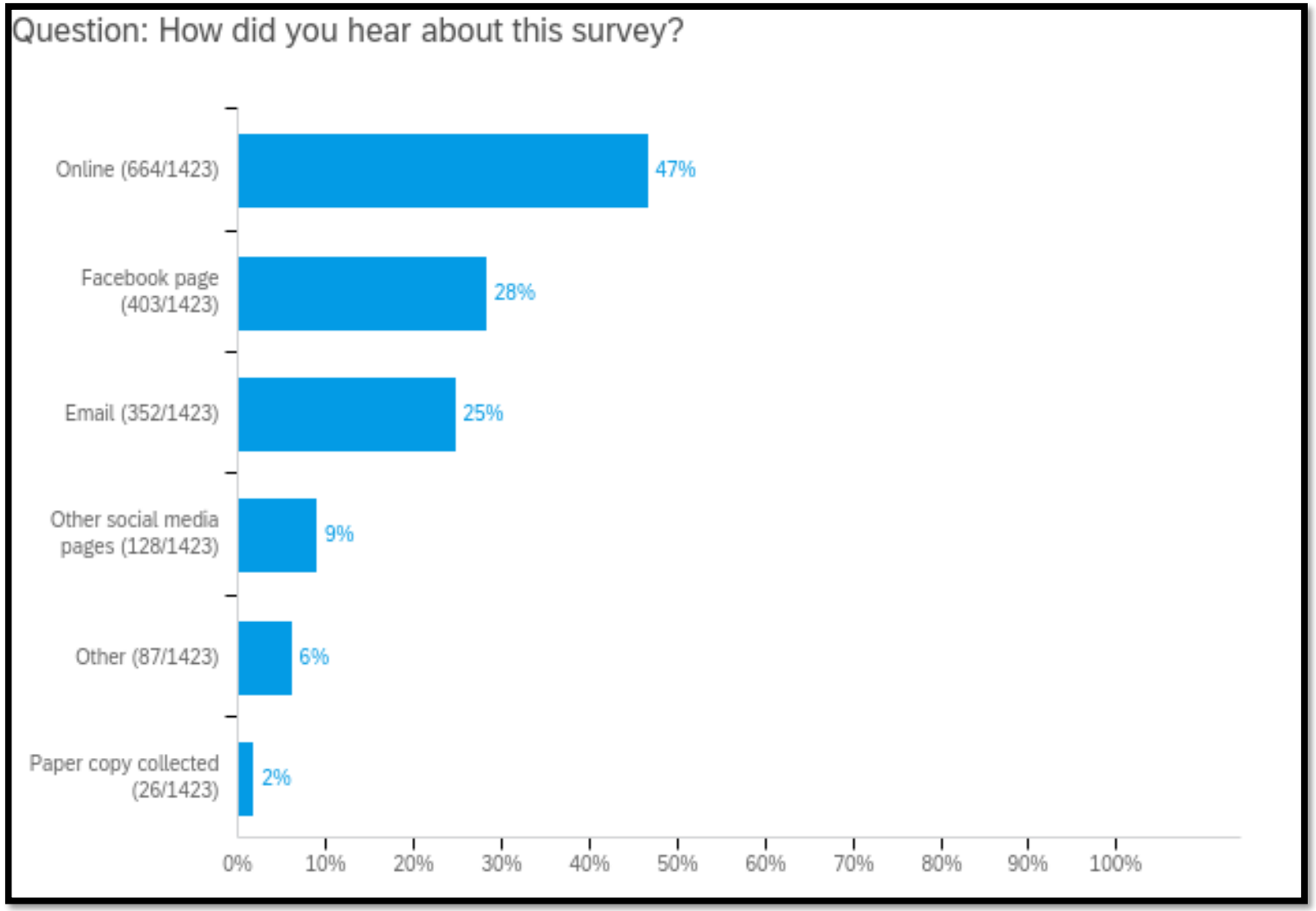
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Section 1: Countywide Dental Survey results



Survey promotion and opportunities for further involvement

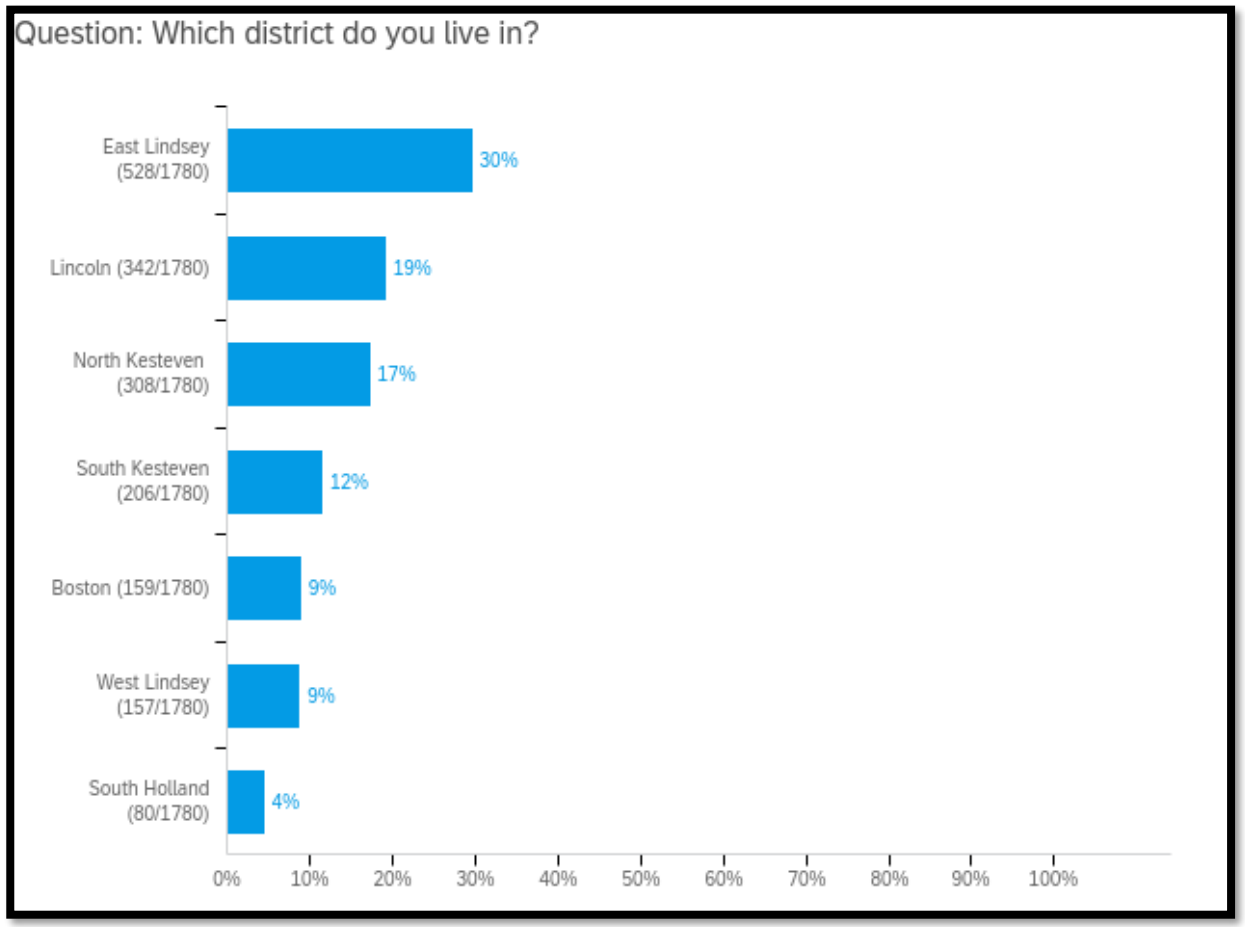
Most respondents heard about the survey online – 47% (664/1423). Other key routes included Facebook pages – 28% (406/1423), emails from organisations – 25% (352/1423), other social media – 9% (127/1423), other methods – 6% (87/1423), and paper copies – 2% (29/1423).



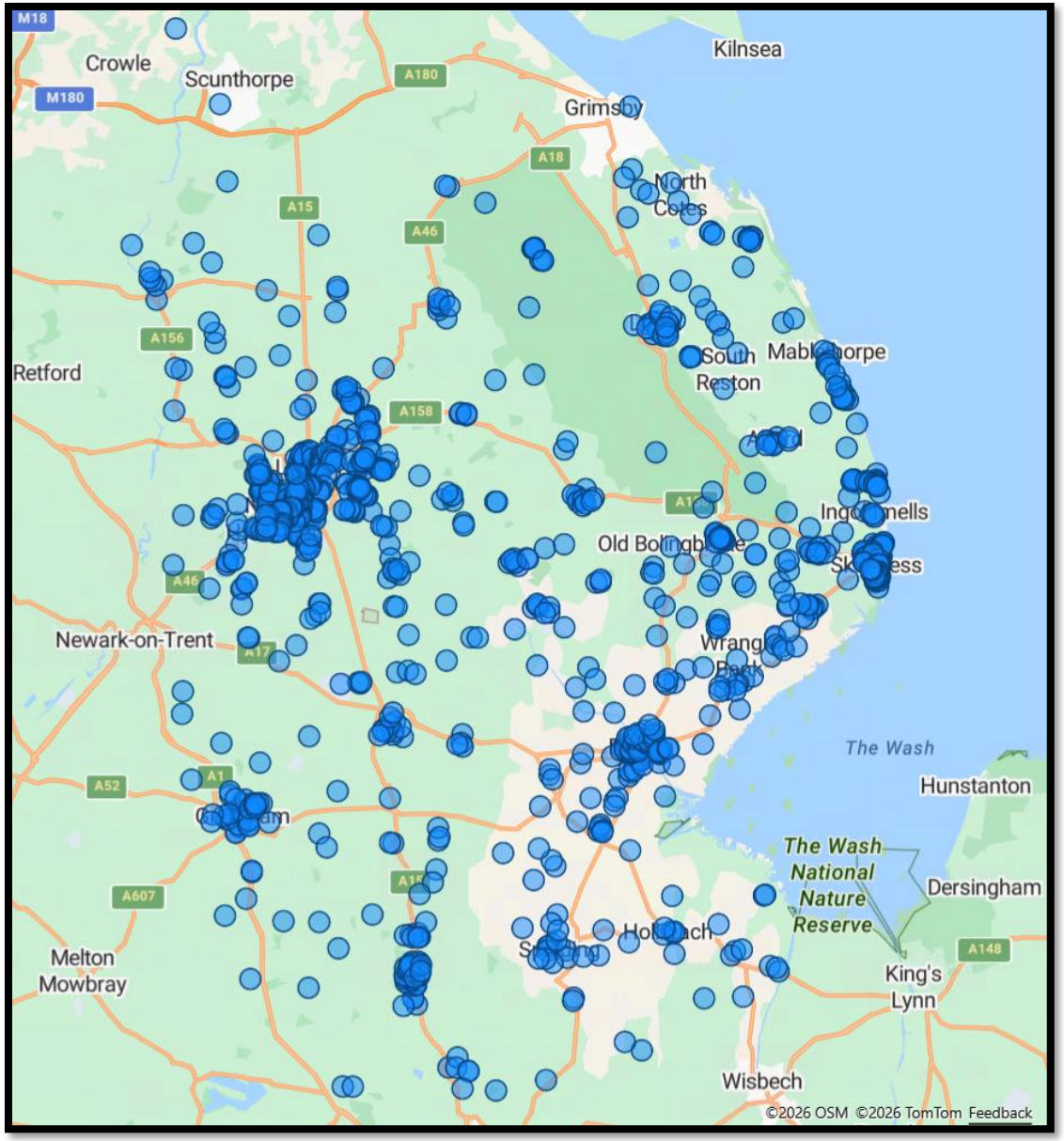
Additional detail from free-text comments: Respondents were asked to give more detail about the online, Facebook, email and other routes they selected. Comments described a wide mix of communication sources. Most commonly, people mentioned online channels, Facebook and email, including NHS Lincolnshire ICB communications, local Facebook community pages, GP practice pages, councillors and neighbourhood networks such as Nextdoor. Other sources included GP practices and Patient Participation Groupss, councils, NHS organisations, voluntary groups, workplaces, local media, posters or leaflets in community venues, and friends or relatives. Some respondents could not recall the source.

Opportunities for further involvement A total of 368 respondents also provided their contact details to express interest in taking part in future dental engagement activities and 517 wanted to be involved by being added to our circulation list.

