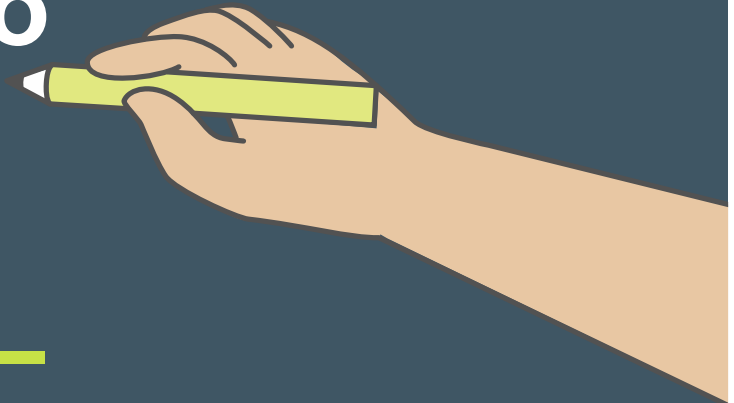


Stockport Health Scrutiny Committee

Provision & access to NHS Dentistry



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INTRODUCTION

1. This paper provides an update to the Health Scrutiny Committee on the provision of, and access to, NHS Primary, Secondary, and Community Dental services and delivery of Oral Health Improvement activity across the locality of Stockport since March 2020.
2. It will highlight the actions taken to address health inequalities and to improve access to dental services to ensure patients are able to receive dental care and oral health improvement in a safe way.

DENTISTRY ACROSS THE LOCALITY OF STOCKPORT

Primary care dental service

Patients are not registered with a GDP in the same way as they are with a GP. Any patient may access dental services from any practice.

- 44 (11.5% of GM) General Dental Services providers
- 4 (7.5% of GM) UDCs are situated within Stockport, providing an additional 25 appointments per week for urgent care

Specialist dental services in the community

A single service provider commissioned to provide specialist dental services to children and adults with additional needs on referral.

- Community dental services clinics delivered by Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS FT
- 2 Orthodontic providers
- 1 Pilot Child Friendly Dental Practice (3 across GM)
- 1 Specialist Tier 2 Oral Surgery provider (10 across GM)

Secondary care dental services across the city of Manchester

12 dental specialities (including Oral Surgery, Maxillofacial Surgery, Restorative Dentistry, Paediatric Dentistry, Periodontics) available in the city of Manchester.

Specialist Dental Hospital and also specialist dental services delivered within Stockport, Wythenshawe, North Manchester and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

BACKGROUND

1. On 25 March 2020, all dental practices received national instruction to suspend routine, non-urgent dental care as part of the national response to limit transmission of COVID-19.
2. All practices were required to provide remote telephone triage services delivering the “triple A” approach, ensuring that patients had access to advice, analgesia and anti-microbials if appropriate. Where patients needed face to face dental treatment in addition to the “triple A” service, dental practices could refer their patients to urgent dental care sites (UDC) across GM.
3. Further to the national guidance by the Chief Dental Officer on 28th May 2020, all dental practices began recommencing face to face routine treatment for patients operating under COVID-specific infection prevention and control guidance to ensure patient safety.
4. Adherence to this guidance has reduced the average dental chair’s daily capacity from 25-30 patients per day to 6-8 patients per day (depending on patient and need).
5. There is a whole system reduction of approximately 70% across all Dental Services capacity, including Secondary Care, specialist community services and specialist primary dental care services such as Minor Oral Surgery.

PLANNING AND RECOVERY

The Greater Manchester dental commissioning team, including the Consultant in Dental Public Health and the Local Dental Network Chair, are implementing a Roadmap to Recovery.

This plan outlines the stages leading to recovery for dental services across the whole system. The purpose being to standardise the approach across Greater Manchester, to strategically plan a range of dental services, and to support opportunities for locally responsive transformational change thus reducing health inequalities.

The purpose of the plan:

- Ensure capacity is in place for on-going activity
- Return critical services to agreed standards
- Address backlog of services
- Retain changes and innovations from the pandemic that we wish to keep

IMPROVING ACCESS - URGENT DENTAL CARE

4 of the UDCs (7.5%) are situated within Stockport, providing an additional 25 appointments per week for urgent care.

