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‘TOWIE effect’ causes surge in demand for teeth whitening and braces

- ***Demand for clear braces up 89% and laser teeth whitening up 116% in past 12 months***
- ***Cost of clear braces rises 26% in past 12 months***

London, 19 June 2013 – Demand for cosmetic dental treatments such as teeth whitening and clear braces has seen unprecedented growth over the past year, according to research carried out by the private healthcare search engine WhatClinic.com.⁽¹⁾

WhatClinic.com, which has more than 11,000 UK dental clinics and practices on its site, compared the number of dental enquiries made over the past 12 months compared to the previous year for a range of popular dental treatments.

The results revealed that demand for braces and teeth whitening treatments were particularly high, with enquiries for braces up by 89% in the past 12 months. Meanwhile, with the cast of reality TV shows like *The Only Way Is Essex* cast showing off gleaming sets of pearly whites, laser teeth whitening treatment enquiries have more than doubled (116%).

Brace yourself

With celebrities like Holly Willoughby and Niall Horan from One Direction happy to be seen in public wearing braces, the demand for cosmetic dental work has never been greater. Enquiries for clear braces have risen 177% in the past year, while ‘invisible’ lingual braces, which can cost more than £3,000, have increased by 60%.

Clear braces have proved especially popular with adults, but this demand has seen the average cost for this type of brace shoot up 26% in the past year, from £1,754 to £2,206. Interestingly, since *The Only Way Is Essex* first aired in March 2011, the average price to have clear braces fitted has increased by more than 50% (from £1,459 to £2,206).

The following table shows the increase in price for some of the different types of braces over the past 12 months:

Treatment	2012 Prices	2013 Prices	Difference
Damon braces	£2,310	£2,913	26.1%
Clear braces	£1,754	£2,206	25.8%
Removable braces	£601	£725	20.6%
Metal braces	£1,392	£1,609	15.6%
Lingual braces	£3,305	£3,271	-1.0%

Teeth whitening

Cosmetic teeth whitening continues to grow in popularity across all age groups. With celebrities like the *TOWIE* girls Maria Fowler, Lauren Pope and Chloe Simms, swearing by laser teeth whitening, this celebrity stamp of approval has seen a surge in demand.

However, unlike braces, the cost of teeth whitening treatments has actually fallen over the past 12 months even with growing demand. Two years ago, having laser teeth whitening at a private dental clinic would have cost on average £448. Now average prices have dropped by almost a third (31%) to £310.

This drop in price is largely due to increasing competition between clinics and the availability of home whitening kits. Unlike braces, consumers are able to buy teeth whitening kits from high street pharmacies and this do-it-yourself option is a major factor driving down the cost of private treatment.

Common treatments

Comparing the 2012 and 2013 prices of several common dental treatments, only laser teeth whitening, dentures, and fillings have dropped in price since last year according to WhatClinic figures. The average cost of a private dental check-up has increased by 8.3% in the past 12 months, from £36 to £39. And the cost of having a porcelain crown fitted has increased by 6.5%, from £464 to £494.

The following table shows annual price changes for the most common dental treatments and services:

Treatment	2012 Prices	2013 Prices	Difference Rise/fall
Clear braces	£1,754	£2,206	25.8%
Braces (metal)	£1,392	£1,609	15.6%
Denture Repair	£50	£57	14%
Dentist Consultation / Check-up	£36	£39	8.3%
Teeth cleaning	£40	£43	7.5%
Gold inlay or onlay	£358	£384	7.3%
Porcelain crown	£464	£494	6.5%
Root canals	£230	£243	5.7%
Gold crown	£423	£442	4.5%
Porcelain veneers	£429	£444	3.5%
Bridges	£488	£502	2.9%
Veneers	£428	£431	1%
Dentures	£433	£424	-2.1%
Laser Teeth Whitening	£323	£310	-4%
Fillings	£77	£65	-15.6%

Caelen King, CEO of WhatClinic.com, comments: “Enquiry levels for private dental treatment have risen more than a third (36%) over the past 12 months. With NHS dentists struggling to cope with demand and waiting lists continuing to grow, more and more people, frustrated with the waiting times for treatment, are turning to the private sector rather than waiting for an NHS appointment.

“Demand is especially strong for good quality but affordable cosmetic dental treatment, especially corrective treatment to align and straighten teeth, which isn’t available through the NHS, unless there is a clear clinical need for treatment.

“Braces, once the scourge of the teenager, are now proving popular with all ages. Advancements in orthodontic technologies mean that patients today have a wide range of unobtrusive braces systems to choose from. And seeing celebrities wearing braces out in public has definitely taken away some of the stigma attached to them.

“Remember though, if you are looking to have some private dental work carried out, do your research and don’t commit to the first quote you receive. With thousands of private clinics competing for custom, and a wide range of prices across practices, it is possible to save tens, if not hundreds of pounds, without compromising on quality, by shopping around.”

– ENDS –

Notes to Editors

1. WhatClinic.com looked at the most popular requests made by people searching for dental treatment on the website. It also calculated the average fees charged by more than 11,000 private dental clinics and practices in June 2013 compared to 12 months ago, for the most common treatments and services.

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About WhatClinic.com

WhatClinic.com is a clinic comparison site that lists over 100,000 clinics globally, and helps one million patients every single month find and compare the right clinic for the treatment they want. The site lists over 34,000 clinics in the UK, 11,000 of these are dental clinics. WhatClinic.com’s mission is to give the patient, as an empowered consumer, access all the information they need to make an informed choice, including price, availability and reviews. WhatClinic.com was founded in 2007 by entrepreneur Caelen King, and is in operation in over 100 countries.