Geographic distribution of responses



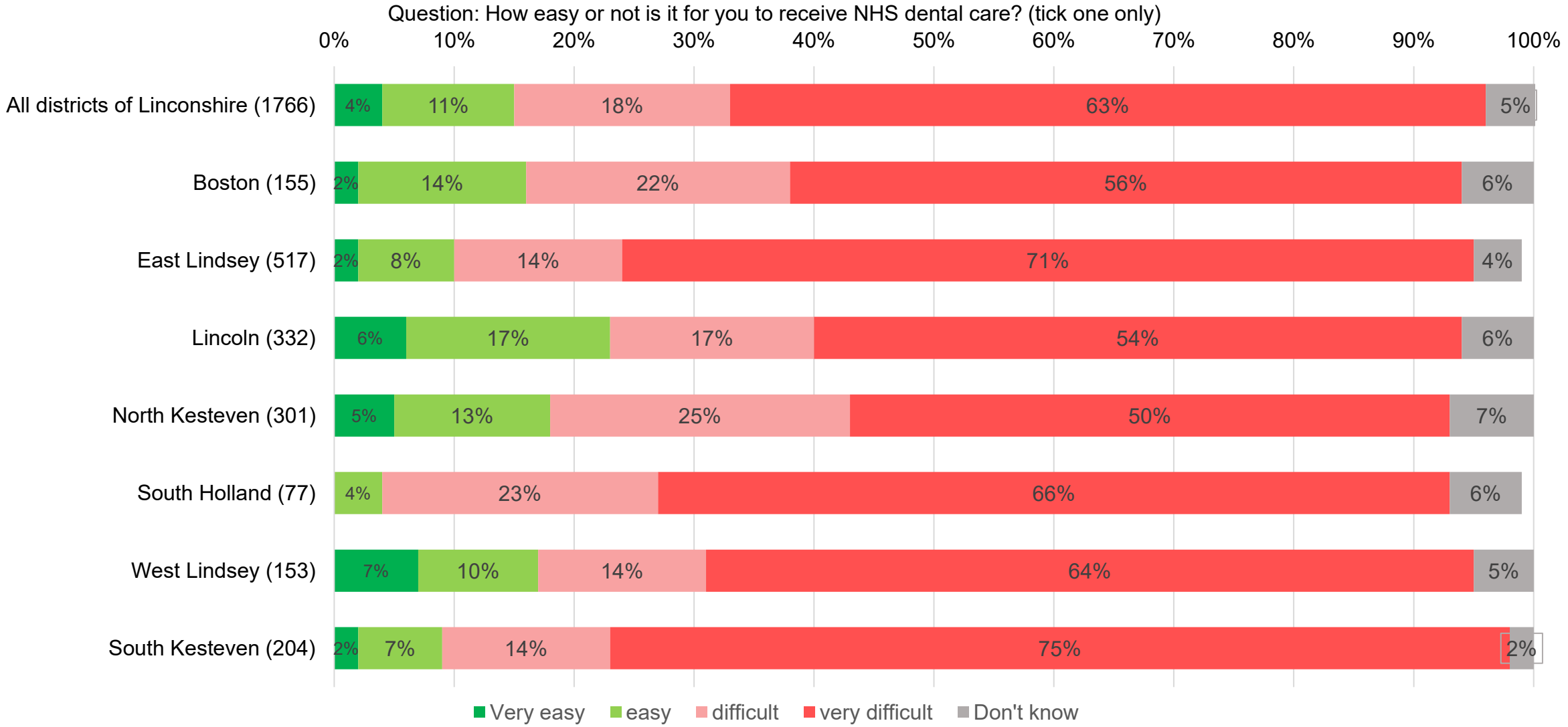
- ✓ **1780 responses** were received from **all Lincolnshire districts**
- ✓ **East Lindsey** had the highest number of responses (30%, n=528)



Single response postcode

Ease of Access

Most people across Lincolnshire find it difficult or very difficult to access NHS dental care. While some districts report slightly better experiences, overall, relatively few respondents said they found it easy to access NHS dental services. South Kesteven district reported the highest difficulty in access with 89% (182/204) describing access as very difficult (14%) or very difficult (75%). South Holland also reported an equally high level of difficulty, with 89% (69/77) of respondents describing access as difficult (23%) or very difficult (66%).This was closely followed by East Lindsey, where 85% (440/517) of respondents said access was difficult (14%) or very difficult (71%).



Reasons why a small number found dental access easy by district

Overall, ease was mainly due to existing registration, long-term continuity, and being fortunate enough to secure a place at a nearby NHS practice.
Question: What makes it easy for you to access NHS dental care?

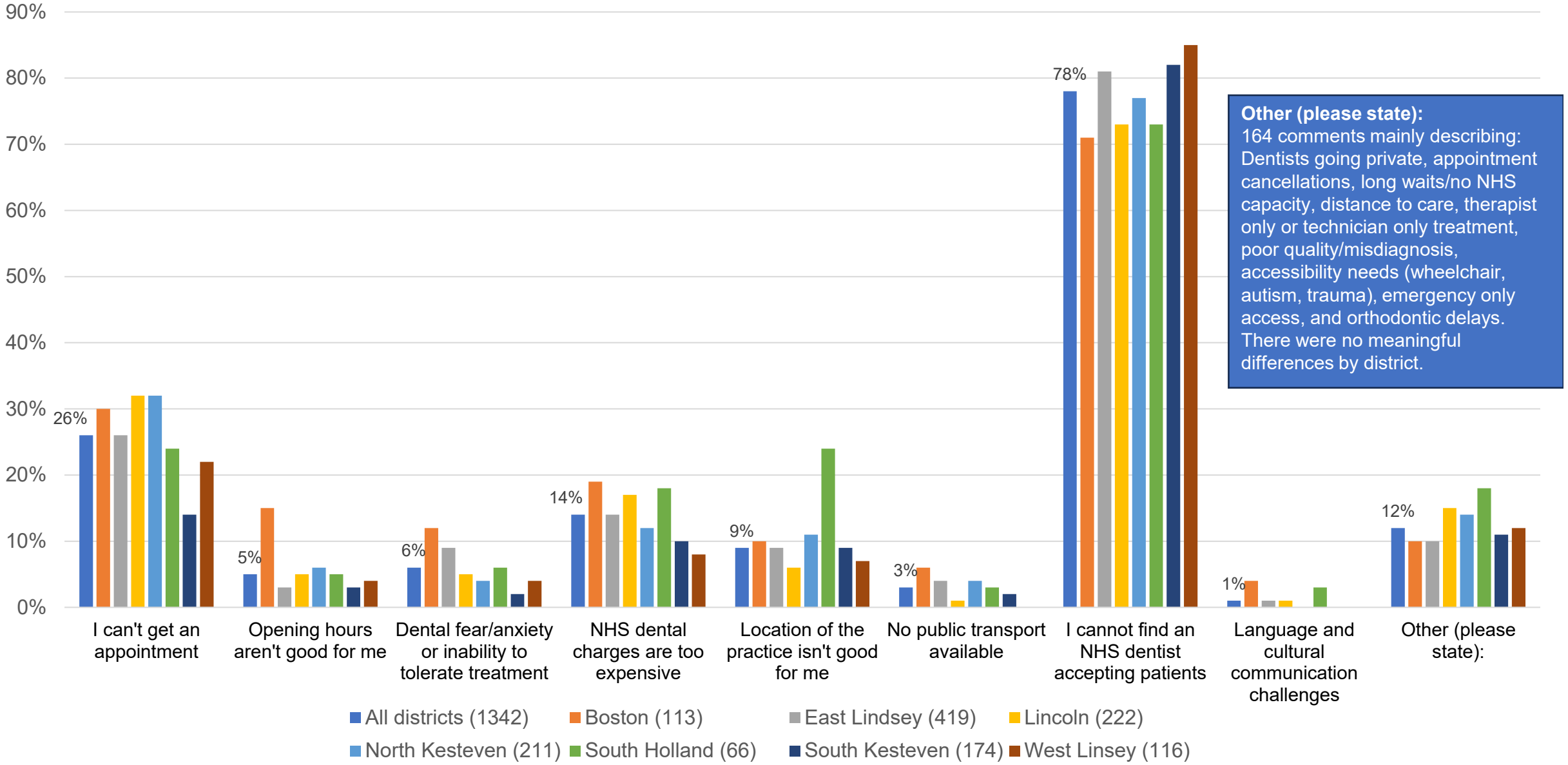
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District	Summary of comments
Boston (20 comments)	Already registered with NHS dentists, often long-term; some mention Wyberton taking NHS patients; easy access due to location, parking, flexible hours; a few travel for NHS care.
East Lindsey (37 comments)	Mostly long-term NHS registration; some lucky to secure places; family connections; local practices; continuity of care makes access easy.
Lincoln (55 comments)	Long-term NHS patients, many for decades; regular 6-monthly check-ups; efficient practices; some use Denplan; emergency access varies; ease mainly from existing registration.
North Kesteven (39 comments)	Access easy because people are already registered, often for years; Treeline, West Parade, Sleaford mentioned; some travel; responsive surgeries; driving makes access easier.
South Holland (2 comments)	Access was easy because they had managed to keep an NHS dentist, and because their dentist is close by.
South Kesteven (11 comments)	Long-standing NHS patients; some dentists going private; many registered decades ago; regular check-ups maintained; one practice still keeping NHS patients.
West Lindsey (15 comments)	Mostly long-term NHS registration; many registered in Lincoln or Gainsborough; feel lucky; can usually get appointments; good transport links.

What makes it difficult for people to access NHS dental care

Across Lincolnshire, the most common difficulty reported was not being able to find an NHS dentist accepting NHS patients -78% (1,047/1,342)

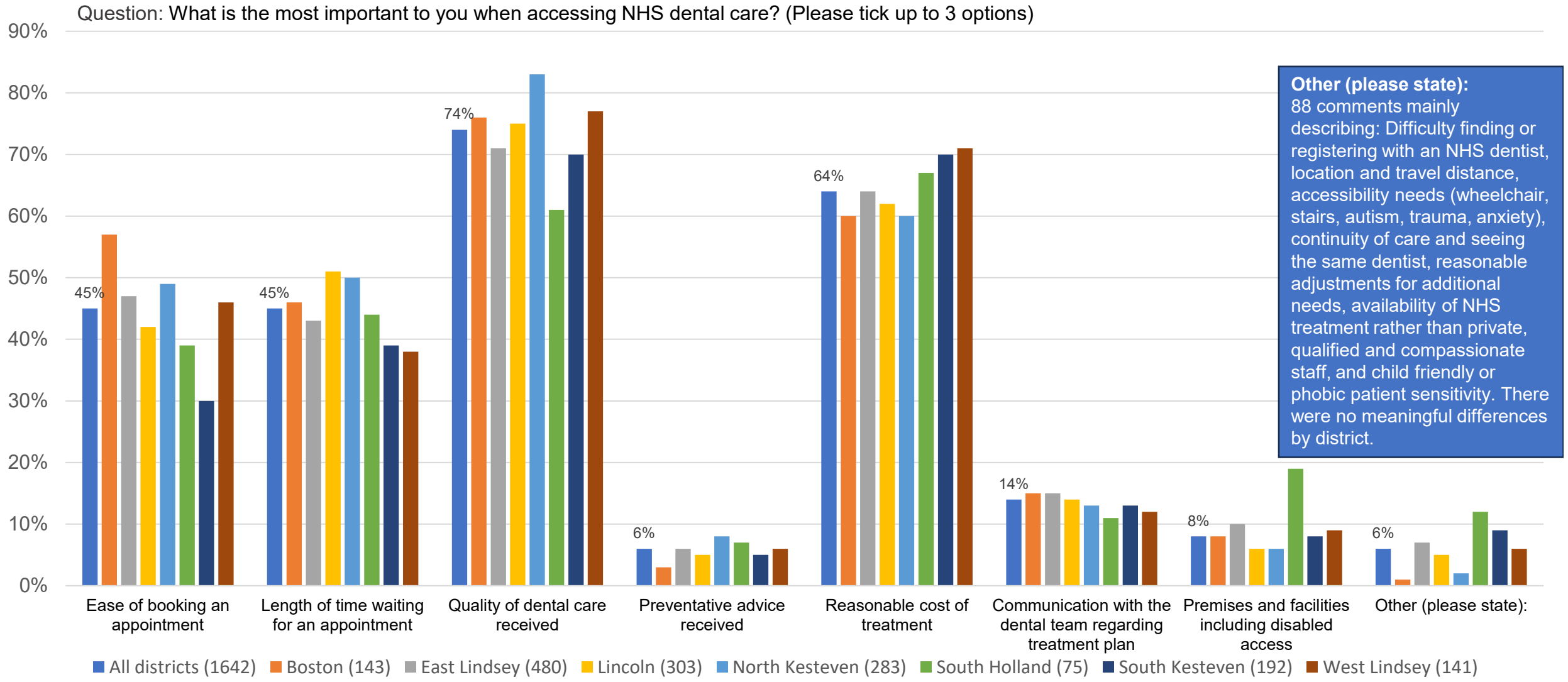
Question: What has made it difficult for you to access NHS dental care? (Please tick all that apply).



Other (please state):
164 comments mainly describing: Dentists going private, appointment cancellations, long waits/no NHS capacity, distance to care, therapist only or technician only treatment, poor quality/misdiagnosis, accessibility needs (wheelchair, autism, trauma), emergency only access, and orthodontic delays. There were no meaningful differences by district.

What is the most important to people when accessing NHS dental care

Across Lincolnshire, the most important factors for people are the quality of dental care (74%, 1,214/1,642) and reasonable cost of treatment (64%, 1,051/1,642), followed by ease of booking and waiting time (both 45%, 739/1,642).

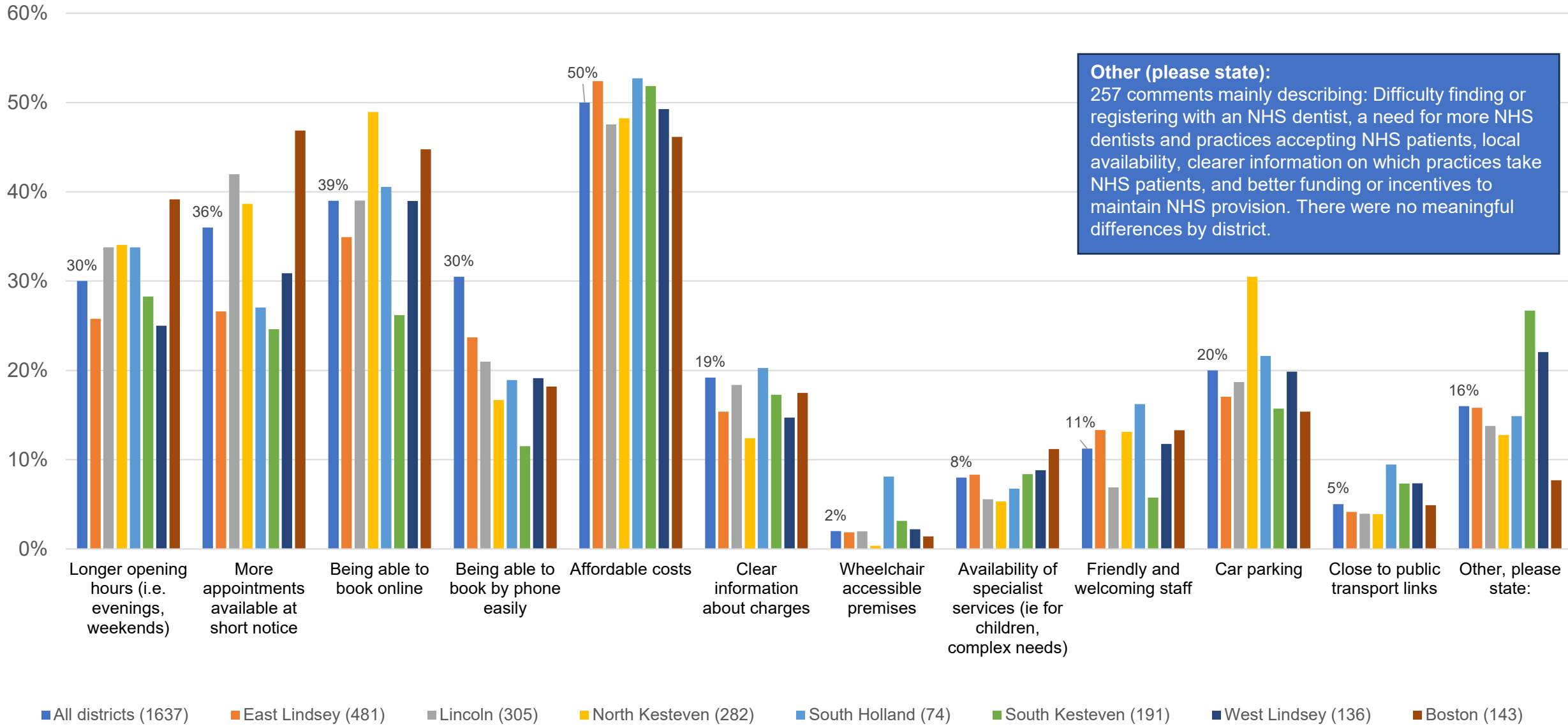


Other (please state):
88 comments mainly describing: Difficulty finding or registering with an NHS dentist, location and travel distance, accessibility needs (wheelchair, stairs, autism, trauma, anxiety), continuity of care and seeing the same dentist, reasonable adjustments for additional needs, availability of NHS treatment rather than private, qualified and compassionate staff, and child friendly or phobic patient sensitivity. There were no meaningful differences by district.

