

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

14 March 2024

Access to NHS Dental Services

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board's (ICB's) approaches to improving access to dentistry as part of its new remit for the commissioning of local NHS dental services, and how this connects with the Council's Public Health activity in seeking to prevent poor oral health, improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- 1) to make any comments or recommendations in response to the report on access to NHS dental services and the activity being undertaken in the context of preventing poor oral health; and
- 2) to consider whether any further scrutiny of the issue is required (and, if so, to identify the focus and timescales).

3 Background information

- 3.1 The Committee last considered a report on access to NHS dental services at its meeting on 17 November 2022. The report had a particular focus on service recovery planning and provision following the Coronavirus pandemic, including the wider context of the activity being carried out to seek to prevent poor oral public health. The Committee recommended that NHS England:

- 1) ensured that its website contained up-to-date information on dental practices, reviewed pathways for the Community Dental Service to ensure that patients were not 'off-rolled' after a course of treatment had finished, and made a concerted effort to increase recruitment of dental practitioners in the city; and
- 2) worked together with the Council to identify what could be done to progress the fluoridation of Nottingham's water.

- 3.2 The commissioning of all NHS dental services was delegated by NHS England to the local ICBs as of 1 April 2023, including primary care dental services and specialist dental services in primary care (such as Intermediate Minor Oral Surgery and Community Dental Services), as well as dental services provided by hospitals.

- 3.3 The ICB has recognised that there are significant challenges both locally and nationally in accessing NHS dental services, with a lack of registration of new NHS dentists and many dentists not taking on NHS patients. The level of provision of NHS dental services has recovered since the Coronavirus pandemic. However, it is estimated that around 631,000 appointments have been lost across the Midlands in primary care dentistry since March 2020 and a backlog of needed dental work still remains. Access for children and young people had been particularly badly affected and specific work is underway to address this.
- 3.4 To ensure the development of commissioning plans that support the needs of the local population, an Oral Health Needs Assessment for Nottinghamshire is being produced. This will be completed by end of March 2024 and be used to inform future commissioning and procurement plans going forward. An Equality, Health Impact Inequality and Risk Assessment will be undertaken as part of the planning process to assess the potential impacts going forward, particularly on the most vulnerable people and communities.
- 3.5 Additionally, the Council's Public Health team (in partnership with local stakeholders) has developed a package of interventions focused on preventing people from experiencing poor oral health. In keeping with the philosophy of the Council's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the approach does not focus solely on seeking to changing individual behaviours, but also considers possible interventions at the community and population level.
- 3.6 A report from the ICB on the current access to NHS dental services is attached, in addition to information from the Council's Public Health team on the activity being carried out to protect and improve the oral health of city residents.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Report: Access to NHS Dental Services
Appendix 1: Oral Public Health

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Report to, and Minutes of, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny meeting held on [17 November 2022](#)

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

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