

The provision of NHS Dental Services in Cambridgeshire

To:	Cambridgeshire Adults and Health Committee
Meeting Date:	7 March 2024
From:	Chief Executive or Executive Director etc.
Electoral division(s):	All
Key decision:	No
Forward Plan ref:	For key decisions Democratic Services can provide this reference
Outcome:	To update the Committee regarding the current provision of NHS dentistry services to the local population of Cambridgeshire.
Recommendation:	<p>Members of the Adults and Health Committee are asked to note the content of the report.</p> <p>a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board want to assure members that we are working closely with dental providers who deliver an NHS dental contract in Cambridgeshire to continue to recover and restore effective dental services, since the delegation of the commissioning of these service since 1 April 2023.</p>

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1. Background

1.1 The committee has requested information regarding:

- a) The current provision and access to dentistry in Cambridgeshire.
- b) An overview of how dental provision has been managed previously in Cambridgeshire.
- c) How this is changing since the Integrated Care Board (ICB) took over responsibility for some aspects and the picture going forward.

2. Main Issues

Delegation of Dental Services and delivery of dental services

- 2.1 The Health and Care Act received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and as a result Integrated Care Boards (ICB) became legally and operationally established on 1 July 2022. This fulfils the long-term policy ambition of giving systems responsibility for managing local population health needs, tackling inequalities and addressing fragmented pathways of care.
- 2.2 In the East of England, the Primary Medical Care (PMC) function was delegated to Integrated Care Boards (ICB) effective from 1 July 2022. The responsibility for Dental and Pharmacy and Optometry (P&O) functions were delegated to ICBs with effect from 1 April 2023.
- 2.3 The governance framework within which NHS Dental Services are provided is through a national Dental Contracting Framework. This overarching governance frames how services are delivered, prior to delegation by NHS England – East of England and then following delegation of dental services, ICBs.
- 2.4 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System has inherited a number of NHS Dental contracts that have underperformed since at least 2018 / 19, against the national General Dental Services contract that has been in place since 2006 and is activity driven. The pandemic exacerbated the under delivery and the restoration of NHS Dental Services has been slow to recover, largely as a result of the pricing structure of this contract.

Local context

- 2.5 On 1 April 2023, NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, the local Integrated Care Board (ICB), became responsible for the commissioning and management of NHS dental services in the area. As part of its commitment to supporting around a million people in the local area to have healthier futures, the ICB has secured £6.1m to help improve access to dental services and support our communities.
- 2.6 The ICB has engaged with local providers who deliver NHS Dental Services across the system, who are very supportive and eager to work with us, to improve access to NHS Dental Services for all patients across the area.
- 2.7 The ICB used commissioning, population health and health inequalities data to identify the geographical areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, where the majority of additional resource should be focused. Cambridgeshire: namely Fenland, Littleport and Ely (and

Peterborough) were highlighted as the areas of need, where there are the highest level of health inequalities and therefore will benefit from a larger proportion of this additional resource.

2.8 NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough has a Dental Improvement Plan in place to use this funding to improve local people’s experiences of NHS dentistry. This plan includes:

Initiative	Summary
Paediatric pathway review and further development of this pathway to make it more sustainable and robust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional resource for prevention to support the Local Authority statutory responsibility. • Additional sessions for paediatric patients including Children in Care. • Setting up of Child Focused Dental Practice (CFDP) initiative
Support to the Special Care Dental Service	Additional sessions for Special Care Dental Service will be provided
General Dental Services (High Street dental practices)	Additional sessions for High Street Dental Practices will be offered. In areas of higher access need more sessions will be offered.
Orthodontic Service	Additional resource will be offered to reduce Orthodontic provider waiting lists.
Care Home support	Offer Care Home staff support with Oral Health of residents and then onward referral to a dental practice for treatment as required.
Golden Hello	Offer one off additional payment to a young dentist / just qualified to come and work at a specific practice in the ICB. To align with national recovery plan
Patient engagement	To gain a real insight into the challenges that patients are facing with access to NHS Dental Services.

2.9 The additional sessions for high street dental practices have been offered to all dental providers delivering an NHS contract. This will be followed shortly with the offer for Orthodontic waiting lists and support to the Special Care Dental Service. The other initiatives will be rolled out in a phased approach.

2.10 It is envisaged, through these measures, to improve dental access, that they will reduce inappropriate presentations of dental problems to General Practice and Emergency Departments. Therefore, increasing access to those services for more appropriate support and meaning patients are more likely to get definitive treatment of their dental issues from a dental professional rather than ‘first aid’ from a medical practitioner in those other settings.

2.11 Types of NHS dental service provision across Cambridgeshire

The type and number of dental contracts that are delivered across Cambridgeshire are listed below:

- High street dental practices that deliver an NHS contract offer mandatory services to the population of Cambridgeshire, of which there are 66 contracts.
- One Special Care Dental Service, with a number of sites across the area.
- One Dental Access Service, with a number of sites across the area.
- 6 Orthodontic contracts across Cambridgeshire.
- 3 Level 2 Minor Oral Surgery contracts across the area.
- 2 Secondary Care providers that deliver Oral Surgery, Maxillofacial Services and Orthodontic Services across the area.

New National Dental Recovery Plan

- 2.12 On 7 February 2024, NHS England published a joint NHS and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) plan to recover and reform NHS dentistry.
- 2.13 As part of the national plan, supported by £200m of government funding, NHS dentists will be given a 'new patient' payment of between £15 - £50 (depending on treatment need) to treat around a million new patients who have not seen an NHS dentist in two years or more.
- 2.14 The plan sets out how the NHS and government will drive a major new focus on prevention and good oral health in young children and deliver an expanded dental workforce.
- 2.15 The plan will also see the government roll out a new 'Smile For Life' programme which will see parents and parents-to-be offered advice for baby gums and milk teeth, with the aim that by the time children go to school, every child will see tooth brushing as a normal part of their day.
- 2.16 To attract new NHS dentists and improve access to care in areas with the highest demand, around 240 dentists will be offered one-off payments of up to £20,000 for working in under-served areas for up to three years.
- 2.17 NHS work will also be made more attractive to dental teams with the minimum value of activity increasing to £28 (from £23). This will affect a small number of contracts across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is understood that any additional funding will be required to be covered from the current dental budget for the ICB.
- 2.18 New ways of delivering care in rural and coastal areas will also be rolled out, including by launching 'dental vans' – with at least one of these vans coming to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, as part of the plan.
- 2.19 Following the publication of this plan, the ICB is awaiting further national guidance regarding what this will mean on a local level to support our patients across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

3. Source documents guidance

3.1 Source documents

Joint NHS and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) plan

3.2 Location

[Our plan to recover and reform NHS dentistry - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/our-plan-to-recover-and-reform-nhs-dentistry)