From April 2020, Urgent Dental Centres (UDCs) were established across Greater Manchester offering face-to-face dental treatment after remote triage. UDCs are linked with the Unscheduled Urgent Care call handling service to receive referrals for patients in pain. The UDCs provide extractions and extirpations (first stage of Root Canal Treatment) to save the tooth that get patients out of pain.

All UDCs continue to be available for those patients who have not seen a Dentist on a regular basis, or patients referred from dental practices, who are unable to deliver services due to staff absence. Patients are able to attend the most convenient centre and are not restricted by local authority or CCG boundaries within Greater Manchester.

IMPROVING ACCESS - GENERAL DENTISTRY

In Stockport there are 44 (11.5%) General Dental Services providers with 1 Pilot Child Friendly Dental Practice, 1 Tier 2 Oral Surgery provider (10 providers across GM) and 2 Orthodontic providers.

All NHS General Dental Practices continue to prioritise patients in pain, children, patients who are deemed as high risk – such as those receiving treatment for cancer, and those who are mid way through a course of treatment.

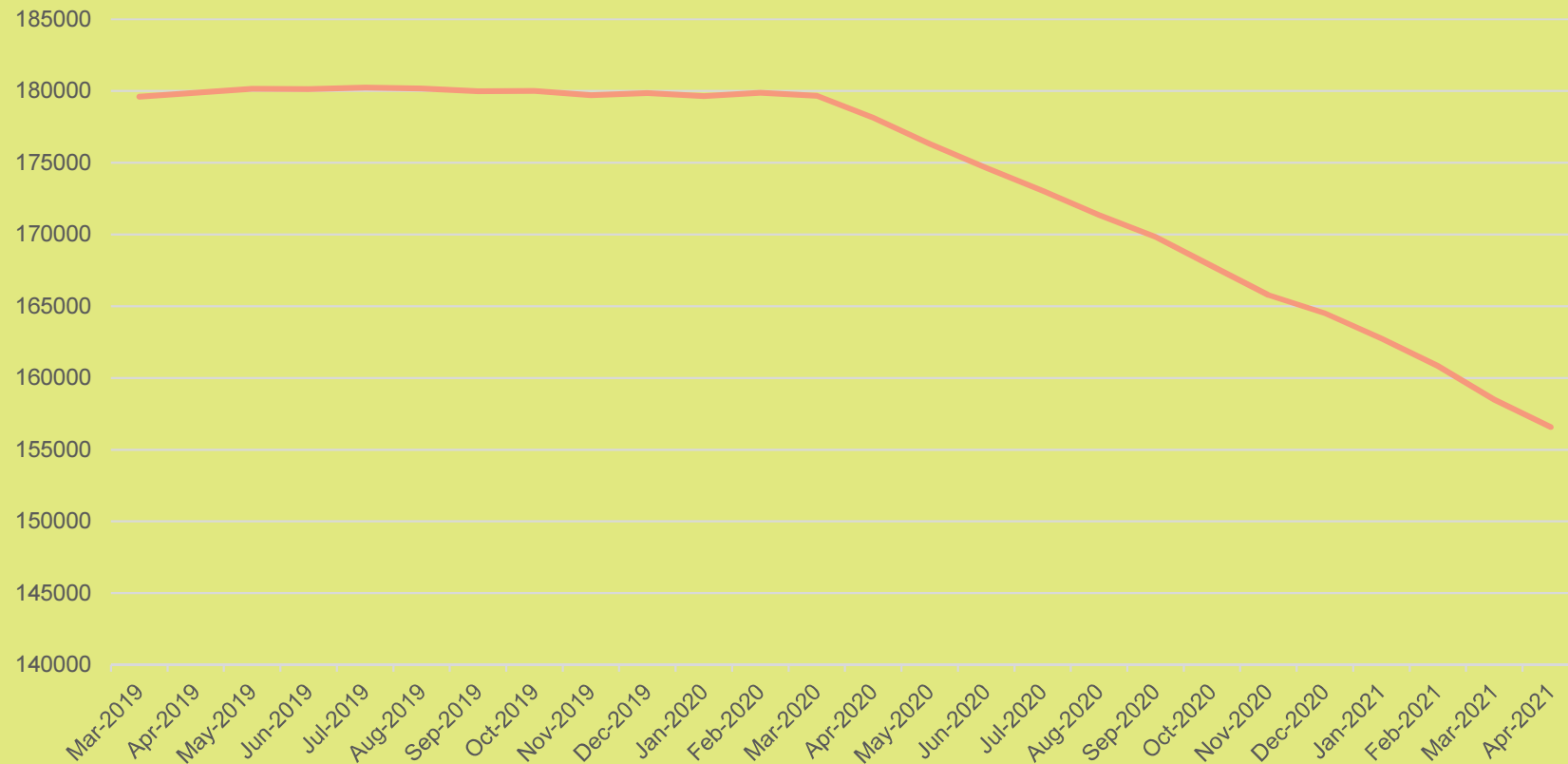
NHS Dentistry has faced particular challenges during the pandemic and must wear enhanced PPE due to the proximity between a dental professional and a patient's airway and the relatively high proportion of aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) undertaken.

