

Update for Portsmouth Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel (HOSP) on NHS dental services

Background regarding the commissioning of general dental services

NHS England holds contracts with dental care providers on behalf of the NHS, as part of its responsibilities for the commissioning and oversight of all NHS dental services (including general dental services, specialist community dental services and secondary care (hospital) dental services). General dental services and specialist community dental services are commissioned in line with national regulations, with dental providers commissioned to deliver care and treatment as measured by units of dental activity.

Decision by Colosseum Dental Group to cease providing NHS dental services at three Portsmouth dental practices

The Colosseum Dental Group informed NHS England that they wished to give notice on the contracts under which they provided NHS general dental services at the following three dental practices in the Portsmouth area, with effect from 31 July 2019:

- Portsea Dental Clinic, John Pounds Centre, 23 Queen Street, Portsmouth, PO1 3HN
- Paulsgrove Dental Clinic, Paulsgrove & Wymering Healthy Living Centre, 219-225 Allaway Avenue, Portsmouth, PO6 4HG
- Southsea Dental Clinic, 96 Victoria Road North, Southsea, PO5 1QE

The services Colosseum was commissioned to provide at the three practices accounted for around 10 per cent of the NHS dental provision commissioned within the local area, with 22 other dental practices also providing NHS services to patients.

Colosseum was contractually obligated to continue delivering care for NHS patients at the practices until 31 July. While we understand Colosseum was experiencing staffing challenges, it is disappointing that the provider did not act in the best interests of their patients by ceasing to provide services at the three practices ahead of their contractual obligations ending on 31 July. NHS England took formal action as a result of this breach of their contracts to deliver NHS care. Breach notices were issued to Colosseum, who will need to declare this should they decide to bid for contracts to provide any NHS dental services in the future. All payments made to Colosseum for any NHS services they have not delivered will also be recovered.

As mentioned above, we understand Colosseum were experiencing some staffing and recruitment challenges. The national Interim NHS People Plan published in June 2019 recognises that dental workforce challenges are not unique to the Portsmouth area and commits to addressing this, in order to ensure the dental workforce can meet patient needs.

Action taken by NHS England to maintain the capacity of NHS dental services in Portsmouth

In response to Colosseum's decision to close the three dental clinics, our immediate priority has been to maintain the capacity of local NHS dental services in the interim period, whilst a



procurement process is undertaken to commission new long-term NHS dental services to serve patients in Portsmouth and to put in place the contractual arrangements to support this.

NHS England is legally required to undertake such a procurement process to award any new long-term contracts for the provision of NHS dental services.

We have therefore been working with other existing local dental practices, so that we can support them to provide more appointments for NHS patients in the interim period, where individual practices are able to do so. We asked all other dental practices in the area to indicate whether they would be in a position to deliver additional NHS care, so that we could fund them to provide this.

We have finalised an agreement with the Bupa Dental Care practice in Cosham to provide additional appointments for NHS patients. The Bupa practice, located at 90 Northern Road, Cosham, PO6 3ER, is just over a mile from the Paulsgrove dental practice that had been run by Colosseum.

The University of Portsmouth Dental Academy in the south of the city, which is located less than a mile from one of the other former Colosseum practices, has also agreed to deliver a significant amount of general dental care to NHS patients, as part of a temporary contract. The existing contract we hold with the Dental Academy, which is part of the University of Portsmouth, is to support the training and education of the dental workforce and to provide a dental service to people who would not necessarily have access to a dentist. This includes working in partnership with community-based organisations that support homeless people, young people, older people, offenders on probation and other groups, as well as working with local children's centres to support better oral care for young children. The additional temporary contract the Dental Academy will hold to provide general dental services to more NHS patients requires them to recruit new staff in order to deliver this service. We are continuing to work with the Academy so that they can establish this service as quickly as possible.

We are also working with a third dental care provider who has indicated a willingness to provide additional dental treatment to NHS patients at one, or even two of, their dental surgery sites. We hope to have confirmation about these arrangements shortly.

These interim arrangements will overlap with the commencement of new long-term NHS dental services within the City.

We have written to patients who previously used the three Colosseum dental practices that have now closed, confirming how they can find details of other local dental practices at the point they need NHS dental care.

Patients who are in pain and in need of urgent dental treatment can continue to access this in the same way by calling the NHS 111 service. They will then be referred to a local dental practice to receive any urgent treatment, as needed.

The process to procure long-term dental services

The procurement process to put in place long-term contractual arrangements for new NHS dental services in Portsmouth is now underway. A refreshed service needs assessment has been completed to inform the procurement plans.

As part of the procurement process it is important for us to take time to engage with the market, as well as local people, to ensure the services procured are sustainable and meet the needs of the population. We will be putting in place a survey so that patients and the public can let us have their views on dental services. This will run for four weeks and we will work with system partners (including the clinical commissioning group, Healthwatch and the local authority) to request that they help to promote the survey through their communications channels and networks). Any assistance Portsmouth City Council can give in regards to this would be appreciated. The survey will be available online on the NHS England website and will also be available in easy-read format. There will be a phone number for people to call if they would prefer to talk to someone. These arrangements will be in place shortly. We are grateful for the support of a representative from Healthwatch Portsmouth, who is a member of the project group that is managing the procurement.

We will ensure the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel (HOSP) is kept updated as the process progresses and will be contacting the Panel shortly to seek feedback to inform the recommissioning of these services, in addition to seeking views from other local stakeholders.

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