



**Portsmouth Heath Overview and Scrutiny Panel  
Access to NHS Dental Services Update**

The Panel requested an update from the PCT Cluster on NHS dental services in Portsmouth.

There are currently 28 contracts held for NHS general dental services in Portsmouth, plus contracts for orthodontic services, dentistry for patients with special needs and a contract with the University of Portsmouth for courses of treatment carried out by student dentists and therapists/hygienists. The majority of these services provide services to all age ranges, to ensure that oral health messages are embedded within family values and maintained throughout life.

The number of patients seen by an NHS dentist has increased since the baseline measure in March 2006, with over 5,500 additional patients seen since that time. Currently the number of patients seen in contracts within Portsmouth is equivalent to over 58% of the population (120,477 patients). At 6 September 2012 there were 11 practices across Portsmouth accepting new NHS patients.

To support awareness of availability of services a Toothbus has been commissioned, following the announcement by the Department of Health of availability of non-recurring funding in December 2011. This money was to allow PCTs to increase the number of patients seen by an NHS dentist and there were a number of restrictions on the use of this money, which limited the opportunities available to the PCT. A submission was made by the PCTs across South Central to introduce a mobile dental service to offer a free NHS check-up for patients who had not seen an NHS dentist in the previous 24 months, which was accepted by the Department with the service starting in May 2012.

This unit visited a number of community sites in Portsmouth during the summer where more than 150 patients were seen for a check-up, with education, advice and signposting to ongoing care provided to many more. This scheme will run for a limited period only to assist those patients who may not be aware of services available, or may need assurances about accessing treatment to receive regular NHS dental care from practices within the area.

A number of social marketing campaigns have taken place, including radio advertising to ensure residents are aware of the services available to them.

The PCT Cluster would welcome the support of the Panel to continue to raise awareness of the availability of NHS dental services in Portsmouth.

September 2012