

Agenda Item 68

NHS Dentistry Update Report to the HOSC – March 2011

1. **Background & Purpose**

The PCT last provided an NHS Dentistry update report to the HOSC in December 2009. This report provides an update on the following key developments since the last report:

- New investment in NHS dentistry
- Communications plans to improve access to NHS dentistry
- Development of a local Emergency Dental Service
- Review of the special care dental service
- Oral Health Promotion developments
- Development of a Balanced Scorecard for NHS Dentistry

2. **PCT Commissioning Plan for Dentistry**

In early 2010 as part of the “Primary and Community Care Strategy” the PCT developed a commissioning plan for dentistry. The aim of the plan is:

To improve oral health by providing access to high quality NHS dentistry that meets the needs of the local population in the most convenient, appropriate and cost effective way.

A range of specific initiatives were agreed as part of this plan and over the last year the PCT has been progressing these. An update on key initiatives follows:

2.1 New Investment in NHS Dentistry

The PCT holds 60 contracts for the provision of NHS Dental Services and currently 58% of our local population access an NHS dentist. This is higher than the England figure of 56% but within Brighton and Hove access to NHS dentistry does vary geographically. This in part is related to the fact that dental surgeries are not distributed evenly across the City. The map in Appendix 1 shows the concentration of NHS dental services in Central Brighton and Hove.

In early 2010 the PCT undertook some research in the geographical areas where access rates were the lowest to identify barriers to dental access. We found that patients did want to access a service local to them but also that putting a face to the individual dentist that would be treating them was also important in terms of influencing access to services

The PCT’s investment plan aimed to address the geographical inequity in service provision and focused on developing increased dental provision

outside the City centre. Four priority geographical areas were identified for increased investment and the PCT tendered contracts for the four areas:

- East Brighton
- Hollingbury and Stanmer
- Moulescoomb and Bevendean
- Portslade

We had patient representatives involved throughout the tendering process including evaluation of bids and the decision making process in terms of final contract awards. The outcome was that contracts were awarded for two of the four areas – Portslade and East Brighton. Both these new contracts started on 1 September 2010:

- in Portslade additional services are available from the two NHS Dental Practices in Portslade – Portslade & Old Village Dental Centres; and
- in East Brighton - a new NHS dental surgery was established at the Wellsbourne Centre. To date over 400 patients have accessed services this new service.

Unfortunately contracts could not be awarded for either Hollingbury & Stanmer or Moulescoomb and Bevendean. A review of the tendering process identified two key barriers that inhibited the award of these contracts:

- the contracts were of insufficient size to cover the investment in premises; and
- there was difficulty in finding premises within the tender timescales.

As a result of the lessons learnt from the tendering process the PCT is intending to re-tender the contracts in 2011 with an option of consolidating the contracts into a single contract to attract potential bidders. We are also aware that since the tender process was undertaken that a new dental facility has opened in Moulsecoomb which potentially has the capacity to serve NHS patients.

This new investment should enable more patients to access NHS dentistry if they chose to. The latest figures we have at December 2010 shows 58% of the local population access NHS dentistry and this figure has remained relatively static since March 2009. It is too early to assess the impact of this new investment in terms of patient numbers. However we expect over 60% of the population to be able to access NHS dentistry by the time all 4 contracts are awarded. More detailed information about historical access rates is detailed in appendix 2.

2.2 Communications Plans

Feedback from patient surveys and consultation events demonstrates there is a public perception is that “you can’t get an NHS dentist” despite this not being the case in Brighton and Hove. Over 20 of the 60 contracts are open to new NHS patients. A dedicated Dental Helpline is available for advice and to direct local residents to NHS Dental Services but we are aware that not

everyone knows about this. During 2010 we developed a Dental Communications Plan. Examples of work we have undertaken/is planned:

- The new dental facility at the Wellsbourne has run a range of local proactive publicity. This has included an open day where residents can put a “face” to the dentist and some door to door mailing
- A poster has been developed and trialled encouraging people to prioritise their dental appointments and this will be widely distributed as part of national smile month in May/June 2011
- We will be developing media editorials ready for National Smile Month which may include for example, interviews with dental staff to try to demystify their work.
- Dental and oral health messages have been added to the PCT website as part of the new year’s resolutions page, Facebook page and Twitter and these sites continue to promote the dental helpline to increase access.

