

## **Dental Healthcare in Stockport**

A report giving an overview of local dental healthcare provision, setting out the current picture in Stockport.

### **1. Background**

Until April 2006 the primary resource for dentistry was a budget held centrally over which the PCT had little control. In April 2006 the budget for the General Dental Services (GDS) was devolved to PCTs. At the same time the PCTs became the contract holder for the GDS and Personal Dental Service (PDS) practices.

The implementation of the new dental contracting within Stockport was considered to be a success, with relatively few dentists opting out of NHS dental services and the PCT successfully contracting with other dentists in order to fill these gaps. The support of the Stockport Local Dental Committee was viewed a significant in achieving this implementation.

### **2. Stockport Primary Care Trust Oral Health Strategy**

The new arrangements, since 2006, have provided an opportunity for Stockport PCT to consider how it can improve the borough's oral health and develop dental services. In response to these opportunities, the Primary Care Trust has written an Oral Health Commissioning Strategy which is to run over a 5 year period (2007 to 2011)

The principle aims of the strategy are to:

1. reduce population prevalence of dental caries
2. reduce inequalities in dental caries prevalence
3. ensure access, based on need, to dental services for urgent, out of hours and elective care is available to all
4. provide services based on robust evidence (were available) and according to need

#### **2.1. Executive Summary to the Oral Health Strategy**

##### **2.1.1. Oral health**

- The dental health of 5 year old children in Stockport is significantly better than the North West average, however further work is being done in comparing against with the Borough's Statistical Neighbours.
- There exist significant differences in the dental health of 5 year old children across Stockport with the poorest oral health being found in the areas of highest deprivation.
- The dental health of 12 year olds is similar to their North West peers.

- For 14 year olds their dental health has been similar to their peers until the most recent survey (2002) where it was poorer.
- Surveys of adults in 1995 and data extrapolated from the 2001 national census show oral health and dental treatment patterns to be close to the North West average and slightly better than England as a whole.
- Healthcare Commission survey of Stockport residents shows NHS dentistry to be more available than local and national benchmarks. The survey also shows dentist/patient communications to be as good, or better, than the benchmarks.
- There are a small number of people who suffer oral cancer. The risk factors are well understood.
- People with disabilities do not suffer more dental decay than their peers but tend to have less access to dental care. Stockport has well developed services for these people which need to be developed and expanded to other vulnerable groups.
- The aging population will have benefited from NHS dentistry. However people are living longer and with more people having their own teeth this will provide a challenge to dental provision. This will be especially challenging in the pre-fluoride toothpaste generation who have had complex dental care which will need maintaining and repairing.

### **2.1.2. Dental Service provision**

- Local commissioning of dental services was enforced in 2006 with the introduction of the new GDS contracting arrangements. This provided PCTs with the tools to meet their statutory duty to meet all reasonable requirements for their population.
- The National Regulations are to be updated in 2009 when the transitional arrangements shall come to an end and the ring-fence around dental budgetary allocations to PCTs is removed.
- This Strategy is to address Stockport Primary Care Trust's commissioning considerations and decisions over the coming 5 years.
- In consideration of the future of NHS dentistry across Stockport, there are a number of significant challenges which shall face service provision. The nature of service requirements shall be determined by the oral health of the public, and therefore the PCT must consider how to make further improvements in dental public health and address oral health issues locally.

### **2.1.3. Improving Oral Health**

- Increased demand for dentistry
- Aging population
- Addressing reduction in inequalities regarding access to services and provision of treatment
- Fluoride of the Water Supply to further reduce decay (benefiting children and adults)
- Work with other Healthcare Professionals on dental health and general health (smoking, diet, slips trips and falls)
- Improving dental practice – clinical and corporate governance
- Shifting services closer to the patient – Secondary to primary care

- transition
- Provision of Specialist Dental Care – e.g. dental implants
- Developing the Dental Workforce in addressing professional needs and training
- Control of patient allocation to GPs and access to specialist and secondary care.