What would make accessing NHS dental care easier?

Across Lincolnshire, people said access would be easier with affordable costs (50%, 816/1,637), more short notice appointments (39%, 631/1,637), being able to book online (39%, 638/1,637) and longer opening hours (30%, 491/1,637)

Question: What would make it easier for you to get NHS dental care? (Please tick up to 3 options)

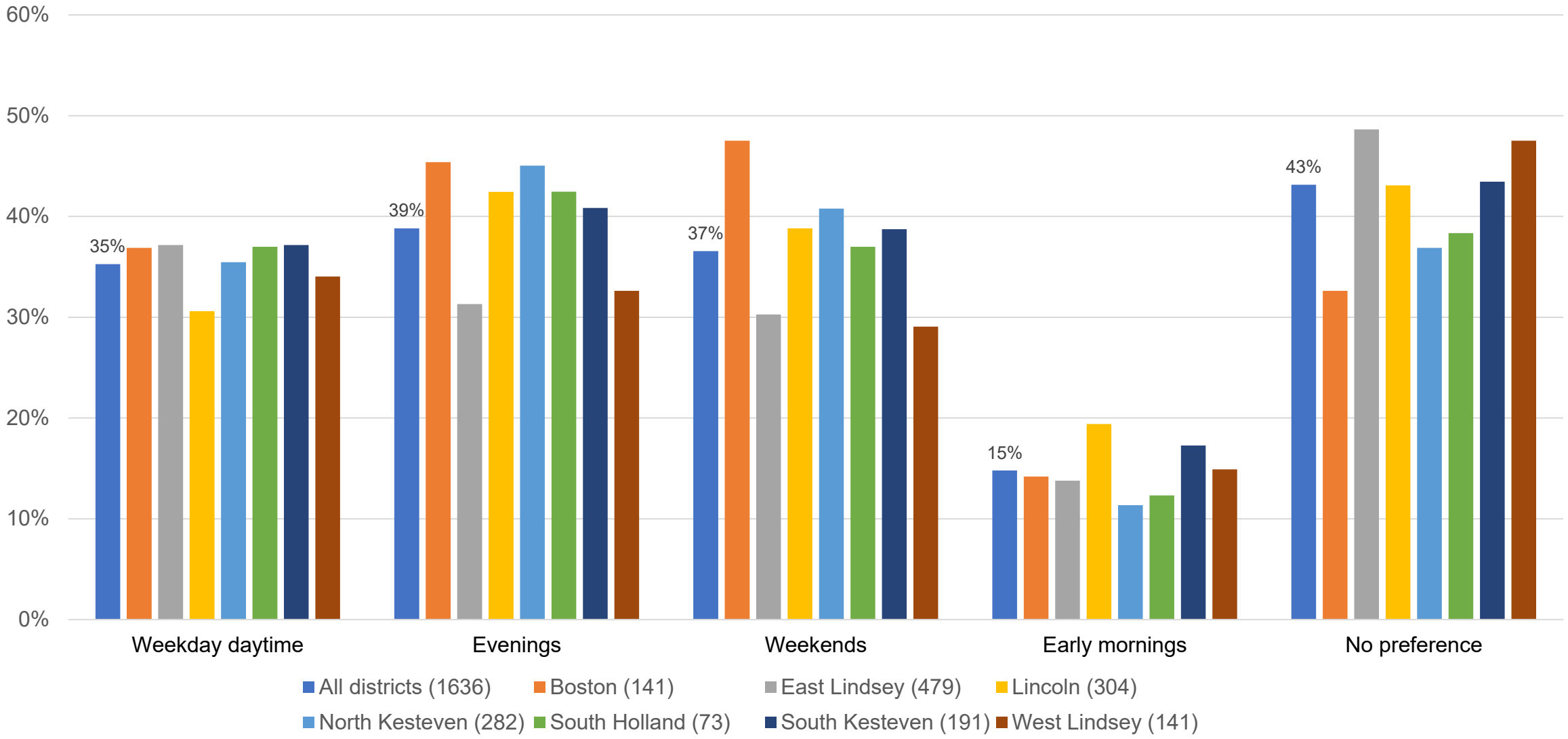


Other (please state):
257 comments mainly describing: Difficulty finding or registering with an NHS dentist, a need for more NHS dentists and practices accepting NHS patients, local availability, clearer information on which practices take NHS patients, and better funding or incentives to maintain NHS provision. There were no meaningful differences by district.

Opening times that would be the most helpful to people

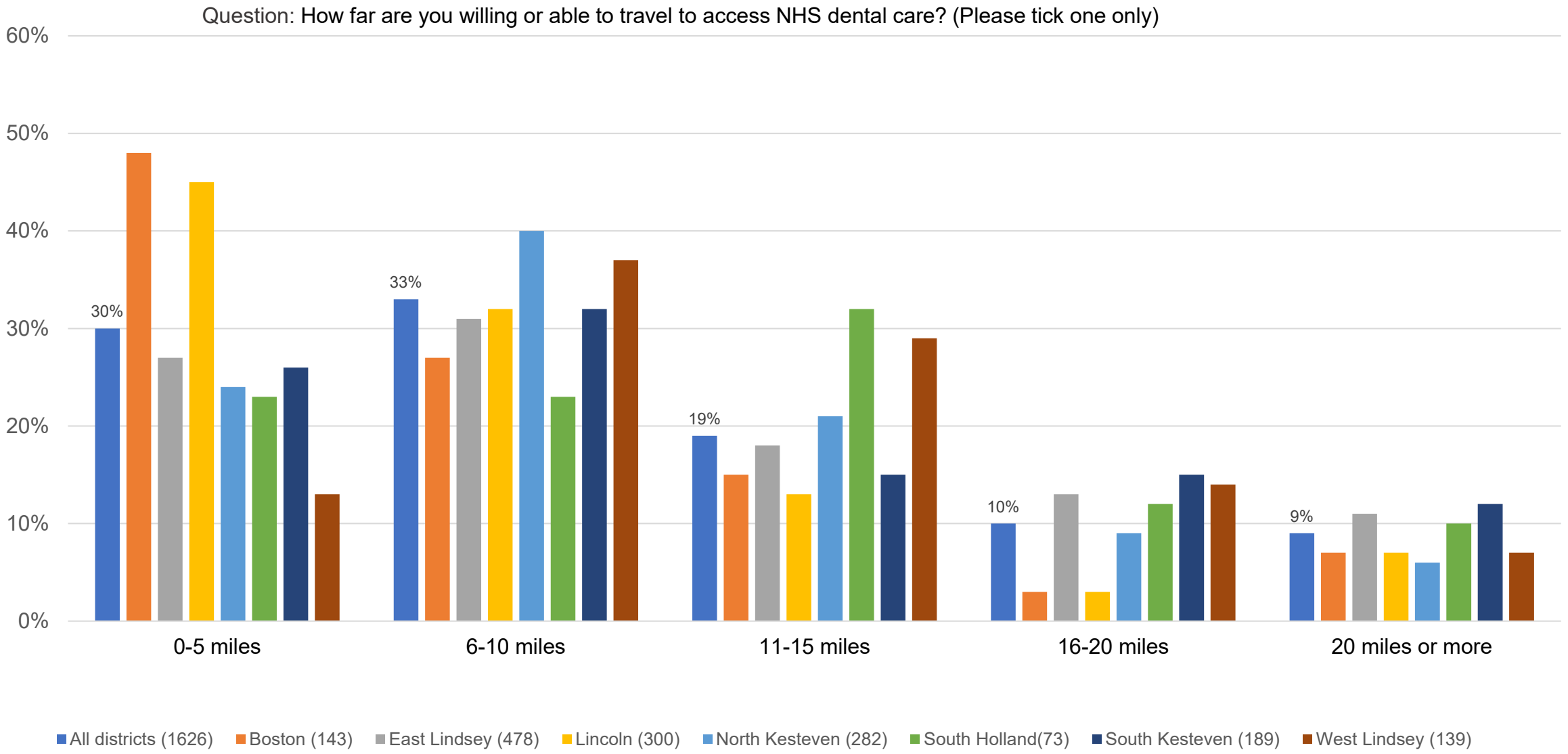
Across Lincolnshire, the most common response was no preference for opening times (43%, 703/1,636). Among those who did express a preference, people most often selected evenings (39%, 638/1,636), weekends (37%, 605/1,636) and weekday daytime (35%, 573/1,636), with fewer choosing early mornings (15%, 245/1,636).

Question: Which opening times would be most helpful to you for the proposed new NHS Dental services? (Please tick all that apply)

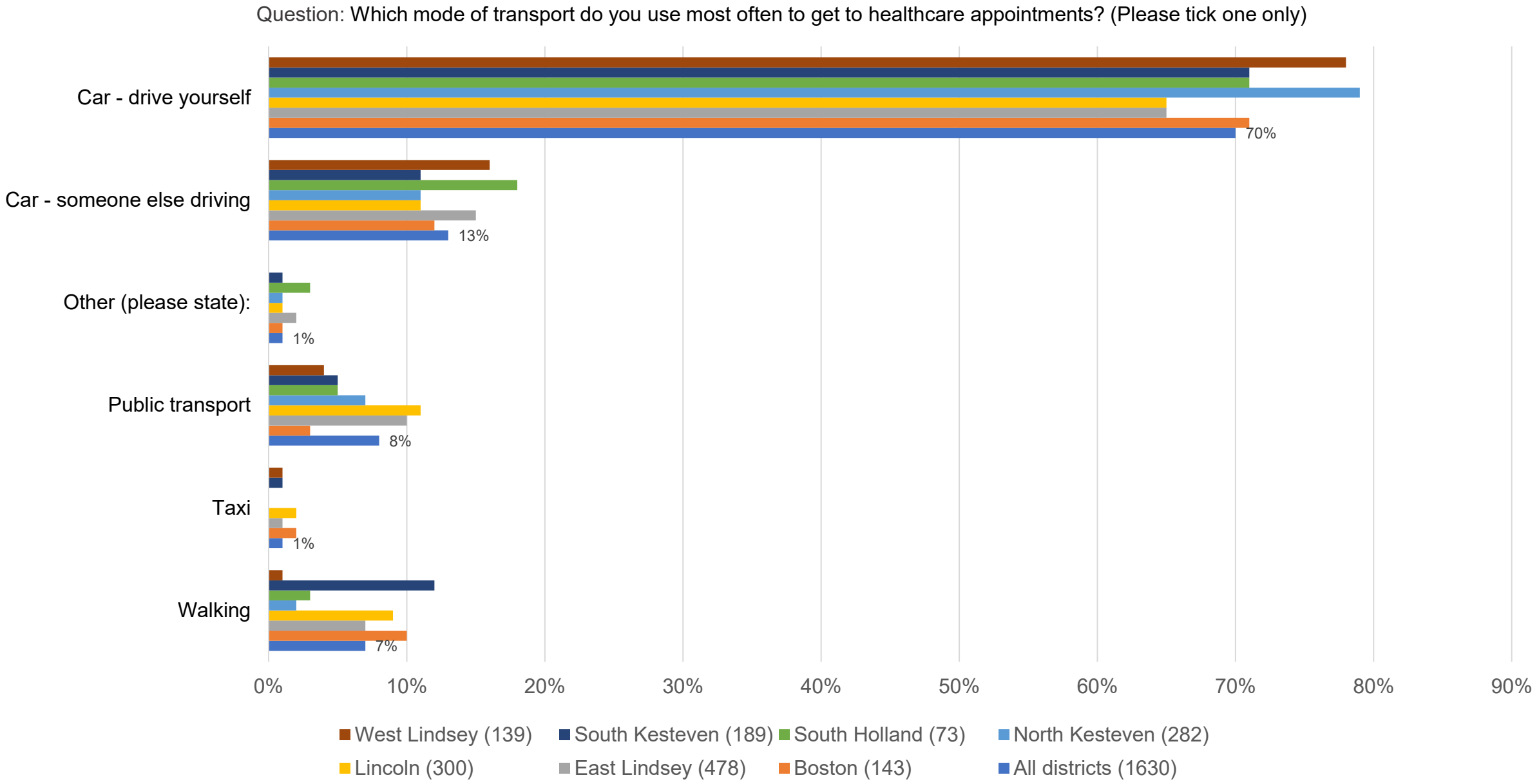


How far people are able to travel

Across Lincolnshire, most people said they could travel 6–10 miles (33%, 537/1,626), followed by 0–5 miles (30%, 488/1,626). Smaller proportions were willing to travel 11–15 miles (19%, 309/1,626), 16–20 miles (10%, 163/1,626) or 20 miles or more (9%, 147/1,626). District differences show Boston and Lincoln with the strongest preference for shorter travel distances.