2.3 Emergency Dental Service

The current out of hours emergency dental service is based in Lewes which is not always convenient for patients to access. During 2010 the PCT undertook a tender process and awarded a contract for an out of hours emergency dental service to be based within the City boundaries. The new locally based service will start on 1 April 2011 and will be based in one of the current NHS dental surgeries in central Brighton.

2.4 Review of Special Care Dental Service

The PCT commission a “special care” dental service for residents who are unable to access the general NHS dental service because of their particular needs, for example people who have a learning disability or children with challenging behaviour.

In 2010 we reviewed the special care dental service and the key principle underpinning this work was that wherever possible all patients that chose to access NHS dentistry should have their needs met in the general dental service. The special care dental service is more expensive than the general dental service and to ensure best value for the PCT has a duty to ensure that more specialist services are preserved for those that need to access them. The outcome of the review is that we identified 3 groups of patients that had historically accessed the special care dental service whose needs could be met by the general dental service. These were:

- 1) Residents who require dentures
- 2) Children under 8 with tooth decay in 3 or more teeth.
- 3) The siblings of children with special needs

The referral criteria to the special care service has been updated and patients were supported in the transfer to the most convenient local dentist. This has enabled the special care dental service to focus on improving the oral health of individuals who need more specialist services.

2.5 Oral Health Promotion

2.5.1 Oral Health Promotion Service

The PCT commissioned oral health promotion services from Sussex Community Trust. The oral health promotion team deliver and support oral health promotion across the City. This service has been reviewed too and the outcome is that it has been re-focused to:

- Further develop the oral health knowledge of front line workers such as health visitors and care workers in residential homes.
- Target areas of deprivation, such as supporting toothbrushing in breakfast clubs
- Target oral health promotion advice to specific “at risk” groups, for example homeless, substance misusers, travellers and people with learning disabilities.

2.5.2 Oral Health Champions Programme

In 2010 the PCT developed a new Oral Health Champions Programme for General Dental Practices. It aimed to develop the dental workforce to take a greater role in delivering oral health promotion. Examples of work include:

- training for dental nurses to apply topical fluoride to children’s teeth
- encouraging dental teams to refer to other health promotion services, e.g. stop smoking.

2.6 Balanced Scorecard

During 2010 the PCT developed a “Balanced Scorecard” for each NHS dental practice. The scorecard brings together a range of quality and performance indicators about each practice including patient satisfaction with services. The performance of each practice was scored using an A, B and C categorisation. One of the key aims of the scorecard is to support NHS dentists in identifying areas of improvement in order to increase the quality of their services. The PCT met with each NHS practice to discuss their individual scorecard and improvements that could be made. The PCT is currently in the process of developing a more user friendly public version of the scorecard which we intend to publish to support local residents in their choice of NHS dental services.

3. Summary and Future Plans

The PCT has made progress on a number of key initiatives during 2010 in particular the development of increased dental services in Portslade; new dental services in Whitehawk and a local emergency out of hours dental

service. We still need to do more to address the geographical inequity in service provision and over the next year we plan to make further investment in dentistry in particular focused on the Moulescoomb/ and Hollingbury and Stanmer areas. Much of our work, for example promoting oral health and raising awareness of dental services will continue into 2011. In addition to this, two specific new pieces of work we are planning includes:

- Reviewing sedation services and exploring the option of developing some alternative services such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)¹
- Developing a local specialist dental service for complex restorative work. Currently this is a gap in terms of local services and many patients currently travel to London to access this service.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Map of Dental Surgeries

Appendix 2 Access to NHS Dentistry: Historical Rates

¹ CBT is a form of psychotherapy that emphasizes the importance of finding new ways of thinking and behaving to deal with current problems, such as phobia