### **3. Current Service Provision**

#### **3.1. Dental Workforce:**

The Dental Workforce in Stockport as at August 2007 was such that there were 136 dentists on the PCT Dental Performers List, of which:

- 119 are in independent contractual arrangements
- 8 dentists are directly employed by the PCT's Salaried Dental Services
- 9 dentists work in private practice but are available for NHS locum services

The above figures provide a headcount of the workforce. There are approximately 80 whole time equivalent general dentists contracted within Stockport to provide general dental services.

#### **3.2. Orthodontic Services:**

Stockport PCT contracts Specialist Orthodontic Services from 3 specialist orthodontic practices and a number of General Dentists with a Special Interest in Orthodontics. The Primary Care Orthodontic Contracting by Stockport PCT accommodates care for approximately 1400 patients per annum. This is not limited to Stockport residents and historically approximately 40% of the caseload has been from outside of Stockport. The PCT is obliged to maintain this commitment to other PCT areas.

#### **3.3. Out of Hours Emergency Dental Services:**

The PCT leads a consortium of 4 PCTs (including Manchester, Trafford and Tameside & Glossop) for the provision of Out of Hours Dental Services. This service provides a telephone advice and triage service from 6pm-8am weekdays and 24 hours on Bank Holidays and Weekends. Dental treatment is available, on-call for weekday evenings and from a selection of clinics across the PCTs at weekends and Bank Holidays.

#### **3.4. In Hours Access to Emergency Dental Services:**

The PCT commissions 10 sessions per week to ensure in-hours access to emergency dental services for those patients who do not have a regular dentist. General Dentists with NHS patient lists are required to provide emergency dental services to their own patients.

### **3.5. Recent PCT Commissioning Activity effective for 2008-9**

#### **3.5.1. PCT Dental Helpline:**

Since 2004 the PCT Dental Helpline has been operating from the PALS office on working days from 9.30am until 2.30pm. The Helpline provides a double function:

- information to members of the public regarding local access arrangements to NHS dental services
- signposting patients who do not have a regular dentist with urgent dental requirements into Stockport Urgent Access services

It was identified that this service had developed since its initial conception and required to be both more robust for managing the allocation of local patients into NHS Dental Services and increasing the hours of availability. The Helpline should dovetail with the Out of Hours arrangements and therefore the PCT decided to tender the service with the requirements of availability from 8am to 6pm. A new provider has been identified and the PCT commissioners and PALS are working with this provider to implement new service in accordance with the revised specification.

### **3.5.2. Commissioning of Additional Capacity:**

In Quarter 4 of the 2007-8, the PCT invited expressions of interest to provide additional general dental services capacity, with specific focus on the areas of SK6 and SK8. These areas were identified in response to demand being presented through the PCT Dental Helpline and local MPs. As a result of this, the PCT has successfully offered contracting arrangements for an additional 7 whole time equivalent dentists within Stockport. These arrangements are expected to accommodate approximately 13,000 patients over the next 2 years.

### **3.5.3. Dental Care Pathways:**

The PCT has reviewed Dental Care Pathways for emergency provision during 2007-8. In response to this, as part of the In-Hours Emergency Care for patients without a regular dentist, the PCT salaried dental service shall be, where appropriate, providing patients accessing this service a one-off course of regular dental treatment in order to stabilise and/or maintain oral health. This service shall address an identified area of need whereby some patients recurrently access emergency services, either due to not being able to access regular dental services or choosing not to access regular dental care. Further work on dental care pathways, particularly relating to the interfaces between general and specialist, and primary and secondary care are planned, in order to improve the patients' experience and ensure clinical needs are suitably addressed.

### **3.5.4. Fluoridation:**

As part of the Greater Manchester conurbation, the PCT shall need to consider the possibility of water fluoridation and the potential benefits to oral health that this may present. This issue shall be considered as part of a wider consultation.

## **4. Summary**

Access to NHS Dental Services continues to be a challenge within Stockport. The PCT, in partnership with local service providers, continues to seek to meet these needs, putting additional dental and support services in place to assist the local population in accessing services.