From 8th June 2020, the second phase of the pandemic response, as infection rates dropped, all practices reopened for provision of both routine and urgent dentistry and have steadily increased access. However, access and delivery is not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels

It should be noted that due to infection prevention and control guidance and required time intervals between patients, the number of patients seen on a daily basis has reduced from 25-30 patients per day to 6-8 patients per day (depending on patient and need). This guidance continues to be in place. but is under national review.

Figure 2. NHS access to general dental services – March 2019 – April 2021

Stockport 24 month patient access



RESTORATION OF ELECTIVE CARE SECONDARY CARE DENTAL SERVICES

Specialist Dental Hospital and also specialist dental services delivered within Stockport, Wythenshawe, North Manchester and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

A key NHS priority is the restoration of all services with a view to returning to a “normal” position as quickly and as safely as possible. Paediatric and Oral Surgery Clinical Reference Groups have been established to lead recovery of elective surgical cases supported by five GM Managed Clinical Networks. The work programme is to ensure patients can receive elective care at the right time, in the right setting and reduce wait times. This includes:

- Population oral health needs assessment and support for the correct coding of specialist activity so it can be monitored and appropriately commissioned.
- Continue to develop e-referral management system with robust clinical triage to direct referrals to the right setting at the right time, including referrals from non-dental professionals with potential use of virtual consultations
- Workforce and training for dental professional are being reviewed to meet current and future needs
- Referrals are made with complete treatment plans so that shared care can be planned and waiting lists validated and care prioritised with patients are seen in the

ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES – CHILD FRIENDLY DENTAL PRACTICE (CFDP)

Service development pilot initiated in December 2020. One CFDP (of three) is in the Stockport locality.

Children who have been referred for an oral health assessment to a specialist setting (including those referred for dental extractions under general anaesthesia) are instead offered evidence-based treatment at a general dental practices.

Treatment includes:

- Prevention – Oral Hygiene Instruction, diet advice, fluoride varnish application, fissure sealants
- Stabilisation – Silver Diamine Fluoride, Temporary Fillings
- Restoration – Hall Crowns, Definitive Fillings
- Extractions

This primary care service supports our specialist community services for children (Manchester Local Care Organisation) and reduces referrals and pressures into Manchester Dental Hospital and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

Table 2. Dental access in Child Friendly Dental Practice (December 2020 – July 2021)

Outcome	Stockport
Total number of patients assessed in CFDP	34
Number of patients treated in CFDP	25
Number of patients referred to specialist services	9

ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES HEALTHY LIVING DENTISTRY

The Healthy Living Dentistry (HLD) project continues to be developed and delivered.

Currently there are 8 Practices in the Stockport locality signed up to deliver this quality assured scheme where Dental practices undertake national & local health campaigns, often linked to local GPs & Pharmacies. Plans are in place to begin a further recruitment campaign to encourage all Practices to sign up to this scheme.

All practices have access to training and development which is supported by Health Education England North West and available to be accessed [online](#).