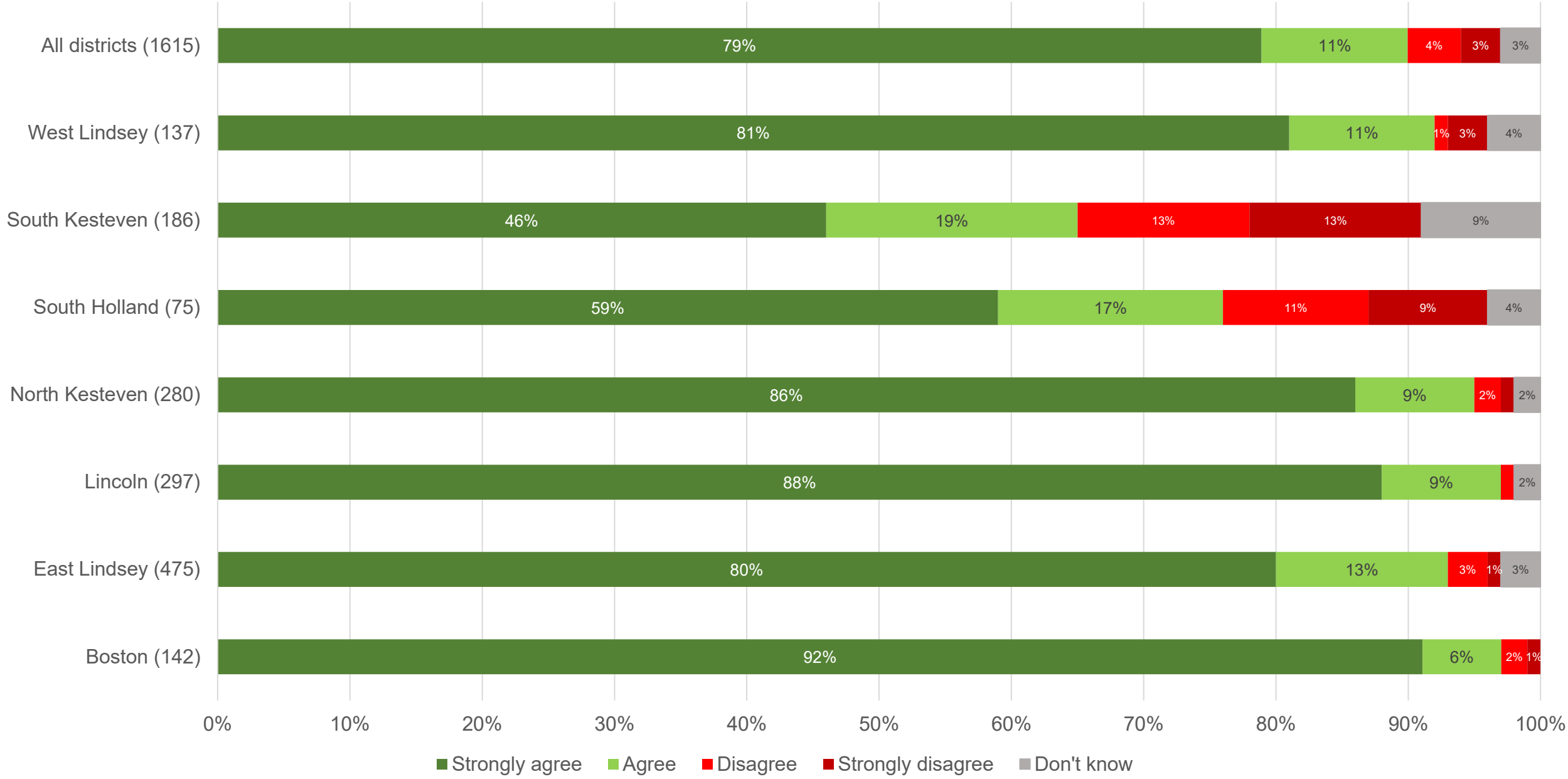


Mode of travel Across Lincolnshire, most people said they drive themselves to healthcare appointments (70% 1,141/1630). A further 13% usually travel by car with someone else driving, while only small proportions use public transport, taxis, walking, or other modes. This was fairly consistent between all districts.



Level of agreement with the proposal

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness?



Level of agreement with the proposal – reason for answer by district - Boston

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness- reason for answer

Summary of comments by district	Strongly agree/agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
Boston (72 comments)	(70 comments) **Strong agreement driven by:** **No NHS access** people say Boston has *virtually no* NHS dental provision; no dentists taking new NHS patients; described as a "dental desert." **Severe shortage** practices full, long waiting lists, NHS places closing quickly, limited to children or basic check-ups/fillings only. **Forced into private care** private treatment unaffordable; some pay hundreds of pounds; monthly plans too costly; many simply go without. **Pain, harm and emergencies** self-extraction, untreated infections, broken teeth, hospitalisation, dentures needed but no access, no emergency or late-night NHS options. **Long-distance travel** travel to Norwich (2 hours each way), Lincoln, Sleaford, Coningsby; fuel and parking costs significant; mobility issues make travel impossible. **Impact on families** children waiting years; families unable to register together; community hubs seeing children with little/no dental care; parents worried children will suffer. **Need for accessible local services** desire for a large multi-dentist service offering full treatment locally; better emergency, late-night and weekend availability; non-cosmetic complex care. **Affordability barriers** – people on low incomes cannot afford private treatment; some explicitly say they need NHS care because they "don't have money." **Population growth** Boston's rising population increasing pressure, especially for children. **General lack of availability** repeated statements of "can't get an NHS dentist," "not enough dentists," "no dentists taking on," "shocking service," "crying out for NHS dentists." **Overall reason:** Residents agreed because **NHS dental access in Boston is almost non-existent**, causing **pain, long delays, financial hardship, long travel, and years without treatment**.	(2 comments) **Different areas have greater need** – respondent works in a dental practice and says shortages are worse in **Skegness, King's Lynn and Cambridge direction**, not Boston. **Closer services preferred** – brief comment simply stating **"Closer"**, indicating they want services nearer to where they live.

Level of agreement with the proposal – reason for answer by district – East Lindsey

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness- reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Strongly agree/agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
East Lindsey (comments 330)	(309 comments) **Strong agreement driven by:** **No NHS access** no NHS dentists taking patients across Skegness, Mablethorpe, Louth, Spilsby, Horncastle and nearby villages; long waiting lists; many removed from NHS lists after Covid. **Forced into private care** private treatment unaffordable (e.g., £220 fillings, £500–£600 extractions/crowns); pensioners, disabled people and low-income families unable to pay. **Children unable to access care** many children have never seen a dentist; braces delayed for years; emergency NHS appointments unavailable. **Long-distance travel** people travelling 20–100 miles (Sheffield, Birmingham, Boston, Holbeach, Coningsby); poor public transport from rural/coastal areas. **Pain and deterioration** untreated abscesses, broken teeth, failing dentures, infections worsening, people removing their own teeth. **Severe shortage across the area** practices closed, NHS dentists leaving, one NHS dentist for 12,600 people, tourist seasons increasing pressure. **Impact on families** children unable to access NHS care, long waits leading to extractions, families travelling long distances, and parents struggling with unaffordable private costs. **Need more local NHS services** calls for dentists in Louth, Horncastle, Spilsby, Woodhall Spa; need for rural/coastal access; desire for reliable NHS provision. **Overall reason:** Residents agreed because **NHS dental provision in East Lindsey is extremely limited**, leaving people in pain, unable to afford private care, and travelling long distances for basic treatment.	**(21 comments) Disagreement driven by:** **Locations too far away** Lincoln, Boston and Skegness are 40–50 miles away for many; difficult or impossible without a car; public transport limited or costly. **Louth and coastal areas left out** repeated statements that Louth has *no* NHS dentists; residents feel “left behind” and “disregarded”; Mablethorpe also highlighted as needing provision. **Need services across all of Lincolnshire** people say the proposal is too narrow; other towns and villages also have severe shortages; “needs to be everywhere, not just three locations.” **North/east of the county overlooked** comments say the north/east has worse access than the proposed areas; elderly and Forces families in villages like Coningsby struggle to reach care. **Existing areas already saturated** some say Lincoln, Boston and Skegness already have dentists, whereas Louth has none and no continuity of care. **Quality and availability concerns** reports of NHS dentists not offering full NHS treatments (e.g. root canal, hygienist care); long waits even when registered. **Overall reason:** Residents disagreed because **the proposal does not include Louth, coastal towns or rural villages**, leaving large parts of East Lindsey without realistic access to NHS dental care.

Level of agreement with the proposal – reason for answer by district – Lincoln

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness- reason for answer

Summary of comments by district	Strongly agree/agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
Lincoln (199 comments)	(196 comments) **Strong agreement driven by:** **No NHS access** repeated statements of *no NHS dentists taking patients*, *none available*, *waiting years*, in some cases*20 years without a dentist*, *only private options*, *practices going fully private*. **Forced into private care** people paying £80–£100 per visit, £200–£800 for treatments, £25–£56 monthly plans; pensioners, low-income households and disabled residents unable to afford private care; some self-treating due to cost. **Long waits and cancellations** 3-month waits for check-ups, 5-year waiting lists, urgent appointments taking days, NHS slots disappearing, appointments cancelled due to lack of dentists. **Severe shortage across the city** practices closing, dentists retiring or switching to private, only one NHS provider at times, thousands unable to register, rural areas around Lincoln also struggling. **Impact on families and vulnerable groups** — comments describe children with complex needs waiting months for specialist care, autistic children struggling to access treatment, and homeless people, prison leavers and low-income families unable to get NHS dental support. **Pain, deterioration and emergencies** broken teeth, abscesses, bleeding, infections worsening, people travelling long distances for emergency care, some attempting self-treatment (fillings). **Need for accessible, affordable NHS services** strong calls for more NHS dentists, orthodontics, wheelchair-accessible services, rural access, and fair NHS treatment instead of being pushed to private plans. **Other areas also need support** comments say Sleaford, Grantham, Cleethorpes, Grimsby, Newark, coastal and rural Lincolnshire also lack NHS dentists and need provision. **Overall reason:** Residents agreed because **NHS dental access in Lincoln is extremely limited**, with long waits, high private costs, and many people unable to register anywhere, leaving families, children, older people and vulnerable groups without essential care.	**(3 comments) Disagreement driven by:** **NHS contract issues** one comment says NHS dental provision will not improve without better contract renewal and pay for contractors. **Difficulty accessing care** people say they cannot get into a dentist even when in pain; previous NHS dentists stopped seeing patients after Covid. **No access even for urgent problems** one person reports losing a filling and being unable to get any dentist in Lincoln to accept them, resorting to temporary self-treatment.

Level of agreement with the proposal – reason for answer by district – North Kesteven

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness- reason for answer

Summary of comments by district	Strongly agree/agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
North Kesteven (187 comments)	(180 comments) **Strong agreement driven by:** **Lack of NHS dentists** repeated comments say there are *no NHS dentists taking patients*, *none available*, *very few NHS places*, and *total lack of provision*. **Long waits and cancellations** people describe waiting years to join waiting lists, appointments cancelled multiple times, limited appointment days, and long delays for urgent treatment. **Forced into private care** pensioners and low-income households say private care is unaffordable; some pay £50–£800 for treatment; others are on expensive monthly plans because NHS options don't exist. **Impact on children and families** comments mention children suffering due to long waits, missed school for long-distance travel, and families unable to register anywhere. **Travel burden** some residents travel 15–50 miles, even 200 miles round-trip, to reach an NHS dentist; others rely on public transport which makes access difficult. **Practices going private** many say their previous NHS dentist switched to private only, leaving them without care; some describe staff prioritising private patients over NHS ones. **Poor quality or inaccessible care** reports of rushed appointments, cancelled treatments, difficulty accessing hygienists, and NHS patients feeling deprioritised. **Other areas also struggling** comments say Sleaford, Grantham, Gainsborough, North Hykeham and wider Lincolnshire also lack NHS dentists, with some residents travelling to Boston, South Cambridgeshire or Nottinghamshire for care. **Overall reason:** Residents agreed because **NHS dental access in North Kesteven is extremely limited**, with long waits, high private costs, cancelled appointments, and families travelling long distances — leaving many without any realistic access to dental care.	**(7 comments) Disagreement driven by:** **Local access already sufficient** one comment says there is already plenty of choice, with Collingham and Sleaford both convenient by car. **Should include all key towns** people say the proposal should cover more towns, not just three. **Lincoln and Boston already have provision** one comment argues Lincoln and Boston already have many dental practices and hospitals, and suggests opening services in North Kesteven instead. **Sleaford and Grantham left out** comments say the proposal does not help residents in Sleaford/Grantham, where people have been waiting years for an NHS dentist. **Cost and travel barriers** concerns about the cost of travelling into Lincoln and paying for parking, alongside NHS treatment costs already being too high. **Overall reason:** Residents disagreed because **the proposal does not support Sleaford, Grantham or North Kesteven**, where some say they already face long waits or high travel costs, while Lincoln and Boston already have more provision.

Level of agreement with the proposal – reason for answer by district – West Lindsey

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness- reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Strongly agree/agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
West Lindsey (100 comments)	(95 comments) **Agreement driven by:** **Severe lack of NHS dentists** Many comments say there are no NHS dentists in or around Lincoln, Market Rasen or West Lindsey villages. People describe the area as a "dental desert", with no practices accepting NHS patients and extremely long waiting lists. **Forced into private care** People report having to pay private fees because no NHS options exist. Pensioners, families and low-income households say private dentistry is unaffordable, leading to delayed or avoided treatment. **Need for more NHS appointments** Comments say NHS dental appointments are scarce, waiting times are too long, and emergency access is difficult. Some describe being given only lists of private dentists by 111. **Training new staff and expanding capacity** Several comments support training new dental staff to increase future NHS capacity, saying this is essential to address the shortage and allow more NHS appointments. **Impact on families and vulnerable groups** People describe struggling to get care for children, pensioners and those with complex health needs. Some say they have not seen a dentist for years due to cost or lack of NHS availability. **Need county-wide coverage** Comments say NHS dentistry should be available across Lincolnshire, not just in the three proposed hubs. People describe shortages across the county, including Grantham and Louth. **Travel barriers** Residents describe long journeys to Gainsborough, Lincoln or other towns, with limited public transport options. Some say they would prefer Lincoln because it is reachable by bus. **Overall reason:** Residents agreed because West Lindsey has extremely limited NHS dental provision, with people forced into private care, long waits, long travel distances, and no local NHS practices taking new patients. Any additional NHS services are seen as urgently needed.	**(5 comments) Disagreement driven by:** **West Lindsey overlooked** Comments say Market Rasen, Caistor, Gainsborough and surrounding villages feel forgotten. People feel West Lindsey is repeatedly left out despite clear need for NHS dental services. **Preference for closer locations** Some residents say Lincoln is difficult due to parking costs and congestion, and that Gainsborough or nearby villages would be easier to reach. **No appointments available** People report being unable to get an appointment anywhere, describing complete lack of access. **Overall reason:** Residents disagreed because they feel West Lindsey has been overlooked, with no local NHS dental provision and no consideration of Market Rasen, Caistor or Gainsborough, despite significant need.

