

13 February 2018

## Queensway Dental Practice NHS Contract

### Summary

Queensway Dental Practice in Billingham Town Centre has decided to cease provision to NHS patients from 31 March 2018.

The Committee is requested to consider an update on the context behind this decision, and the steps taken locally to minimise the impact where possible.

### Detail

1. The Council has been informed that Queensway Dental Practice has decided to not continue treating NHS patients from 31 March 2018. Patients have been written to and provided with a list of alternative NHS dentists.
2. A list of alternative Practices provided to current NHS patients is attached at Appendix 1.
3. Queensway is a large dental practice in Billingham Town Centre, providing a range of NHS and non-NHS oral health services (including some specialist services e.g. minor oral surgery, orthodontics).
4. To assist the Council in understanding the potential impact of this change, the Public Health service has provided further context to this issue, as follows:
  - a) Poor oral health can lead to pain, surgery, unnecessary anaesthesia, infection, oral cancer, distress and impact on self-esteem and absence from education and work. Access to oral health services is therefore important.
  - b) Queensway has seen approximately 11,500 NHS patients in the last 24 months. Queensway wrote to its affected patients during the week commencing 15th January to inform them of the change. The list of alternative provision identified to-date has been shared with Healthwatch and NHS England's customer contact centre.
  - c) NHS England has a role to reduce inequalities in relation to oral health and to improve access to dental care, based on needs, in-line with the Five Year Forward View. There is no set maximum distance that patients are expected

to travel, to access these services but a radius of 10miles from Queensway is being used by NHSE as a benchmark for securing alternative provision.

- d) Apart from Stockton Town Centre, Billingham Central (the location of Queensway) has the highest prevalence (at ward level) of dental decay in under 5s, in the Borough. It also currently has the lowest uptake of NHS dental care (44%) for children 0-4yrs.
  - e) Adult oral health will be poor in this ward compared to the other wards given deprivation levels, including levels of dental decay and oral cancer (prevalence of oral cancer is increasing nationally). As the population ages, oral health in older people is also an increasing concern.
  - f) SBC Public Health commissions a universal toothbrushing programme in primary schools and a fluoride varnish programme in targeted primary schools (ie. those with the worst oral health). Queensway will continue to deliver the fluoride varnish treatment as a provider of this service.
  - g) Through the fluoride varnish programme, Queensway have also so far accepted 80 children onto their list who were not previously registered with a dentist. The benefits of registration are promoted to the wider family and a proportion of the 80 children are siblings of the children actually treated through the fluoride varnish programme. Queensway will no longer accept new children identified through the fluoride varnish programme, onto their list. SBC Public Health and PHE are exploring alternative options for the unregistered children identified through the fluoride varnish programme, who would have then been registered with Queensway.
5. Work is being undertaken in order to understand the potential impact of the changes including the exact capacity in local Practices (including those nearer than the 10 mile radius), and the accessibility of these practices.
6. NHS England have been invited to provide an update on their role in the commissioning of dental services, and together with Public Health, the steps taken to mitigate the impact of the change on local residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

**Contact Officer:** Peter Mennear  
**Post:** Scrutiny Officer  
**Tel.:** 01642 528957  
**Email:** [peter.mennear@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mennear@stockton.gov.uk)

**Contact Officer:** Sarah Bowman-Abouna  
**Post:** Director of Public Health  
**Tel.:** 01642 524296  
**Email:** [sarah.bowman-abouna@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.bowman-abouna@stockton.gov.uk)