Practices who sign up to HLD deliver targeted health promotion to specific groups such as:

- Dementia Friendly Dentistry
- Baby Teeth DO Matters
- Mouth Cancer Awareness
- Sugar free diet and medicines
- Flu awareness

ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES – A DENTAL HOME FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Led by the team in Greater Manchester, and linking with Local Authority Teams supporting health care for looked after children, a new referral service has been developed that will support all looked after children in Greater Manchester and Cheshire & Mersey to **find a dental home.**

In the short term, the objective is for the newly set-up digital platform to seamlessly connect referrals for any child who is looked after with a UDC Dental Practice within their locality.

The child will be seen and treated and offered regular appointments and re-calls dependent on their oral health risk.

The long-term objective will be to strengthen the links of the Stockport Safeguarding Team with Child Friendly Dental Practices to ensure that there is ease of access for all looked after children to find a dental home.

ORAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT – ONLINE TRAINING

In response to the cessation of the delivery of face to face training during the COVID response, the oral health team in the localities, supported development of open access online training packages

Mouth Care Matters in the community - training material suitable for the wider care team, including care managers and care staff carrying out admissions, assessments and provision of daily mouth care. It ensures dignity and comfort.

Mouth Care Matters in the acute sector – developed to support NHS Nightingale North West and for all nurses and care staff providing and supporting effective mouth care for all hospitalised patients during COVID. Daily mouth care in hospital reduces the risk of infection such as Hospital-acquired pneumonia (HAP), which in turn reduces the length of a hospital stay.

Supervised Toothbrushing in Early Years and Educational Settings - training material intended for early years and education staff who are working with their local health teams to deliver a supervised toothbrushing programme.

RESPONDING TO PATIENT FEEDBACK

The national NHSEI Customer Contact Centre (CCC) has received a large number of general enquiries about dentistry with the wider Manchester area receiving the largest reported numbers of patient enquiries. The main themes include not being able to get an appointment, patients being told that they must pay for PPE on top of the NHS banding, or patients being told that they cannot be seen in the NHS but can be seen the same week privately.

Although a large number of enquiries are being received, these are not being taken forward as formal complaints and are generally dealt with informally. It is also recognised that the reported regional areas are not comparable in size or service provision.

The Greater Manchester Dental team is working in conjunction with the Local Dental Networks to ensure adherence to national guidance in service delivery; and GMHSCP Communications Team to develop a suite of communications assets shared across all our partner organisations detailing what is currently available, how patients can access services, and what to expect when attending.

The GM Dental Team continues to support the GM Complaints team with advice and written responses to all patient enquiries, complaints, MP enquiries, and enquiries from the Mayoral Office.

RESPONDING TO PATIENT FEEDBACK - HEALTHWATCH

All Greater Manchester Local Dental Committee (LDC) Chairs have committed to engaging with local Healthwatch Officers to ensure that there is clear communication and understanding of any issues that are highlighted by clients.

LDC Chairs have agreed to attend local Healthwatch meetings, and it has been agreed that a Healthwatch representative from GM is invited to attend the Dental Provider Board to provide a report on behalf of the 10 Healthwatch organisations.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

During the summer of 2021 notification was received from one Stockport NHS Practice of their intention to give 3 months notice to withdraw from delivering NHS Dental Services.

From 1st October 2021 the dental commissioning team commissioned 10 NHS Dental Practices situated within a 3 mile radius (of the closed Practice) to continue to support the locality and deliver additional NHS services until the end of March 2022. This commissioning decision will ensure that at least 3000 patients will be able to seek NHS dental services from an alternative Practice.

Information leaflets and posters are currently being developed and circulated with our relevant networks to enable the information to be shared with patients seeking an alternative Dental Practice.

ADDITIONAL NON-RECURRENT INVESTMENT

The impact of the pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges in dental provision in Greater Manchester. Practices continue to work hard to see as many patients as possible, whilst operating at a reduced capacity due to measures in place to limit the spread of Covid - 19.

We have identified £2 million to spend on measures that will help to manage demand, increase capacity/access and reduce health inequalities.

We are currently developing plans to roll out these new initiatives across Greater Manchester as soon as possible.