Level of agreement with the proposal – reason for answer by district – South Holland

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness- reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Strongly agree/agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
South Holland (52 comments)	(38 comments) **Agreement driven by:** **No NHS dentists available** repeated statements of *no NHS dentists nearby*, *none available*, *nowhere taking NHS patients*, and people unable to register for years. **Forced into private care** several describe dentists switching to private mid-treatment, being told to pay for care, private costs unaffordable, and taking loans for private treatment. **Need dentists across the whole county** strong view that services should not be limited to three towns; Spalding, Holbeach and wider South Holland also need provision. **Travel barriers** people report travelling 20–50 miles, to Boston, Wisbech or Cambridge; travel is difficult for pensioners, disabled residents and families; not environmentally or financially sustainable. **Long waits and cancellations** comments mention waiting 5+ years, cancelled appointments, dentists closing or going private, and long delays even for urgent care. **Impact on families and vulnerable groups** children missing school for long-distance travel, elderly relatives unable to access care, vulnerable adults on pension credit without local NHS options. **General shortage in the area** people describe a severe lack of provision, not enough qualified staff, and South Holland being one of the worst-served areas. **Overall reason:** Residents agreed because **South Holland has extremely limited NHS dental access**, with long waits, high private costs, and many people travelling long distances or going without care. and they want services in Spalding, Holbeach and across the county, not just in the proposed towns.	**(14 comments) Disagreement driven by:** **South Holland left out** — comments say South Holland has no local NHS provision, Spalding and Pinchbeck were not considered, and rural communities in the south of the county feel forgotten. **Proposed locations too far away** Boston, Skegness and Lincoln require long journeys; Boston is difficult to access; travel, distance, time and parking are barriers, especially for those reliant on lifts. **Sleaford, Grantham, Spalding, Pinchbeck left out** comments say the proposal does not help residents in Sleaford/Grantham, and specifically that *Spalding and Pinchbeck were not considered*. **Shortage is county-wide** people say the shortage exists everywhere, not just in the proposed towns, and services should be spread more evenly. **Existing facilities not used** one comment asks why the dental suite at Johnson Hospital is not being used. **Concerns about staffing rural sites** one comment questions whether the ICB can attract dentists to rural South Lincolnshire, describing the area as a "rural backwater". **Poor access for rural communities** comments say rural South Holland is overlooked, roads are poor, and Boston is not realistically accessible without a car. **Overall reason:** Residents disagreed because **the proposal does not support South Holland**, where people say there is *no NHS provision*, long travel distances, rural isolation, and key towns like Spalding and Pinchbeck have been left out.

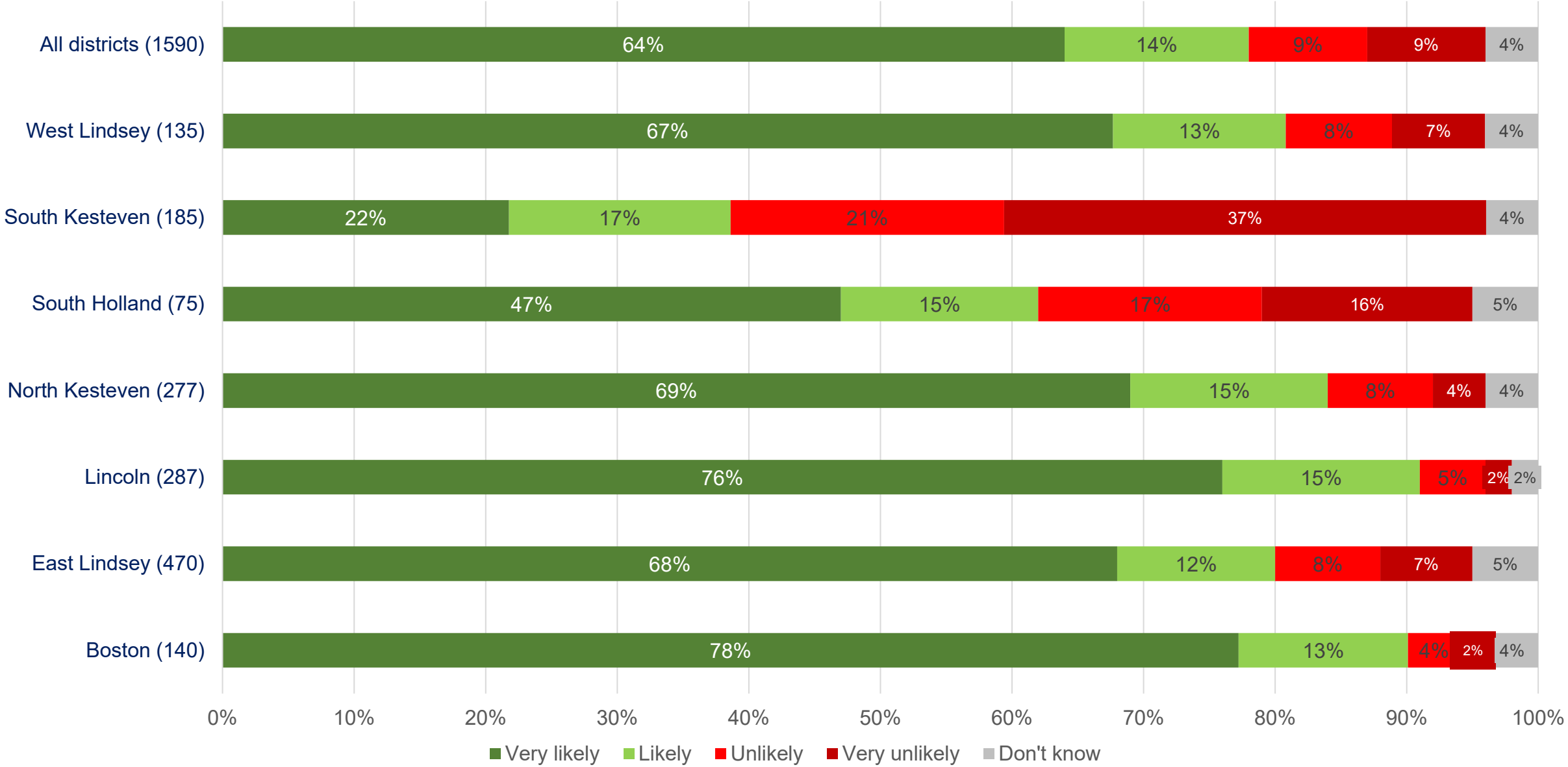
Level of agreement with the proposal – reason for answer by district – South Kesteven.

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to introduce additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness- reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Strongly agree/agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
South Kesteven (135 comments)	(87 comments) **Agreement driven by:** **Severe lack of NHS dentists** Many comments say there are no NHS dentists at all, practices have gone private, and people cannot find any NHS appointments in Bourne, Stamford, Grantham, Sleaford or surrounding villages. **Forced into private care** People describe being moved from NHS to private without notice, paying high private fees, taking out loans, or being unable to afford treatment for themselves or their children. **Need for county-wide provision** Strong view that the whole of Lincolnshire needs NHS dentists, not just Lincoln, Boston and Skegness. Many say South Lincolnshire is repeatedly forgotten. **South Kesteven towns left out** Repeated mentions of Bourne, Stamford, Grantham, Sleaford and surrounding villages having no NHS provision and needing to be included. **Long travel distances** People report travelling 20–50 miles, even 80 miles round-trip, to Nottingham, Melton Mowbray, Northamptonshire or Peterborough because no local NHS dentist will take them. **Long waits and cancellations** Comments describe being on waiting lists for years, cancelled appointments, unreliable practices, and NHS slots disappearing as dentists switch to private. **Impact on families and vulnerable groups** Some comments describe difficulties for children and families, including one parent saying their children haven't been able to see a dentist since 2020. **Private costs unaffordable** Private fees described as prohibitively expensive, extortionate, and impossible for low-income families, single parents and older adults. **Overall reason:** Residents agreed because South Kesteven has almost no NHS dental provision, with key towns like Bourne, Stamford and Grantham left out, forcing people into private care, long travel, long waits and unaffordable costs.	**(48 comments) Disagreement driven by:** **South Kesteven left out** Many comments say Grantham, Bourne, Stamford, Market Deeping and surrounding villages have been ignored. People describe South Lincolnshire as repeatedly forgotten, with no NHS dentists and no proposals for the south of the district. **Proposed locations too far away** Lincoln, Boston and Skegness are described as too far to travel, especially for elderly residents, disabled people, those without cars, and those relying on limited or non-existent public transport. Some say journeys would be 45 minutes to over an hour each way. **No NHS provision locally** Comments describe zero NHS dentists in Bourne, no NHS services in Grantham, practices going private, and people unable to find any NHS appointments within travelling distance. **Need county-wide coverage** Strong view that NHS dentistry should be available across all Lincolnshire towns, not just the three proposed hubs. People say the shortage is county-wide and affects rural communities as much as urban ones. **Forced into private care** Several comments describe being moved from NHS to private without choice, facing high private fees, or being unable to afford treatment for themselves or their children. **Growing population but no services** Grantham and Bourne are described as expanding rapidly with thousands of new homes planned, yet NHS dental provision has reduced or disappeared entirely. **Overall reason:** Residents disagreed because the proposal does not support South Kesteven, where towns like Grantham, Bourne and Stamford have no NHS dentists, long travel distances, no public transport options, and growing populations left without any local NHS dental care.

Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them?



Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services – reason for answer

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them? Reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Very likely or likely to use	Unlikely or very unlikely to use	Don't know
Boston	Comments - Very likely- 39 Likely - 8 Long gaps in NHS access; urgent dental need; private costs too high; difficulty travelling; need for a local NHS dentist; preference for flexible hours; desire for reliable, qualified care; preference for closer care; frustration with frequent practitioner changes; need for accessible care for autistic people. **Conditional factors** would use if sedation available; accepted as NHS patients; appointments available; location accessible; quality good.	Comments- unlikely – 5 very unlikely -2 Happy with current dentist; already registered with an NHS dentist; satisfied with existing care; prefer to stay with their current practice; would only consider switching if they could no longer remain with their present dentist; current dentist meets their needs. **Conditional factors** Would not use if quality is poor; would not use if appointments are unavailable; would not use if not accepted as a patient; would not use if location is inconvenient.	Comments- 4 Depends on cost and quality of dentist; concerns about poor-quality NHS treatment in Boston; unsure because they now have an NHS dentist; doubt they would get an appointment; fear of going to the dentist.

Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services – reason for answer

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them? Reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Very likely or likely to use	Unlikely or very unlikely to use	Don't know
East Lindsey	Comments - Very likely- 183 likely -23 No NHS dentists available; unaffordable private costs; urgent dental need; long gaps without treatment; difficulty travelling long distances; need for local NHS provision; reliance on public transport; desire for regular check-ups for adults and children; pain or deteriorating oral health; preference for Skegness/Louth/Market Rasen locations; concerns about dentists switching to private-only; older residents needing accessible care; medical conditions affecting teeth; need for supportive care for anxious patients; desire for capped NHS pricing; need for accessible, level-access facilities; preference for reliable, high-quality treatment. **Conditional factors** would use if quality matches private care; good dentist recruited; level/mobility access available; public transport available; location close enough; costs/availability acceptable; practice stays in Mablethorpe; urgent appointments available; children/family could use it even if parent wouldn't.	Comments – unlikely – 27 very unlikely - 29 Locations too far to travel; poor or impractical public transport; long travel times (whole-day trips); older or disabled residents unable to travel; prefer or already have a local NHS dentist in Louth, Woodhall Spa, Horncastle, Coningsby; dislike travelling to Boston or Skegness; taxi costs unaffordable; need NHS provision in Louth/Mablethorpe instead. Conditional factors- Might use only in an emergency; would use only if local practice closed; would use only if transport barriers were removed. **Conditional factors** Would not use if travel distance is too far; would not use if public transport remains poor; would not use if current dentist remains accessible/satisfactory; would not use if location is outside preferred areas (Louth/Mablethorpe/Horncastle).	Comments- 19 Severe anxiety; long-term trust in current dentist (20 years); depends on multiple factors including quality of work; already have NHS dentist; happy with NHS dentist in Coningsby; need more local options; currently able to access care in Louth but unsure if this will continue; haven't been able to book for 4-5 years; already registered with private dentist in Skegness. Decision depends on pricing and parking; unsure due to location; too far to travel; depends on hospital transport; unsure if Lincoln service covers their postcode; depends on current dental care availability and needs; prefer good private dentist; dentist reducing NHS places; unsure if current practice will remain available. Would like continuity with same dentist; need to see the plan first; not a good traveller.

Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services – reason for answer continued

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them? Reason for answer

Summary of comments by district	Very likely or likely to use	Unlikely or very unlikely to use	Don't know
Lincoln	Comments – very likely -110 likely - 16 No NHS dentists available; private costs unaffordable; urgent dental need (Pain, broken teeth, lost fillings, root canal needed); long gaps without treatment; difficulty accessing appointments; older residents needing affordable care; need for reliable, local NHS provision; need for regular check-ups; medical conditions affecting teeth; concern about current dentists switching to private only; long travel distances to Grimsby/Cleethorpes; desire for stable, continuous NHS care; need for child/family access; importance of oral health and prevention **Conditional factors** Would use if current dentist stops NHS; depends on quality, hygiene, service availability; charges increasing at current dentist; depends on dentist recruited; on future dental needs (eg dentures); depends on stability of local NHS provision.	Comments – unlikely – 12 very unlikely - 6 Already registered with an NHS dentist; happy with current dentist; long-standing trust in existing practice; prefer to stay with current arrangements; quality and confidence in current care;; private arrangements working well; do not need another practice. **Conditional factors.** Family members might use even if they personally would not; would only consider switching if current dentist stopped NHS care or quality declined.	Comments- 4 Happy with current dentist except emergency access; already have an NHS dentist but know others would use it; private care currently meets needs; already have an NHS dentist so unsure about switching.

Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services – reason for answer continued

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them? Reason for answer

Summary of comments by district	Very likely or likely to use	Unlikely or very unlikely to use	Don't know
North Kesteven	Comments - Very likely- 89 Likely – 22 No NHS dentist available; currently forced to use private care; private costs too high; long travel distances (Gainsborough, Sleaford, 70-mile round trips); difficulty accessing emergency or same-day NHS appointments; need regular check-ups; need more NHS dental practices; current dentist moving private or unstable; need affordable NHS care for adults and families; want a dentist closer to home; monthly private plan costs increasing; need reliable access without cancellations; need NHS access for working adults; need preventative care. **Conditional factors** Would use if current dentist stopped NHS or moved on; depends on waiting lists; depends on location (Lincoln/Sleaford/Boston); depends on parking availability; depends on cost remaining affordable while quality stays good; depends on access improving at current practice; would use if NHS appointments were available.	Comments – unlikely – 18 very unlikely - 9 Already registered with an NHS dentist (Lincoln, Sleaford); happy with current NHS or private dentist; prefer to stay with existing arrangements; private dental plans working well; good quality care at current practice; do not want to travel far; locations too far or inaccessible by public transport; distance not suitable for older residents; prefer local Sleaford-area provision; already well served by local practices. **Conditional factors** Would use only if current dentist closed or stopped NHS; depends on cost, parking, location, opening hours; spouse or family members might use even if they personally would not; would use only if travel barriers were removed.	Comments -10 One person well served in Sleaford; uncertain if dentist will continue NHS; private care good but costly/unsustainable; depends on transport as Sleaford resident; happy with current dentist but NHS may stop; nervous to change due to risk of losing NHS + like current dentist; receiving NHS care and happy so no point changing; happy with current dentist; want emergency cover regardless of main practice; already have an amazing dentist.

Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services – reason for answer continued

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them? Reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Very likely or likely to use	Unlikely or very unlikely to use	Don't know
West Lindsey	Comments – very likely -49 likely – 16 No NHS dentists available; private care unaffordable; urgent dental need (pain, erupting wisdom tooth nerve pain, mismatched crown, extractions due to lack of NHS access); long gaps without treatment; need regular NHS check-ups; current travel distances too far (30 miles, 65-mile round trip); need affordable treatment; forced to go private; need specialist services (orthodontists/specialists); want NHS care for whole family; dental health important; essential service; prefer NHS values over private profit; would save money in retirement; can access via public transport. **Conditional factors** Would use if able to register; if faster treatment available; if location accessible (Lincoln acceptable); if NHS dentist is close enough; if NHS dentist is good quality; if dentist does not go fully private; if public transport access is good; if patients accepted without benefits restrictions.	Comments – unlikely – 12 very unlikely - 5 Already have an NHS dentist; already registered with a practice; happy with existing arrangements; long-standing confidence in current dentist (25+ years); prefer to stay with current provider; quality concerns about NHS contractual limitations. **Conditional factors** Would not use if private care remains preferred; would not use if current NHS access continues to meet needs; family members might use even if they personally would not.	Comments-4 Too far to travel due to disability + rely on driver + no public transport; unsure how far the journey would be; depends where in Lincoln it is based / how desperate for a dentist; currently have NHS dentist but may need family cover if dentist leaves / partner's dentist already went private.

Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services – reason for answer continued

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them? Reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Very likely or likely to use	Unlikely or very unlikely to use	Don't know
South Holland	Comments – very likely -19 likely – 4 Not currently registered with a dentist; cannot get NHS appointment for 5+ years; private dental care too expensive; need affordable treatment; teeth in poor state after years without care; need regular dental care for whole family; dental care is a necessity not a luxury; currently using private dentist because NHS in Spalding is not workable; current NHS dentist "rubbish"; long travel distances (nearly 4-hour round trip); local NHS options not available (Long Sutton, Holbeach private only); Spalding NHS practice puts patients on 90-month waiting list unless paying private; struck off after missed appointment and no NHS access since; want a more local NHS dentist; need accessible service; want records integrated with other health documents. **Conditional factors** Would use if able to get on the list; if no other option; if dentist remains open or continues NHS; if location is fair for South Holland residents; if accessible by distance (Lincoln/Skegness too far, Boston 30 minutes)	Comments – unlikely – 11 very unlikely - 5 Already have NHS dentist (Wyberton/Boston, Lincoln); already registered with a practice; happy with existing arrangements; long history with current private dentist; prefer local Spalding area; can afford private care locally; prefer not to travel further; current NHS access meets needs. **Conditional factors** Would not use if distance too far (Lincoln/Skegness/Boston); would not use if not within walking distance; would not use if reliant on lifts; poor public transport makes travel impractical; too far to travel from Spalding; already travelling over an hour for NHS care; would only switch if private costs become unaffordable; would need NHS dentist specifically in Spalding due to health issues.	Comments-3 Requires disability-accessible facilities and support for people with dental phobia; concern about distance to Boston, heavy traffic, and whether regular treatment would be available; location considered too far.

Likelihood of people using the proposed new dental services – reason for answer continued

Question: If these additional NHS dental services were available in Lincoln, Boston or Skegness, how likely would you be to use them? Reason for answer.

Summary of comments by district	Very likely or likely to use	Unlikely or very unlikely to use	Don't know
South Kesteven	Comments – very likely -21 likely – 19 In pain and urgently need a dentist; no NHS dental service in Bourne;can not afford private care; private care is the only option locally; need high-quality dentistry; dental care is essential and everyone deserves affordable treatment; NHS not available locally; current dentistry poor quality and not following guidelines; need reliable regular dentist who understands health conditions; oral health affects confidence and wellbeing; private care feels discriminatory due to cost; need NHS care for self and child; long gaps without treatment (6+ years); previous NHS dentist switched to private; medication worsening dental health; retirement makes private fees unaffordable; child (12) has never accessed dental care; only one adult dental visit in lifetime; private dentist only option because practice stopped NHS; cannot justify private costs; disabled student + retired grandparents cannot afford private; private treatment unaffordable so cheaper to travel; Bourne practice going private; need NHS care due to rural residents being forgotten; cost of private dental care too high. **Conditional factors** Would use if location accessible (Lincoln easier; Boston/Skegness too difficult); would use if able to get an appointment; would use if evening/weekend appointments available; would use if current dentist goes private; would use if no other option; would use if NHS care available in Grantham due to population growth; would use if distance manageable	Comments – unlikely – 32 very unlikely -60 All proposed locations (Lincoln, Boston, Skegness) are too far; do not live near those towns; prefer local Bourne/Grantham/Market Deeping/Stamford area; already have NHS or private dentist locally; age-related need to stay close to home; rural residents need local provision; long journeys unrealistic for working parents, elderly, disabled people; parking concerns; travel would require a whole day; current dentist acceptable and long-standing (60 years). **Conditional factors** Would not use if reliant on lifts; would not use if public transport unavailable (no buses from Bourne, Market Deeping, South Kesteven); would not use if travel exceeds 30–60 minutes; would not use if needing a driver post-procedure; would not use if distance makes appointments impractical during work/school hours; would not use if transport costs too high; would not use if service not provided in South Lincolnshire (Bourne, Stamford, Spalding, Grantham).	Comments- 3 Depends on finding a more local option; Lincoln is far unless nowhere nearer than Grantham; lives outside area and wants similar services in the south or NHS 111 emergency access.

Additional comments

Question: Is there anything else you would like us to consider?

Summary of comments by district	Summary of comments
Boston	42 comments Severe long-term lack of NHS access and major affordability barriers; repeated calls for more NHS dentists, therapists and hygienists; strong need for physically accessible premises for elderly and disabled patients; priority for children's and orthodontic care (families travelling long distances); requests for trauma-informed support and chaperones; concerns about NHS/private charging practices and desire for fair, consistent pricing; repeated demand for weekend, late-evening and emergency availability; need for easier performer-number routes so more clinicians can deliver NHS care; concerns about patients not turning up for appointments affecting capacity; and repeated requests for NHS dentistry to be available in more areas around Boston, with good transport links and accessible locations for people who don't drive.
East Lindsey	245 comments Severe long-term lack of NHS access across Louth, Mablethorpe, Alford, Skegness, Horncastle, Spilsby and Wainfleet; repeated calls for more NHS dentists in all towns (not just the proposed three), mobile units, satellite clinics (Louth, Holton-le-Clay, Alford), and Woodhall Spa; major affordability pressures and requests for regulation of private fees; repeated concerns about being removed from NHS lists (especially post-Covid) and NHS care needing to be available for adults; very long waits for treatment when in pain; poor rural transport links (no direct bus from Louth to Skegness/Boston) and need for accessible parking and ground-floor premises; strong support for prevention and school based dental education; need for care-home access and would like waiting lists; prioritisation for local Lincolnshire residents over holidaymakers; quiet sessions for people with phobia; more orthodontists; concerns about incorrect charging and poor NHS/private standards; need for clear pricing, qualified staff, and support for people with additional needs; and repeated requests for urgent expansion of NHS dentistry across the whole district.
Lincoln	128 comments Severe and long-standing lack of NHS dental access, major affordability pressures, and widespread concern about dentists switching to private and removing patients from NHS lists; very long waits for routine, urgent and orthodontic care; repeated calls for more NHS dentists, larger clinics and waiting lists; strong need for clear, fair NHS pricing and concerns about incorrect or split charging; need for accessible locations with adequate parking and support for elderly, disabled and low-income residents; requests for evening/weekend appointments and more flexible appointment systems; strong emphasis on prevention, school-based education and better quality NHS treatments; need for improved support for people with additional needs, anxiety, learning disabilities, complex medical conditions and communication needs (including language support); concerns about rural transport barriers; and repeated requests for reliable, family-friendly NHS dentistry across Lincoln and surrounding villages.

Additional comments

Question: Is there anything else you would like us to consider?

Summary of comments by district	Summary of comments
North Kesteven	120 Comments Severe lack of NHS dental access across Sleaford, Bracebridge Heath and surrounding villages, with many residents unable to register or obtain emergency care; major affordability pressures and repeated reports of dentists switching to private and removing NHS patients; strong calls for the ICB to focus on increasing access, with more NHS dentists, multiple dentists per practice, and additional provision in Sleaford, Grantham and rural villages; repeated emphasis on accessible premises and adequate parking for elderly, disabled and low-income residents; repeated requests for evening/weekend appointments and flexible booking for working people and the self-employed; concerns about cancelled appointments, very short NHS check-ups, and pressure to take private treatments; strong demand for NHS orthodontists (children travelling long distances and waiting years); calls for mobile clinics and village-based provision to support rural communities such as Witham St Hughs, Bracebridge Heath and other surrounding villages; clear support for dental training, including supervised student appointments and mentoring routes for overseas-trained clinicians; need for better regulation of mixed NHS/private practices and clearer, fairer pricing; emphasis on prevention, school-based dental programmes and hygiene services; support for people with anxiety, additional needs and communication barriers; concerns about rural transport links; and repeated requests for reliable, local, fully NHS dental services across North Kesteven.
South Holland	30 comments Severe lack of NHS dental access across Spalding ,Bourne, Holbeach, Long Sutton and surrounding rural areas, with many residents unable to register or obtain routine or emergency care; strong perception that the far south of the county is neglected and needs significant investment; repeated calls for NHS dentists in Spalding, including proper NHS treatment (fillings, extractions) and clearer information on what NHS care should include; requests for additional provision such as a hub at Johnson Hospital or another site in Spalding, alongside concerns that the three proposed sites are not central or easy to access for residents of south Lincolnshire; major transport barriers for older, disabled and partially sighted residents with no public transport; need for wheelchair accessible premises and dentists who are patient, understanding and supportive of nervous patients and people with dementia; concerns about long waits for children's dental and specialist services; affordability pressures and frustration at being told to pay privately when NHS care is unavailable, including calls for NHS subsidies in private clinics; emphasis on continuity of care and building long-term relationships with dentists; and repeated requests for more local NHS dentists across Spalding, Holbeach, Long Sutton and Bourne.

Additional comments

Question: Is there anything else you would like us to consider?

Summary of comments by district	Summary of comments
West Lindsey	68 Comments Severe lack of NHS dental access across West Lindsey, including Market Rasen, Caistor and surrounding villages, with many residents unable to register locally and travelling long distances (Cleethorpes, Brigg, Sleaford) for care; strong frustration at long waiting lists and the near total absence of NHS provision, with repeated calls for new NHS dental services across all areas rather than focusing only on the three proposed sites; suggestions to incorporate dental services into the new Community Diagnostic Centres to improve access and make use of extended opening hours; concerns about rural isolation, poor public transport and the need for village-based provision, mobile clinics and locations on bus routes to ensure accessibility for all; affordability pressures with residents reporting unaffordable private fees, debt, delayed treatment, worsening oral health and people living in pain with no NHS option; calls for regulation to prevent NHS dentists switching to private and for NHS-trained dentists to be required to provide NHS care; strong emphasis on high quality NHS dental care
South Kesteven	127 comments Severe lack of NHS dental access across Bourne, Grantham, Stamford, Sleaford, Market Deeping and surrounding villages, with many residents unable to register locally and travelling long distances for care; strong frustration that towns across South Kesteven have lost all NHS provision as practices convert to private, prompting calls for tighter regulation of private practices and protection for long-standing NHS patients; repeated calls for new NHS dental facilities across all areas of South Kesteven and central Lincolnshire, including Sleaford so more people can access, rather than focusing solely on the three proposed sites; affordability pressures with residents reporting unaffordable private fees, debt and worsening oral health due to delayed or avoided treatment, including people living in pain with no NHS option; requests for NHS dentists who can provide full treatment, shorter waits for braces and specialist care, and clearer, honest treatment plans; emphasis on continuity of care and the need for respectful, empathetic support for people with anxiety, complex medical conditions and disabilities; concerns about inaccurate NHS website listings and long waiting lists; calls for NHS-funded options, contract reform and fair payment for dentists to restore NHS provision; and repeated requests for equitable, local NHS dental services across all towns and villages, not just the proposed three sites.

