

## The Provision of NHS Dental Services in Cambridgeshire Adults and Health Committee Health Scrutiny session 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Evidence received from:

- i. Chief Finance Officer, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB)  
Associate Director for Primary Care Contracts and Enabling, ICB  
Primary Care Contracts Business Partner (Dental), ICB
  - 07.03.24 [The Provision of NHS Dental Services in Cambridgeshire \(report\)](#)
  - 07.03.24 [Oral evidence to the Adults and Health Committee on 7 March 2024](#)
- ii. Communities Programme Manager, Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
  - 01.02.24 [Our position on NHS dentistry - Healthwatch](#)
  - 07.03.24 [Oral evidence to the Adults and Health Committee 7 March 2024](#)

The Committee was pleased to welcome representatives of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to its public health scrutiny session on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The aim of the session was to focus on changes and improvements to dental provision in Cambridgeshire under the ICB, and the scope to make further improvements locally.

Questioning focused on:

- dentistry budget allocation and contracts
- training
- preventive care
- local provision

### Feedback

The Committee:

1. highlights the consistently high level of public concern and dissatisfaction with access to NHS dental services being seen both locally and nationally. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough report that this has been in the top two issues raised with them by local residents every month since before the covid pandemic.
2. commends the local Integrated Care Board in securing £6.1m to help improve access to dental services through its Dental Improvement Plan. This includes



funding additional sessions at high street dental practices, with more sessions being offered in areas of higher access need.

3. notes that NHS minimum activity payment rates for the provision of NHS dental services have not increased in line with inflation, and that there is a significant differential between these and the fees charged for comparable services by private dental practitioners.
4. expresses concern that the new money announced by Government in support of NHS dentistry is not all new money.
5. welcomes the ICB's engagement with local dentists, which it understands is a new initiative, and encourages this active dialogue.
6. highlights the importance of hearing the voice of groups representing local people's experience of dental provision in Cambridgeshire, like Toothless in Huntingdon.
7. welcomes the provision of additional sessions for paediatric patients including children in care and the offer of support to care home staff with residents' oral health and onward referral to a dental practice for treatment where required as part of the ICB's own Dental Improvement Plan.
8. welcomes the offer by the Primary Care Contracts Business Partner (Dental) to engage with district councils.
9. encourages further dialogue between County Council officers and the ICB on wider collaboration in relation to the ICB's workforce strategy, including the opportunities offered by the new Care Academy.
10. welcomes the progress being made in enabling dental assistants, hygienists and other dental care practitioners to undertake an extended role, including possible community-based initiatives, subject to the relevant professional requirements being met.
11. welcomes the ICB's intention to look at S106 funding to make sure that dental provision for new and growing communities is included in future conversations with developers.
12. welcomes and endorses the focus on integrated neighbourhood working and the potential for collaboration in the use of community spaces.
13. welcomes the offer to meet with a local councillor to discuss access to orthodontic care in Cambridge.
14. notes the strong public health argument in favour of the fluoridation of water to build and maintain strong, healthy teeth in both adults and children, and the role it can play in improving dental health in people living in more deprived communities. The

Committee would welcome the extension of water fluoridation in Cambridgeshire being examined further in the future.

15. expresses shock at the finding in the Healthwatch report [Our position on NHS dentistry](#) that some people were reporting that dental practices will not see children as NHS patients unless their parents registered as private patients.
16. welcomes the work already being done by the ICB to actively promote career opportunities within dental care in Cambridgeshire to young people and those changing careers, and encourages this remain an area of focus.

## Recommendations

In the context of its statutory health scrutiny function the Adults and Health Committee:

1. remains dissatisfied with access to dental care in Cambridgeshire. The Committee encourages the ICB to move quickly to assess the sufficiency of dental provision in Cambridgeshire, and requests a briefing note providing an update on this work by the end of July 2024. **Action required – Chief Finance Officer, Integrated Care Board**
2. requests that ICB officers advise the Director of Public Health of the current oral health promotion budget that has been transferred to the ICB from NHSE, and that the ICB renews discussions with the Public Health team around making best use of that oral health budget. **Action required – Primary Care Contracts Business Partner (Dental)**
3. calls on the ICB to review the evidence in the Healthwatch report [Our position on NHS dentistry](#) that some dental practices will not see children as NHS patients unless their parents registered as private patients, to establish if this is happening in Cambridgeshire and, if it is, to consider how this can be prevented. **Action required – Chief Finance Officer, ICB**
4. advocates collaboration and a cross-party partnership approach to lobbying Health Education England for a major extension of dental training provision in Cambridgeshire. The ICB is requested to open a conversation on this with Health Education England, and to keep the Committee informed of how and when it can support this dialogue. **Action required – Chief Finance Officer, ICB**
5. requests that County Council officers and the ICB discuss wider collaboration in relation to the ICB's workforce strategy including dentistry, and the opportunities offered by the new Care Academy. **Action required – Executive Director for Adults, Health and Commissioning, CCC and the Chief Finance Officer and Chief People Officer, ICB.**

6. requests a briefing note on overseas recruitment of dentists, registration arrangements and the local training provision available to them. **Action - Primary Care Contracts Business Partner (Dental)**
  
7. requests that the ICB attend a follow-up health scrutiny session in 6-12 months' time. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will also be invited to attend and to provide feedback on patient experience of the ICB's Dental Improvement Plan. **Action required – Democratic Services Officer**