

SCRUTINY

REPORT OF THE DENTISTRY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

September 2009

1. Purpose of the Report

To outline the findings of the Task and Finish Group in relation to the provision of dental services within the Borough.

2. Background

Following a presentation from the East Lancashire Primary Care NHS Trust in December 2008, it was agreed that Overview and Scrutiny should look at the potential impact on levels of dental provision in the Borough and therefore the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed to establish a task and finish group to consider the matter.

Prior to its first meeting, the Task and Finish Group received information that the Government had announced that they would reintroduce payments per registered patient to the dental contract, which was scrapped in favour of payment for activity in 2006, following an independent review of NHS dentistry. The reforms would be discussed with dentists and piloted before being introduced nationally.

3. Membership

The Members of the Task and Finish Group were:

- Councillor Anne Cheetham (Chairperson)
- Councillor Lynda Barnes
- Councillor Alyson Barnes
- Councillor Colin Crawforth
- Councillor Joyce Thorne

4. Terms of Reference of the Group

1. To review access and availability of local NHS dental services.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of dental health in Rossendale.

Objectives were:

To develop an understanding of present and future provision of NHS dental services in Rossendale

To produce accurate information on current access and availability of local NHS dentists, and identify gaps in service provision.

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5. Methodology

Site Visits

As part of its work, the Task and Finish Group agreed to undertake a visit to Haslingden Health Centre and Bacup Health Centre, both of which provided emergency dental services.

Witnesses

- Hilary Whitehead, Director of Dental Health, East Lancashire Teaching Primary Care Trust
- Roger Smith, Dental Practitioner, Haslingden Health Centre Emergency Dental Services

Documents

- East Lancashire Teaching PCT – Oral Health Strategy and Commissioning Plan 2007
- General Dental Council – Business Plan 2009
- Oral Health in Lancashire – Lancashire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Review

6. Findings

6.1 Emergency Dental Services

This service is based at Haslingden Health Centre. Roger Smith, Dental Practitioner of the Blackburn and East Lancashire provides a service predominantly for urgent dental triage and is solely providing NHS treatment.

Patients contact a dedicated dental helpline telephone number and are given either an urgent appointment or put on an access allocation list.

The service is open 5 days a week, with at least 3 days to provide emergency dentistry. On Thursdays a dental therapist is on duty to provide treatment on the prescription of a dentist including oral health advice, the cleaning of teeth, fillings and the extraction of baby teeth. One day is sometimes taken up to look after special needs patients and the practitioner is involved in the treatment of special needs patients under general anaesthetic at Burnley General Hospital. Domiciliary visits are also undertaken on a needs-led basis, which is available through the Primary Care Trust.

Approximately 18 patients are seen daily, each receiving a 20 minute appointment. The PCT send the patient appointment details to the clinic. Urgent care can usually be arranged within 24-48 hours. Patients are received from both East Lancashire PCT and Blackburn with Darwen PCT.

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Most patients who attend the service are from the Rossendale area, but some come from Burnley, Blackburn, or as far away as Barnoldswick. The service is emergency access-led.

Some patients who attend the service are happy just to receive emergency treatment with no further follow-up, whilst others request continuing care.

The oral health promotion team go into schools to promote healthy diets and other preventative measures. Some children are referred from the Children's Centre and Children looked-after are prioritised.

The out of hours dental service between the hours of 6-10pm is provided at Oak House, Accrington.

6.2 Bacup Health Centre –Community Dental Service



Members met with Hilary Whitehead, Clinical Director for Blackburn with Darwen and East Lancashire Dental Service, who gave a brief history of dental provision in the Borough.

Background Information

Some 16 years ago dental services were provided in Rawtenstall and Bacup Health Centres and through the Community Dental Service. Due to lack of dentists, services could not be maintained at both of these sites. There was also a shortage of space for GPs and Health Visitors. It was agreed that dental services would be provided on one site at Waterfoot Health Centre. It became apparent that Rossendale people like local services and Waterfoot Health Centre was not as well attended.

When the new Bacup Health Centre was developed it was agreed to re-establish the Community Dental Service within the new centre.