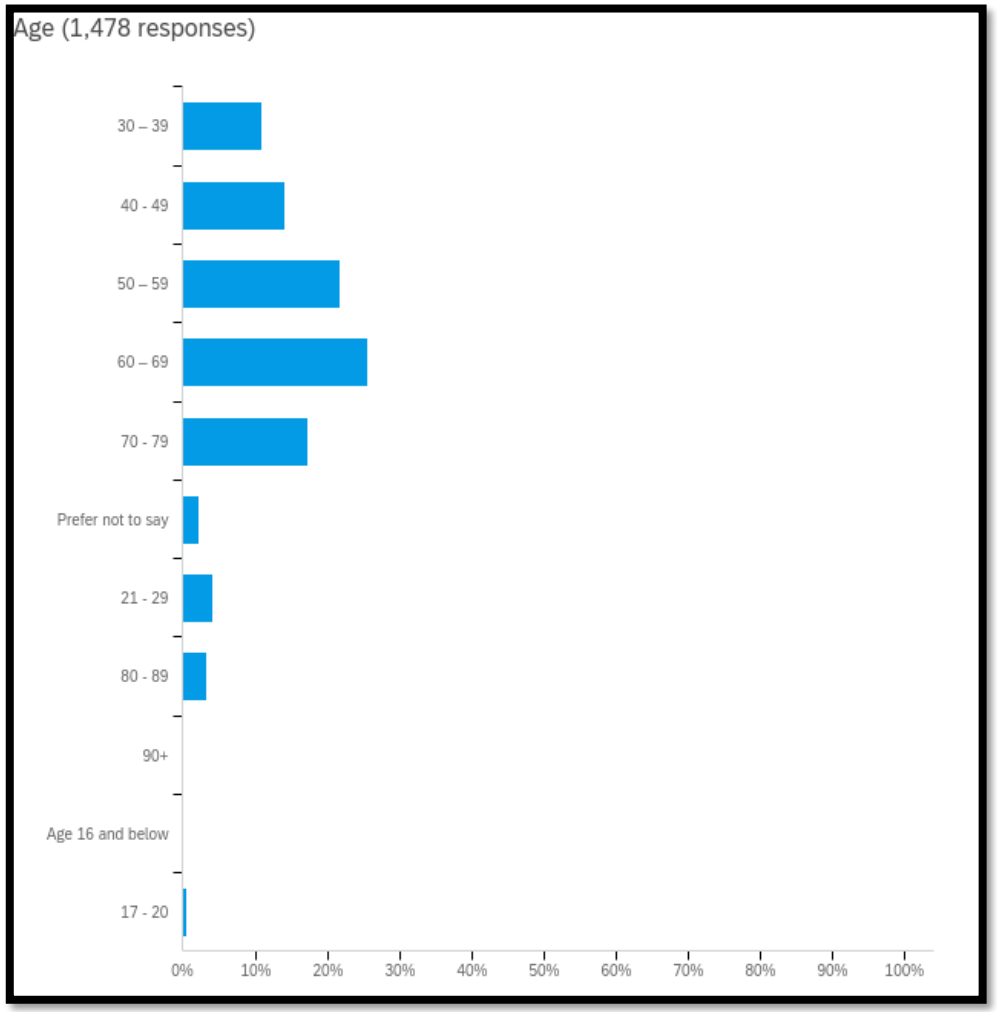
Countywide Dental Survey Equalities Monitoring

NHS
Lincolnshire
Integrated Care Board



Respondent Demographics

To help us understand if our engagement has reached a broad and representative range of people across Lincolnshire, we ask optional questions about characteristics such as age and ethnicity. This information helps us identify any groups who may be under-represented in our feedback and consider how we can make future engagement more inclusive and accessible. Responses are analysed and presented as overall findings and are not used to identify individuals.



Ethnicity	%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0%
Any other Asian background (please state)	0%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	0%
Black or Black British: African	0%
Any other Black background (please state)	0%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and black Caribbean	0%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	0%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	0%
Any of mixed or multiple ethnic background (please state)	0%
White: Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	88%
White: Irish	1%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0%
Any other White background (please state)	3%
Other ethnic group: Arab	0%
Any other (please state)	1%
Prefer not to say	5%
White Roma	0%
Total	1459

Other: Ukrainian 2; Romanian 5; Eastern European 1; French 1; American 1; European 7; White Jamaican 1; British 2; White European 1; English 3; Cornish 1; Swedish 1; Lithuanian 3; Jewish and Irish 1; Brazilian 1; Mediterranean + British 1; White 1; Canadian/Native American 1; Greek 1; South African 1; Polish 4; Hispanic 1; White English 1; White British 1; Mixed South American 1; English Turkish 1; Dutch 2; Berger 2; Jewish 3.

Respondent Demographics

Gender reassignment	%	Count
Yes	1%	9
No	97%	793
Prefer not to say	2%	14
Total	100%	816

Gender	%	Count
Female	73%	1048
Male	24%	345
Prefer not to say	2%	29
Prefer to self-identify (please state)	1%	11
Non-binary	0%	4
Intersex	0%	0
Total	100%	1437

Religion	%	Count
No religion	23%	309
Atheist	11%	151
Buddhist	0%	1
Christian	50%	658
Hindu	0%	1
Any other religion	3%	37
Jain	0%	0
Jewish	0%	1
Muslim	0%	4
Sikh	0%	0
Prefer not to say	12%	154
Total	100%	1316

Pregnancy & maternity	%	Count
Yes	3%	20
No	96%	674
Prefer not to say	1%	6
Total	100%	700

Language	%	Count
Bulgarian	0%	0
English	97%	1393
Hungarian	0%	1
Latvian	0%	0
Lithuanian	0%	4
Polish	1%	8
Portugese	0%	2
Romanian	0%	6
Spanish	0%	2
Russian	0%	1
Other (please specify)	1%	15
Total	100%	1432

Other languages:
Arabic 1, Chinese 1, English 4, Great British 1, Greek 1, Malayalam 1, Romanian 1, Ukrainian 3

Respondent Demographics

If english is not your main language, to what extent can you read English?	%	Count
A lot.	95%	138
A little.	3%	4
Not very much.	1%	2
Not much at all.	1%	1
Total	100%	145

If english is not your main language, to what extent can you speak english?	%	Count
A lot.	92%	91
A little.	5%	5
Not very much.	2%	2
Not much at all.	1%	1
Total	100%	99

Sexual Orientation	%	Count
Heterosexual	82%	1031
Gay	1%	16
Lesbian	1%	11
Bisexual	3%	37
Prefer not to say	11%	137
Prefer to self-identify	2%	30
Total	100%	1262

Caring Responsibilities	%	Count
Primary carer of child/children (under 18)	31%	122
Primary carer of disabled child/children	4%	16
Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over)	19%	74
Primary carer of older person	30%	116
Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)	17%	65
Total	100%	393

Amount of time spent in in relation to caring	%	Count
Yes, 50 or more hours a week	37%	132
Yes, 1-19 hours a week	30%	106
Yes, 20-49 hours a week	21%	77
Prefer not to say	12%	44
Total	100%	359

Respondent Demographics

Disability: Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last, at least 12 months (including any problems related to old age)?	%	Count
Yes, the health problem/disability limits me a lot	16%	156
Yes, the health problem/disability limits me a little	27%	256
Prefer not to say	2%	24
No	55%	528
Total	100%	964

If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please indicate your disability - people may experience more than one type of impairment, in which case you may indicate more than one	%	Count
Physical impairment	35%	253
Sensory impairment	8%	60
Mental health condition	17%	126
Learning Disability/Difficulty	4%	28
Long-standing illness	28%	199
Other (please state)	8%	57
Total	100%	723

In relation to the previous question do you have any specific needs or requirements?	%	Count
No	83%	781
Yes (please state)	17%	159
Total	100%	940

Other disabilities: A wide mix of long-term conditions were reported, mainly mobility-related conditions (arthritis, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, spinal injuries, back pain), chronic illnesses (COPD, diabetes, thyroid disease, heart disease, immune disorders), pain and fatigue conditions (fibromyalgia, neuralgia, energy-limiting conditions), neurological or neurodivergent conditions (autism, ADHD, FND, epilepsy), cancer or post-treatment effects, hearing or vision impairments, and a small number of complex multi-morbidities.

Specific needs or requirements (144 comments)
Most comments relate to mobility access (no stairs, lifts, level access, wheelchair access, close parking), difficulty standing or walking, accessible toilets, clear communication (hearing loss, neurodivergence, need for simple explanations), appointment flexibility (reminders, online booking, later times), extra time for pain, arthritis or limited movement, support for anxiety or trauma, sedation options, parking close by, and general understanding and patience.

Respondent Demographics

Employment Status	%	Count
Employed full time	29%	388
Employed part time	15%	204
Homemaker	4%	47
Not employed and looking for work	2%	24
Not employed and not looking for work	4%	56
Retired	36%	488
Self employed	5%	63
Student	0%	5
Prefer not to say	3%	43
Other (please specify)	2%	21
Total	100%	1339

Health Inequalities Information	%	Count
Currently working in the farming/agricultural industry	8%	12
Have worked in the farming/agricultural industry.	23%	34
Currently homeless.	1%	2
Experience of being homeless.	14%	20
Currently serving in either the UK's regular or reserved armed forces.	1%	2
Have served in the UK's regular or reserved armed forces.	48%	70
I am a refugee, immigrant or asylum seeker.	3%	5
Previous experience of being a refugee, immigrant or asylum seeker.	1%	1
Total	100%	146

Section 2: Feedback from engagement activities



Feedback from engagement activities

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

This section summarises feedback gathered through conversations with group leaders and professionals representing people who may experience health inequalities, alongside feedback from residents shared with the ICB during the engagement period.

Feedback from group leaders

Group leaders and services supporting people shared a range of insights relating to access, vulnerability and health inequalities as follows:

Feedback from homeless service support

Project Compass Feedback Project Compass is a day service in Lincoln city supporting people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping, including people who come in from other areas. They provide advocacy, link people into services, register guests with a GP, and offer practical support such as mobile phone charging. They support around 220 people a year, mainly men, often younger men, many of whom use drugs and have already lost teeth.

Access barriers to dental care are severe. People experiencing homelessness find it extremely difficult to access NHS dental treatment. Some individuals remove their own teeth or use drugs to manage dental pain because they cannot get care. Many are embarrassed by the condition of their teeth, which makes seeking help even harder.

Key considerations for the new service. The new provider would need a strong understanding of trauma and the chaos of people's lives, as making and keeping appointments is very hard. They felt outreach would be particularly important for this group

Location of services They reported that dental services work best when they go to the people who need them. Around six years ago, a community dental van used to visit the site, and this worked well.

Opening times They advised that dental services should ideally operate during daytime on weekdays, when Project Compass is open and able to support people to access the service.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from drug and alcohol service support

Feedback from Lincolnshire Recovery Partnership provides free and confidential support for people affected by drug and alcohol use across Lincolnshire. Feedback was provided by two recovery workers, who answer calls and support people with drug and alcohol issues. They regularly hear about the barriers people face when trying to access dental care.

The key feedback was:

- **Barriers** to dental care are significant for access. Recovery workers hear frequent reports of people struggling to make appointments, keep appointments, and arrive on time due to their lifestyle. Anxiety and shame about the condition of their teeth are major barriers. One worker had recently supported two people to access NHS dental care, but both were placed on waiting lists.
- **Pain** They also noted that people may use substances to numb dental pain, which worsens oral health.
- **Key considerations for the new service** Recovery workers felt that having more services would be extremely helpful. One recovery worker highlighted that a dental bus previously operating in Boston worked very well because it brought care directly to people who struggle to attend fixed appointments. They stressed the importance of trauma-informed, non-judgemental staff, as people with drug use histories often feel judged. One worker shared their own lived experience of losing all of their teeth due to drug use, explaining that dental care was the first thing they addressed in recovery because it affects identity and confidence. They also reported that staff attitudes can be a barrier, for example, some healthcare staff (including A&E) may assume people seeking pain relief are “just after more drugs.” They described their excellent dentist who showed empathy and understanding, which made a significant difference to their treatment and confidence in getting dental care which helped in their recovery.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from drug and alcohol service support

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Further feedback from Lincolnshire Recovery Partnership

Location: Our services cover the whole county with our 6x hubs being located in the larger populated areas however we still find that not all service users find it easy to travel to our hubs, given the rurality of the county and the limited bus services we have available, however with this in mind the area which would suit most would be town centres.

Current access: Our service users report it being extremely difficult to find an NHS dentist, and for those who do manage to get one many do not manage to hold onto to the place due to the nature of their substance use issues many will fail to attend appointments and be de-registered.

Barriers: Many people with substance use issues worry about being judged or stigmatised as a result of their issues, this often leaves individuals refusing to attend appointments until they have no other choice, or they deal with the dental issue themselves by removing teeth or self-medicating with substances to manage the pain. Some often struggle to attend structured appointment times; this may be because they are unable to remember when the appointment is as they do not have the recovery capital to remember times/dates.

What matters the most: To feel that they are not judged or stigmatised.

What would help improve dental access: More NHS funded places, a consideration for some of the difficulties faced by some cohorts of people. (Health inequalities) Homelessness, substance use, Criminal justice etc.

Travel and transport: Most will attend appointments on foot, walking to appointments, for some of the harder to reach groups we need to use outreach options taking services to them.

Views on the proposal: Any extra dental services would always be positive however we feel that this is unlikely to make a difference to our most vulnerable clients who will not reach out for support unless its an emergency dentist requirement.

Likelihood of using services new services proposed in Skegness Boston Lincoln - Will depend on how the service is advertised, and who this targets.

Which opening times would be most helpful - Later opening hours.

Anything else to consider — Considerations for vulnerabilities of those most at risk of health inequalities and why stigma and fear of judgement stops individuals reaching out for support.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from Traveller service support – organisation 1

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback was gathered from professionals who work directly with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families as follows:
Poor Access to NHS dentistry is currently experienced by the traveller community due to the lack of available NHS dental provision. Parents reported that many people have been taken off NHS dental lists, leaving families without ongoing care. Dental access and education for families and children is poor, with some young children having black teeth. Income levels and affordability vary, creating barriers for some people. Families often avoid dental services due to fear of judgement and previous negative experiences. Some individuals expressed concern that disclosing dental problems could lead to involvement from statutory services. Transport, cost and previous poor experiences were highlighted as barriers.
Concerns During COVID, some community members removed their own teeth, and this continues because of the lack of access to NHS Dental services**.**
Barriers Services are more accessible when they go to the people. Travel is a barrier; in many families only men drive and work
Opening times Afternoon and evening appointments and a mixture of appointment times would help. Afternoon opening works best when support services are open also.
Key considerations for the new service Building trust is essential; families can feel frightened to access services due to fear of judgment and fear of social services involvement.
Most important aspects of the new service Access is the most important element, they feel the service would be used in the three proposed locations (Boston Lincoln and Skegness)
Additional Information Organisations could support people to attend if funding were available, as they are a small team**.**

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from Traveller service support organisation 2

Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback was gathered via professionals from members of the traveller community as follows:

➢ **Location: district, and how this affects access**

- No dentists available in Spalding and Holbeach - have had to try and register in Boston as the closest place accepting NHS patients.
- Many people cannot drive or no not have access to a car, therefore rely on walking or public transport.
- Treeline in Lincoln are usually able to accept NHS so not experienced too many issues in this area.

