

# **Primary Care Dentistry in Plymouth**

**Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

Vicky Shipway, Chris Boote and James Glanville, Primary Care Manager for Pharmacy (also covering dentists)

## **Responses to questions posed**

### **Does NHS Plymouth currently see a gap between provision and demand?**

By March 2011, NHS Plymouth is expected to provide access to dental services for anyone seeking it (NHS Operating Framework).

The PCT have recently been asked by the Strategic Health Authority to submit plans on how they will achieve the new 65% dental access target (ie, 65% of the populations should be able to access an NHS dentist) as set out by the Department of Health. It is suggested that using figures from the early 90's will give an accurate reflection of the demand for an NHS dentist and NHS Plymouth is currently investigating the best way to achieve this.

### **Why are UDAs and provision set against historical provision and not local population statistics?**

Units of Dental Activity (UDA) values were originally set by the Department of Health when the new contract was implemented during April 2006. Historical figures were used to set individual dentists NHS UDA value. Access figures from 1993 are thought to be the most accurate reflection of acceptable access to NHS dental treatment and these access figures have been used to set dental access targets for 2011.

### **What, if any, are the local plans to improve NHS dentist provision?**

The dental contract is now within its third year and as such PCT's are implementing more robust and now much more appropriate contract monitoring. In order to meet these targets, NHS Plymouth will be enforcing the 4% over/under achievement rules. Any monies recouped from contractors who have claimed for X UDA's will be re-invested back into dentistry, therefore creating additional UDA's and allowing practices to extend their NHS commitment.

NHS Plymouth also holds a database of those patients wishing to access regular NHS dental treatment. This is a useful indicator of demand and any potential gaps in service provision in particular areas of the city.

### **Could you clarify for us the recent developments within the provision that we spoke about?**

NHS Plymouth has just completed a reinvestment exercise whereby six practices throughout the city were given additional recurrent and non recurrent funding to provide additional 17, 500 UDA's for 2009/10. These additional investments are to practices in the following areas of the city (although any practice can apply to increase their UDA's):

Plympton  
Plymstock  
South East  
South West  
North West

With regards to the contract which was awarded in the North West of the city, NHS Plymouth are currently in discussion with the successful bidder as to the best way forward.

**What do patient reviews say about NHS dentist provision? We would welcome copies of any you have access to.**

NHS Plymouth works closely with our Patient Advice and Liaison service (PALS) and also our Complaints and Litigation team to ensure that we are aware of any issues which need addressing. This collaborative approach also helps us to identify any themes which may develop, such as training needs, gaps in service provision and also complaints and feedback.

**How is information targeted to reach the 'hard to reach' in Plymouth, is information available in other formats? Translated? Audio? How is information about NHS dentists disseminated to these more vulnerable groups?**

Information about how to access a dentist is published in the annual patient prospectus - *Your guide to health in Plymouth* and in our Annual report. Information about dental services in Plymouth is also included on our website which can be translated on line into other languages. Regular media releases also help ensure regular coverage of dentistry in the city in the local press and radio.

**Do NHS Plymouth currently work with organisations that already work with the hard to reach?**

Sally Parker, Patient and Public Involvement lead works closely with LINKs. A Service Level Agreement is in place between NHS Plymouth and the Race Equality Council, with Plymouth Disability Action Network and also Plymouth Pride. In addition, there are public health practitioners working with people living in the more deprived areas of Plymouth, these are frequently the 'hardest to reach' populations. In addition, we have access to a network of Colleagues from a variety of organisations across the city which we can utilise to reach a wide range of populations within Plymouth.

**You mentioned that it has been recognised that communication needs to improve – what are the plans for this and what other ways of communication will be used?**

We are currently exploring this area and have included it in our Action plan for dentistry.

**How are accessibility needs within practices addressed?**

Each practice has been DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) Assessed as part of their Practice Inspection visit. Our General Dental Practice Advisor has worked closely with practice to provide a list of recommendation which would assist each practice to gain compliance. We also have several practices that have excellent disabled facilities. These practices work closely with us to enable us to provide services for this important cohort of patients, should they be unable to access dental services from other practices.

**What is the local response to the national review of dentistry by Jimmy Steele?**

We take on board the learning and recommendations outlined in Professor Steele's review and look forward to national developments, although there will be a time lag until some of the recommendations can be covered e.g. contractual issues related to 'registration'. The moves towards focusing on good oral health as an outcome and piloting developments to ensure their effectiveness before making them mainstream are particularly welcomed.

**How will local needs be assessed (as per Vital Signs) to inform future provision? How will it be different from the existing assessment based on historical use of dentists?**

NHS Plymouth strives to provide excellent service links and provision for all areas of the city and patient groups. We work closely with public health to identify areas of deprivation and need. Current area of local need has been identified as predominantly the North West of the city, NHS Plymouth are currently looking at options for a new Tender opportunity to provide access to approximately an additional 6-7000 patients.

**Who makes up the Dental Investment Panel and what is their remit?**

To ensure additional access is commissioned in the areas of most need within Plymouth, the Investment Panel (which is a sub group of the NHS Plymouth Board) meets approximately three times per year to consider expressions of interest to increase NHS capacity from existing and new providers.

The panel consists of NHS Plymouth's Strategic Dental Commissioning Manager, Operational Dental Lead, NHS Plymouth Non-Executive Director, NHS Plymouths General Dental Practice Advisor, an out of area Local Dental Committee (LDC) representative, the Chair of the Councils Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an NHS Plymouth Finance Officer and a Public Health Specialist.

**Could there be a place on this panel for Plymouth LINK?**

We are currently exploring this option but are keen to work more closely. We would welcome the opportunity to attend a LINK meeting and talk to all members about dentistry and any further questions.