Several years ago the PCT became involved with Liverpool Dental School, when over 2 years, 2 cohorts of final year students, approximately 90 students

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in total spent time in East Lancashire dental clinics with one dentist supervising four students to provide optimal services. Each new health centre building has at least 4 surgeries to accommodate student training, although currently there is not any funding in Bacup to run all four surgeries.

6.3 Personal Dental Service (PDS)

The Community Dental Service originally employed 25 staff and through bidding for Government's PDS funding, now has 150 staff. PDS staff treat patients for both continuing care plus urgent care, under NHS Regulations. There are 17 sites across East Lancashire providing salaried dental services, commissioned by NHS East Lancashire and NHS Blackburn with Darwen PCTs.

6.4 Community Dental Service (CDS)

General Anaesthetics are undertaken at Burnley General Hospital on a Tuesday morning and Royal Blackburn Hospital all day alternate Mondays and Wednesdays for children who require multiple dental extractions. There is also a special needs list at Royal Blackburn Hospital each week and alternate weeks at Burnley General Hospital for comprehensive dental care.

Since 2007. the CDS is no longer a free service and patients now have to pay the normal NHS charges, unless they are exempt.

6.5 Dental Health Promotion

All special needs school children receive examinations with the introduction of a term basis toothbrush/toothpaste scheme. This will be evaluated in the current financial year.

Families are targeted through the Children Centres and dental health promotion work is carried out with the families. Child minders are also trained to educate children. Nurseries are also signing up to the healthy snacking policy.

Through Children Centres within East Lancashire, there is a facilitated access scheme, which originated in Pendle. Every family is asked whether they have an NHS dentist, or if they would like an NHS dentist. If it appears that a child needs dental treatment they are always offered it.

6.6 Domiciliary Services

Last year the Community Dental Service treated 120 domiciliary patients throughout East Lancashire, with 3-4 visits per patient.

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6.7 Allocation List

There is a dedicated telephone number for patients to ring to be put on the allocation list (**01254 266411**). Rossendale's people on this list are as follows:

- 1 person waiting over 12 months
- 314 waiting between 6-12 months
- 934 waiting between 3-6 months
- 835 waiting up to 3 months

Dental contracts issued in Lancashire include a requirement that practices take patients from the allocation waiting list, rather than allowing patients just to walk into a practice and be given an appointment.

6.8 Urgent Care

If a patient required urgent care they would telephone the dedicated telephone number and be given an urgent appointment at the nearest available clinic. Up to 18 patients are seen daily, each receiving a 20 minute appointment. Appointment details are sent from the triage centre to the clinic.

6.9 Rossendale NHS Dental Services

The PCT put in a bid for additional PDS money and within 48 hours of implementing their successful bid, more Rossendale dentists went private.

The following dental practitioners are accepting NHS dental treatment

- Bacup Road, Rawtenstall – partial NHS
- Archer in Whitworth – partial NHS
- Newchurch Road in Stacksteads – partial NHS
- Denpoint in Rawtenstall – partial NHS
- Mr Gayle's Practice – partial NHS
- Hargreaves in Haslingden – partial NHS
- John and Colin Hudson in Whitworth – partial NHS

Rossendale Dental Practice in Burnley Road, Rawtenstall takes the most NHS patients.

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7. OAK HOUSE, ACCRINGTON



Oak House opened in April 2008 and was built for training dental students. When the Government announced funding for training additional dentists, the link with Liverpool dental students coming to East Lancashire was developed further. A consortium of Liverpool University, University of Central Lancashire, University of Cumbria and the NHS was established and successfully bid to train 32 graduate entry dental students each year in Lancashire and Cumbria, areas where there was a shortage of dentists. It also provides the out of hours dental service weekdays between 6pm-10pm, plus weekend and bank holidays, for all residents of East Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen.

Students spend their first year at Preston and are then allocated to dental education centres at Carlisle, Morecambe, Blackpool and Accrington, where the 8 students spend the next 3 years training.

The programme will enter its 3rd year in September 2009, with the first cohort of dentists being awarded their Liverpool University Dental degree in June 2011.

