Nearly one in eight managers in the UK do not trust their staff when it comes to taking time off to visit the dentist. Thirteen per cent of bosses dictate when employees can visit the dentist and in some cases, actively discourage any visits to the dentist during working hours, according to Simplyhealth’s Annual Dental Survey.

Liverpool is home to some of the least trusting managers, with almost one in four admitting they strictly control when members of staff visit the dentist.

Managers in Cardiff are among the strictest, with more than a quarter requesting dental appointments are carried out during the employees’ own time.

A similar number of managers in Brighton (20 per cent) confess to operating a system where staff are ‘encouraged’ to get their teeth checked out during lunch breaks, after work or at weekends.

But while many managers admit to subjecting their staff to high levels of scrutiny, bad dentistry can have a negative effect on workers’ careers, according to health provider Simplyhealth.

Three-quarters of employees feel their chances of career progression could be affected because they have bad teeth, while four out of 10 managers say an employee with an unattractive smile or bad breath would not be taken to client meetings.

Nearly a third of bosses give bad teeth as a reason for not promoting an employee, the survey found.

The survey also suggests that while many employers are unhappy about staff taking time out of the working day to visit the dentist, more than half believe staff absenteeism would be significantly reduced if dental benefits were included in the employee benefits package. Meanwhile three-quarters indicate its provision would lead to an improvement in employee morale.

James Glover, corporate director at Simplyhealth, said: ‘All managers want to be able to trust their staff, as a positive relationship between manager and employee is far more likely to lead to a good and sustained working relationship.

But staff absenteeism is a frustrating and costly issue for many managers in the UK, and giving staff time off to get their teeth checked can have a significant impact on the day-to-day running of a business.

The economic conditions are certainly playing their part in how infrequently people visit the dentist, and indeed 45 per cent of people we questioned cited cost as the main reason for delaying treatment.

However, those who decide to put off dental treatment can only expect their teeth to get worse, which can ultimately result in more expensive treatment and the need to take more time off work.’