➢ **Current access: how easy or difficult it is to receive NHS dental care, and why**

- Majority of families say it is impossible to find a dentist registering NHS patients within their local area.
- People cannot afford private dental care.

➢ **Barriers: i.e. appointments, opening hours, costs, transport, availability other**

- Literacy issues – difficulty in filling out forms and embarrassed to ask for support in busy waiting areas.
- Embarrassment – some people haven't accessed dental care for long periods of time, so oral hygiene is poor.
- Feeling anxious about going – both from a treatment perspective and negative past experiences of feeling judged by staff and/or members of the public.
- Would prefer not to be there when the practice is busy.

➢ **What matters the most: booking, waiting times, quality, communication, facilities or other**

- Being able to get through via phone – not being on hold for ages when trying to make an appointment.
- Waiting times for appointments.
- Being able to get emergency appointments when needed. Frustration at having to go via 111 to get an emergency dental appointment – very long-winded process.
- Feeling welcomed when attending. More appointment availability.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from Traveller service support organisation 2 continued

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

- **What would help improve dental access: longer hours, more appointments, online booking, affordability, accessibility or other**
  - Being able to book over the phone rather than online.
  - Not being put on hold/in queues for long periods when phoning for appointments.
  - If needed, support with registration paperwork (due to literacy issues).
  - Clearer guidance on who is eligible for free dental care.
  - Quiter appointment times for those experiencing anxiety or similar.

- **Travel and transport: distance people can travel and how they usually get to appointments**
  - Majority of people need to walk to appointments – sites are often based in remote locations/edges of towns.
  - Some taxi companies will not pick residents up from sites.
  - Public transport can be a barrier due to the cost, being unreliable and infrequency of buses/trains.

- **Views on the proposal:** thoughts on introducing additional NHS dental services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness, including reasons for their view
  - Families state it is very much needed.
  - Staff supporting this community have usually been able to register people at Treeline, Lincoln and Boston Dental Centre.

- **Likelihood of using services new services proposed in Skegness Boston Lincoln and why**
  - Would definitely use new services.

- **Which opening times would be most helpful**
  - Later evening appointments to manage around work and childcare.
  - Quieter appointment times

- **Anything else to consider — any additional comments or needs**
  - This is aimed at specific geographical areas, but it has been highlighted there is a real issue finding a dentist in the Grantham area.
  - Have had people comment that more support should be in place through school – dental service visiting schools.
  - The Community Dental Service have been very supportive and have visited 4 of Lincolnshire Traveller Initiatives education hubs. This reached 43 children who were all given advice on oral hygiene and a toothbrush/toothpaste pack to take away.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from criminal justice service support

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback from Lincolnshire Probation Service Lincolnshire Probation Service support around 1,400 people (approximately 200 women and 1,200 men) and reported:

- **Poor Access** to NHS dental care for people on probation.
- **Barriers** include transport, affordability (private as well as NHS dental treatment charges) and lack of NHS availability. People leaving prison receive no support to register with an NHS dentist, leading to long periods without care**.**
- **Affordability** was highlighted as a major barrier. Many individuals do not know they may be eligible for free NHS dental care, and it was felt this should be promoted widely as part of the service rollout**.**
- **Dental need and re-offending** A case was described where an individual reportedly re-offended in order to access dental treatment in prison due to cost and lack of NHS provision.
- **Location of services** The proposed services in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness were strongly welcomed and described as “invaluable.”
- **Opening times** Evening and weekend appointments were considered the most helpful due to zero-hours and temporary work patterns among people on probation.
- **Support for engagement** Staff offered to support survey completion and signpost people to the new services.

Feedback from Lincolnshire Action Trust who support people in prison and those leaving prison, reported that some individuals are re-offending in order to receive dental care because they cannot access NHS dental treatment after release, particularly in East Lindsey area. They noted that they could help people access the proposed services in **Lincoln Boston** and **Skegness** and were very supportive of the plans, recognising that the service cannot be located everywhere. They also confirmed that the questionnaire has been distributed across their teams and staff have been asked to complete it. In addition, they shared the following experience: LAT were supporting an individual whose teenage son required specialist dental treatment, with the nearest available service located in Leicester. The parent had to spend a significant amount of money on public transport and dedicate an entire day each month to attend the appointments, as waiting lists in Lincolnshire were years long. This had a substantial impact on the family’s personal finances and was extremely difficult to manage.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from criminal justice service support continued

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback from Grantham Probation Service Feedback was provided by a probation service officer supporting low- and medium-risk individuals across a large geographical area including Grantham, Bourne, Stamford, the Deepings, Deeping St James and up to Sleaford. The officer manages a mixed caseload of around 24 people and provided specific feedback relating to the women they support including:

- **Dental need linked to domestic abuse** It was highlighted that some women who had experienced domestic abuse required dental care following physical assault but were unable to afford or access treatment. No local services were available to meet this need, and urgent dental care was not appropriate because the assaults had taken place some time ago. A case was described involving a woman who had lost her two front teeth, with a noted funding gap for victims of crime who require dental treatment. The Engagement Team offered to look into this case to identify whether any local provision might be available, and provided information on who may be eligible for free NHS dental treatment via the NHS website.
- **Impact on mental health** Lack of access to dental care was described as having a major impact on mental health, particularly for individuals already experiencing trauma, low confidence or social anxiety.
- **Location of services** Concerns were raised that there are very few NHS dental services in the south of the county. The officer emphasised that any new service should be located close to public transport links, as many people on probation cannot drive, have lost their licence, or cannot afford travel. Some individuals struggle even to attend probation appointments, so travelling to Lincoln, Boston or Skegness would not be feasible.
- **Opening times** To support people on probation, evening and weekend appointments were considered essential. Many individuals work irregular hours
- **Affordability**, including zero-hours contracts, and cannot attend daytime appointments was identified as a significant barrier. A large proportion of people supported by probation are on Universal Credit and cannot meet the cost of private dental treatment

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from language support organisations

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback from The Community Lab Initiative CIC (Ukrainian community support) Feedback has been provided by The Community Lab Initiative CIC who support Ukrainian families to rebuild, connect, and thrive in Lincolnshire was as follows:

- **Local talent:** It was explained that there are several qualified Ukrainian dentists and dental hygienists living in Lincolnshire who are currently unemployed or underemployed, including two based in Lincoln. This was described as “wonderful, untapped potential” that could be mentored or onboarded into the new service, helping to build capacity while supporting skilled professionals already in the area.
- **Community habits:** It was highlighted that people generally prefer to access dental services from Ukrainian practitioners. Some travel to London for treatment, while others go to Woodhall Spa where a Ukrainian dentist works. Many of the families supported by the Community Lab Initiative CIC choose to travel back to Ukraine or Poland for their dental care. This is described as common practice, similar to what is seen within the Polish community, because treatment is more affordable and there are no waiting lists. Many Ukrainian families also regularly travel back to Ukraine to visit fathers and husbands who are legally not permitted to leave the country.
- **Engagement activity:** The survey was completed and shared widely across the WhatsApp and Viber groups.
- **Potential to use the proposed services in Lincoln Boston and Skegness** Lincoln may have more Ukrainians who could be interested, as the group had not yet engaged with Ukrainians from Boston or Skegness.
- **Barriers** A key barrier identified was a lack of familiarity with British dentistry practices. For example, many Ukrainians do not know regular check ups are required to stay registered at a dental practice. Those who have lived in the UK for four years may find language less of a barrier now, but many still prefer to complete check ups and treatments (such as crowns) during visits back home, where costs are lower.
- **Preferred opening times** School hours availability was highlighted as particularly helpful for parents, alongside weekend options
- **Communication** When the services are live, the Homes for Ukraine team could advertise them in their newsletter for British hosts and Ukrainian guests. The Community Lab Initiative CIC also offered to share information in WhatsApp and Viber groups, as well as on Facebook and LinkedIn. Lincoln College was highlighted as a key location where people travel from different areas (including Sleaford and Louth) for English lessons, and could therefore be a useful place to advertise the service. They also noted that a Ukrainian gentleman working as a dental assistant in Lincoln may be able to help spread the word, and that ESOL teachers at Lincoln College could be contacted to support communication. A joint event was suggested as an ideal opportunity to explain how dentistry works in the UK, alongside information about NHS job opportunities. Clear, plain english was strongly recommended, noting that some medical terms are shared across languages and may be easier for people to understand.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from language support organisations

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback from Polish Support Initiative CIC Feedback was gathered from two staff members at the Polish Support Initiative CIC, a non-profit organisation supporting migrant families and individuals in Boston and the surrounding area. One staff member provided feedback relating specifically to the Polish community. The second, who works as a languages translator, shared additional insights based on her work supporting residents from Lithuania, Latvia, Russia and Ukraine who require language assistance when accessing healthcare. In the last six months, the organisation has supported 1,200 people, offering practical help, community cohesion activities and accessible support. Staff from the Primary Care Network (PCN) also attend sessions to help improve access to primary care services.

Feedback was received as follows:

Insights from support worker supporting Polish residents

- **Access to NHS dental care:** Children and adults supported by the organisation report no NHS dental spaces available in Boston, resulting in long delays and significant difficulty accessing care. Some families travel to other parts of Lincolnshire where occasional availability exists, but many choose to travel back to Poland for treatment. This is due to greater trust in Polish dental services, lower costs, and the absence of waiting lists. However, travelling abroad is expensive and places financial strain on families.
- **Use of private dental services:** Some individuals access private dental care in Skegness, where a Polish dentist is available. People are generally happy to see any nationality of dentist, provided the treatment is good and communication is clear.
- **Language barriers**: Language remains a significant barrier. Some dental practices do not offer translation support, meaning appointments cannot take place. Adults attending are often allowed to translate, but children are not permitted to act as interpreters, which can prevent families from accessing care.
- **Delays and misinformation**: Long delays for treatment were highlighted as a major concern. One individual supported by the organisation travelled to Sleaford for treatment but was given incorrect information at the first appointment, resulting in the treatment being cancelled. They were left worried that their dental health would deteriorate further.
- **Experience of care:** A key theme from feedback is that people do not feel listened to by dental staff. The organisation emphasised that the approach and communication style of dental teams needs improvement to build trust and ensure people feel respected and understood.
- **Ideas for improving children's dental care**: One suggestion was to deliver dental services in schools, allowing children to be seen on-site and parents to receive written updates afterwards. This model works well in Poland, where families can choose between public and private dental options and children receive regular school-based dental checks.

Feedback from engagement activities

Feedback from language support organisations

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback from Polish Support Initiative CIC continued

Feedback was received as follows:

Insights from languages translator supporting residents from Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine Poland and Russia

Access to NHS dental care: NHS dental care is often not available, and people are instead offered private treatment, which many cannot afford. The price of private treatment is a major concern. One person was quoted £5,100 in Boston, but had the same treatment done in Poland for £500.Because NHS care is unavailable and private care is unaffordable, many people travel abroad (Poland, Lithuania, Turkey) to get treatment. Large numbers of people give up trying to access NHS dental care and return to their home countries for treatment.

Quality of care: The biggest concern raised was the quality of dental work in the UK compared to other countries. Quality of care is viewed as much higher in Poland and Lithuania People described poor experiences, including someone with ill-fitting dentures that caused gum problems .A person who needed braces due to overlapping front teeth was told their need was not severe enough for NHS treatment, despite being referred**.**

Experience of care: There is a lack of trust in NHS dental services because healthcare systems in their home countries operate very differently and are viewed as higher quality overall. Several examples were given of rude dental staff, which further reduces trust. A dental practice excluded someone from their list because their need was not considered high.

Translation and communication: Translation is often not provided by dental practices or local GP practices. People are asked to bring their own translators to appointments. Many rely on private translation, which adds extra cost and makes accessing care harder.

Children's dental care: In Lithuania and Poland, children receive dental and health checks in schools, and the services are much more thorough. One example was that a child's first dental check-up was when they were three years old.

Views on new dental services The new dental services would be amazing and are really, really needed as long as they are high quality and accessible.

Appointment times need to be flexible**.**

Considerations for the new service: must build trust and ensure high-quality care.

Feedback from engagement activities

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback from Asylum seeker support

- **Access** is poor, no availability of NHS dentists locally.
- **Barriers** If people cannot speak English, they have been told they cannot have care and need to bring a translator with them**.** No registration with local dentists has been offered.
- **Concerns** Often when there is an issue, teeth get extracted through urgent dental care and no fillings or extra treatment are offered**.**
- **Opening times** Service users could access services at any time. The service would be extremely useful.
- **Other** Being able to register with a dentist and have regular slots to book would be ideal. Additional services would benefit service users greatly. Accessing dental services promptly would be great for health and well being, and service users could be directed to dental services for registration when they arrive, as they do now with the GP.

Children's representative

- **Access** is poor, with a real lack of NHS dentistry especially for people moving into Lincolnshire from other areas. Many practices report that they will only register children for NHS treatment if parents sign up as private patients.
- **Opening times** need to include weekends and after-school hours to support children's access, as working parents struggle to attend daytime appointments and schools prefer children not to miss lesson time. Some schools are really strict about this.

Feedback from engagement activities

NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

Feedback from members of the public via email and phone

Email 1 respondent expressed concern that the proposed locations (Lincoln, Boston and Skegness) are all in the southern part of the county and do not reflect the needs of residents living in northern areas such as Gainsborough. They felt that dental and wider NHS services in the north are already limited and highlighted challenges accessing NHS dental care locally. The respondent questioned if the proposal truly improves access “across Lincolnshire” and emphasised the need for greater consideration of communities north of Lincoln.

Email 2 The respondent welcomed the proposal and felt it would be positive for many people. However, they were disappointed that no improvements are currently planned for Grantham, where they and many others cannot access an NHS dentist. They explained that while their husband (nearly 80) does have NHS provision, he must travel to Newark for treatment. The respondent emphasised the need for future consideration of Grantham within wider dental access planning and expressed hope that the town will be included in later phases.

Call 1 The caller’s first and strongest concern was that the proposed new NHS dental services were located in Lincoln, Boston and Skegness, with no provision in Grantham. They explained that this creates significant barriers for residents who cannot travel, including the elderly and particularly those with mobility issues or who are under hospital care. Despite these concerns, the caller welcomed the proposal overall, recognising that increased NHS dental provision is much needed across Lincolnshire. They felt the plans would help many people but emphasised that additional locations, including Grantham, will still be required to ensure fair access for residents who cannot travel long distances.