

## **Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee, 20 January 2015**

### **Agenda Item 8 – Information Bulletin – Supplementary Item**

#### **Access to Primary Dental Services**

##### **1. Introduction**

This paper provides Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee with information regarding the commissioning of dental services by NHS England.

##### **2. Commissioning Arrangements**

The Area Team footprint covers the Cambridge, Peterborough, Norfolk and Suffolk areas.

Following the NHS reorganisation in April 2013, NHS England has assumed responsibility for the commissioning of dental services (including secondary care but excluding public health services which are the responsibility of the Local Authority). This responsibility is discharged through the NHS England East Anglia Area Team (the Area Team).

The Area Team has established a Local Professional Dental Network (LPN) which has the following key functions:

- To support the Area Team in commissioning services
- To provide clinical leadership and facilitate wider clinical engagement
- To provide a mechanism for engaging patients, carers and the public
- To establish solid and productive local commissioning relationships
- To advise and work in partnership with the health and wellbeing boards
- To feed into other clinical networks
- To engage with local representative committees

The constructive working relationship with the Local Dental Committees (LDC) continues with joint meetings with the 3 local LDCs being held on a regular basis.

The working relationship with Healthwatch groups and Patient Advice Liaison Services.

##### **3. Understanding Local Need & Commissioning Intentions**

Work has been undertaken to complete the Oral Health Needs Assessment to inform the priorities for commissioners and national guidance to support a consistent approach to the assessment of need is expected to support this.

There are also a number of national working groups which are developing evidence based pathways to improve outcomes for patients, with a focus on improving access and outcomes for vulnerable adults and children, oral surgery and orthodontics. It is expected that these groups will report in April 2015.

In view of the ongoing work to finalise the evidence based pathways, the Area Team has extended current contracts for dental services that were due to come to an end prior to March 2016 until that date. This will enable the development of clear commissioning intentions to ensure that services have sufficient activity in the correct areas early in 2015, commencing procurements where appropriate in 2015/16.

#### **4. Access to Primary Care Dental Services**

The area team remains committed to maintaining stability and access to dental services across the Area Team footprint.

The latest GP Practice Survey Results (January to March 2014 data) show that 96.3% of patients were successful in getting an NHS dental appointment in East Anglia in the previous two years. This is 1% above the England rate of 95.3%.

Overall experience of dental services for those who tried to get a NHS dental appointment in the last two years was 85% fairly good or very good, 9% neither good nor poor, 6% fairly or very poor. This is 1% above the England rate for good or very good and 1% below the England rate for fairly or very poor.

The most recently published Vital Signs data (September 2014) reports that 94% of patients reported satisfaction with the dentistry received against a national position of 93.8%. Satisfaction with the time to wait for an appointment was 90.7% against 89.8% nationally.

##### **4.1 Access to Urgent Care**

The Area Team has been working to ensure that there are clear pathways to ensure patients can access urgent, out of hours dental care based on need. Effective triage pathways are being implemented with the NHS111 provider to improve access to Urgent Out of Hours dental provision.

#### **5. Quality Assurance framework**

The Area Team has commenced development of a quality assurance framework for primary care dental providers. This will ensure proactive performance management processes, triangulating both soft and hard information and intelligence from various sources to help inform knowledge of individual practices.

The Area Team monitors practice on an ongoing basis for both activity and quality of services using various data sources and information that is available to the public such as Dental Services vital signs reports (practice level data), comments on NHS Choices (practice level), GP practice survey results and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection reports (practice level). Patient complaints and concerns, both formal and informal are addressed with practices using clinical input for Dental Practice Advisors where appropriate.

**NHS England East Anglia Area Team**

**January 2015**