

MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council

**Dental Services in Plymouth**

The problems of access to NHS dentistry in Plymouth are well known, long standing and have been subject of discussion on numerous occasions within both the City Council's Scrutiny function and Health & Wellbeing Board.

All age groups and populations are at risk of poor oral health even though it is largely preventable. Oral health problems such as tooth decay, gum disease and mouth cancer are increasingly concentrated in vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups. More deprived areas with more transient populations are also associated with a lower proportion of access to NHS primary dental care.

Despite being identified as a priority by NHS England, in excess of 20,000 fellow Plymouth residents remain on the waiting list for an NHS dentist. This situation is exacerbated by the inability and/or unwillingness of existing high street dental practices to undertake additional NHS work for which they are commissioned.

NHS England's own Oral Health Needs Assessment (2021) identified the following priorities for the Devon ICS area –

- The need for targeted increases of access to NHS dentistry is a critical issues for key parts of Devon.
- There is a need for additional support of dental care services in line with the increasing numbers of older people in the area.
- There is a need to support the recruitment and retention of dentist working in NHS Dentistry.
- There is evidence that there is difficulty being experienced by Dentists in meeting their contractual targets.
- In some parts of Devon, there is difficulty for patients to access Paediatric care services, particularly to its western extremities.

This council believes that -

- These priorities can only be met if NHS England is more flexible in its approach to commissioning, taking account of all possible providers who may offer alternatives where current arrangements are not working in a satisfactory way for patients.
- NHS England should commit to approach existing providers who have developed proposals to address these issues in the City.
- These approaches should include alternative providers that have not traditionally delivered commissioned dental services and use re-investment of current underspend in providers with capability and capacity to deliver more services.

- NHS England should look to agree contracts that reward improvements in the dental care of its patients and focus on outcomes rather than activity based commissioning.
- NHS England should present a plan for improvements in Plymouth as requested on numerous occasions.

Therefore this Council agrees that a joint letter is sent from the Chairs of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community Health and Care and to the Senior Leadership of NHS England expressing the views set out above.

Proposed by: Councillor Mrs Mary Aspinall

Signature: Approved by email

Seconded by: Councillor John Mahony

Signature: Approved by email