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*Dear Tine,*

29<sup>th</sup> March 2018

On 22 March, during a question on the NHS and US companies, you asked about dental charges (col. 412). I am happy to expand upon my earlier answer.

NHS patient charges have existed for almost as long as the NHS has been in being. Charges for dental treatment and for prescriptions were first introduced in 1951.

Then, as now, there are a wide range of exemptions. For dentistry all those aged under 18 (or under 19 if in full time education), pregnant women or those who have given birth in the last 12 months and individuals in receipt of specified income related benefits are exempt from any charges. Partial help is also available for those on low incomes through the NHS low income scheme.

Adults who do not fall into one of these categories pay one of three possible patient charges for their dental care. The maximum charge for complex work (crowns bridges etc.) are currently capped at £244.30.

Patient charges including dental charges make an important contribution to the overall NHS budget. They are not retained by dentists. Dentists collect the charge and pass it on to the NHS.

The provision of NHS dentistry is not dependent on the level of patient charge raised. NHS England, which commissions dental services, is required to provide NHS dentistry to meet need regardless of any patient charge revenue raised.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library.

*Yours ever,  
James*

**VISCOUNT YOUNGER OF LECKIE**