Many of the students at Oak House live in East Lancashire and wish to work here when they qualify.

Dental therapists are also trained at Oak House, again with Liverpool Dental School.

The four dental surgeries from Accrington Victoria Hospital were allocated to Oak House and two dentists are accredited Vocational Trainers who support newly qualified dentists in their first year of work. Plans are well underway to train dental nurses from January 2010.

8. DENTAL REFORMS

In 2006 there was a reform of dental services and since then, dentists have been working in a system where they were given a set number of courses of NHS treatment to provide to any patient that asked for care. It was instructed so that they were effectively paid the same amount of money to see slightly

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fewer patients. The system was criticised as it led to fewer patients accessing dental care.

In December 2008 a review team was established to look at new ways of improving access to NHS dental services. The review was led by Professor Jimmy Steele.

From the autumn, selected dental practices would pilot some of the recommendations of the review team, which include:

- linking a significant part of dentists' income to the number of patients registered with them, not just the number of treatments they provide
- making dentists more accountable for providing high quality and long lasting treatments, and for dentists to take time to advise patients on preventative care
- define more clearly the rights that patients can expect when they register with an NHS dentist, both for urgent treatment and continuing care

Meeting with Consultant in Dental Public Health

The Task and Finish Group tried to arrange a meeting with the Consultant in Dental Public Health, but due to other commitments this was not able to take place within the timescales for production of this report. It was therefore agreed that this report would be presented to them when the meeting takes place in late October/November.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 That whilst the Task and Finish Group were pleased to be made aware of the availability of the emergency dental service, there was concern that this was not a service that the public knew existed and therefore awareness of this valuable service needed to be made public.
- 9.2 Members were concerned at the number of dentists providing only partial NHS treatment throughout in Rossendale, and felt that more needed to be done by the PCT to encourage more NHS dentists into the Borough.
- 9.3 It was pleasing to learn about the new training facility at Oak House in Accrington and it was hoped that there would be incentives given to newly trained dentists to keep them in the Borough, once qualified.
- 9.4 Members were pleased to note the number of domiciliary visits provided by the Community Dental Service and also the provision of services for special needs children.

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- 9.5 Although there are over 2,000 people within Rossendale on the allocation list, it is suspected that lots of others are not aware that this list exists and only contact a dentist should they require emergency treatment.
- 9.6 It is understood that since the implementation of the 2006 dental reform there has been an increase in the number of people without a dentist.
- 9.7 Whilst we note that children are targeted through the Children Centres and there are links with the Maden Centre, the Group are not sure if there is a referral mechanism to centres for vulnerable youngsters like Tupbridge Family Centre.
- 9.8 The Task and Finish Group commend the ongoing preventative work of the Community Dental Service to deliver good oral health throughout East Lancashire.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the PCT should develop an effective Communication Strategy to ensure the public are aware of how to access the emergency dental service and how to be included on the allocation list by advertising in the following:
 - a) pharmacy windows
 - b) health centre/GP notice boards
 - c) libraries etc
- 10.2 That the PCT, as Commissioners of services ensure they implement/monitor the recommendations of the Steele review, which should improve access to dental services.
- 10.3 That the PCT should continue to look at ways to increase the number of NHS dentists operating in East Lancashire.
- 10.4 The PCT should offer some form of incentive to newly qualified dentists living in East Lancashire to encourage them to stay in the area.
- 10.5 That the PCT continue to invest in preventative treatment to reduce the need of filled/extracted teeth in young children by working closer with the health community worker and local schools
- 10.6 That mechanisms be put in place to safeguard looked-after children’s teeth and ensure this is communicated through to the various care homes throughout the Borough.
- 10.7 That due to the locations of the two emergency dental buildings, the PCT look at providing an additional dental suite within the new Rossendale Health Facility, which would be a more central base for people seeking dental treatment.

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10.8 That a meeting be held in late October/November with the Consultant in Dental Public Health to present the interim findings of the Task and Finish Group.

The Task and Finish Group would like to thank everyone for their hospitality during the course of the site visits.

Councillor Anne Cheetham (Chair)

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