

### Report to the Hampshire Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Title:** NHS Dental services in the NHS Frimley ICB part of Hampshire

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#### 1.0 Introduction

The following report provides an update on the Dental services in Frimley with a focus on the Dental providers in the NE Hampshire and Farnham (NEH&F) area in the Frimley footprint.

The report includes an update from the National priorities, current performance in Frimley and in NEH&F plans and future schemes that are subject to approval via the internal Governance route in November.

#### 2.0 National context regarding Dental Recovery

Recovery of access to NHS dental services is a key target within the 2024/2025 NHS priorities and operational planning guidance.

In February 2024 the Dental Recovery Plan was published which committed to expanding access so that everyone who needs to see a dentist will be able to offer a significant incentive to dentists. ICB dental budgets have been ringfenced to support the achievement of this aim. Plus, supporting and developing the whole dental workforce, increasing workforce capacity as committed to in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.

The new government have placed a particular emphasis on improving access to urgent dental care committing that an additional 700,000 appointments will be available. Each ICB is being asked to contribute towards achieving this commitment with plans being approved at regional level during November 2024.

#### 3.0 Access to Frimley ICB NHS dental services; current performance

In April 2020 Frimley dentists saw 390,012 patients. By January 2022 this had dropped by 141,206 to 207,276 patients. At April 2024 attendances had increased to 348,482 although this is still 41,530 short of the pre-pandemic monthly attendance figure.

Access issues continue to improve steadily with the results of the national patient survey (January–March 2024) showing:

- ✓ 83% of patients who tried to get a dental appointment in last 3 months were successful compared to those who tried in the last 2 years when only 78% were successful
  
- ✓ 87% of patients were able to see a dentist that they had been to previously

#### **4.0 Contractor performance**

There are 18 GDS dental providers located in NEH&F, with a total 2024/25 annual contracted Unit of Dental Activity (UDA) Target of 238,693. There are also two orthodontic providers with a total annual contracted Unit of Orthodontic Activity (UOA) of 15,423.

In 2023/24, the general dental providers in NEH&F delivered 93% of their contracted UDA Activity target (213,131 UDAs), and Orthodontic providers delivered 100.2% of UOA activity targets in 2023/24.

The contracted mid-year performance target for all providers is 30%. Mid-year for all in Frimley in 2024/25 in both UDAs and UOAs, are above the performance target at 46.23% and 50.99% respectively.

#### **5.0 Frimley's plans improve access to NHS dentistry in 2024/25**

The following schemes have been submitted and are subject to approval by Frimley ICB in November:

##### **Additional Hours Scheme**

This scheme increases additional commissioned UDAs via the relatively new route “flexible commissioning” has been used to purchase additional urgent access sessions for patients who do not have a regular dentist. Under this scheme both the immediate needs and the full course of treatment to rectify the issue have been commissioned.

This scheme supports the reduction in accident and emergency department attendances either through self-presentations, 111 redirections or the dental support line redirections.

The mid-year performance has indicated a continual increase in activity and subject to an overspend. If approved, this expenditure will equate to an additional 577 sessions or 4,617 patients.

Patients in NEH&F can access any of the additional hours providers across the Frimley footprint.

### **Annual over-performance**

Annually, ICBs are able to authorise an additional 10% of commissioned UDAs from contractors that provide both Tier 1 and Tier 2 services without triggering a procurement process. These additional UDAs are funded by freed up budget due to other contractors performing lower than expected.

These additional UDAs, performed by contractors who exceed their core commissioned UDAs, helps boost access for patients who may otherwise be unable to obtain NHS dentistry.

It is anticipated 38 contractors are eligible for over-performance funding in 24/25. These are providers that over-performed in 23/24 and who have exceeded the mid-year target of providing 30% of their UDA allocation. If approved, the additional 10% performance would deliver 30,097 additional UDAs.

In NEH&F, it is anticipated that 13 of the 16 UDA providers will be eligible for over-performance funding in 24/25, delivering an additional 19,000 UDAs.

### **Rapid commissioning**

Over the past couple of financial years, we have experienced a reduction in UDAs commissioned due to the closure of a large dental practice in Aldershot and the reduction of access in a dental practice in Crowthorne. The majority of these UDAs have now been procured from alternative dental practices, but a small number remain unallocated.

The rapid commissioning process allows a quick commissioning cycle, in which Frimley are looking to commission 4,332 UDAs. If approved, this is due to commence in November, with a timeline to mobilise the delivery of the additional UDAs in Q4 2024/25.

The commissioning would be focused on areas of deprivation, including areas identified in NEH&F, and dental practices who have consistently over-performed.

## **6.0 Future schemes to improve access to NHS dentistry**

### **Resilience support packages**

Dental practices will be able to apply for packages of funding to support with recruitment or other issues.

Practices can apply for either or both of the following:

- Practice support – Funding for 'one-off' recruitment costs, premises works or equipment upgrades
- UDA flexibility – increase in UDA rate for up to 2 years

An outline scheme has been developed for South East ICBs; which is currently being refined and personalised for Frimley ICB dentists prior to the formal launch in 2025.

### **Permanent procurement of new UDAs**

Mandatory dental services (high street dentistry) must be procured according to the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023.

Utilising the funding freed up from rebasing contracts we intend to permanently procure:

- Additional urgent access (as an alternative to the additional hours scheme)
- Additional UDAs focussed on areas of need such as specific patient cohorts or geographical areas of high oral health needs

The mid-year performance conversations will commence in November 2024. These will identify contractors with no intention of improving UDA performance and those where genuine issues prevent full performance.

### **Community Dental Services**

The Community Dental Services (CDS) who serve most of the residents in Hart and Rushmoor, remain challenges with backlogs in the number of patients awaiting treatment in clinics across Hampshire as well as those who require a General Anaesthetic (GA) and require hospital treatment. The CDS Provider, Solent NHS Trust continues to face on-going challenges in relation to recruitment of appropriately trained staff. The Provider is in discussions with the ICB as to how they can reduce their patient waiting times.

#### **Next steps:**

- Continue to monitor access to primary care dental services with the aim of maintaining on-going improvements in access.
- Consider the implementation of innovative approaches such as flexible commissioning to support access for patients with greater oral health needs.
- Work with colleagues in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB and Community Dental Service providers to address key challenges facing their services.