

19 February 2024

NHS Commissioned Dentistry Services

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Councillor G. Flint (Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces)

1. Aim

This report aims to provide members of the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the commissioning arrangements for dentistry services within the Walsall Borough.

This report builds upon information provided to the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee by NHSE dentistry commissioners in April 2023.

This report aims to provide an update on issues and progress since that point and to secure feedback from HOSC members around areas of specific interest for future enquiry.

2. Recommendations

Scrutiny Members are asked to note the contents of this report and highlight any issues for onward consideration by Dentistry Commissioners working within the Office of the West Midlands.

3. Report detail

3.1 Overview of NHS commissioned dental provision in Walsall

Since the April 2023 report to Committee dentistry services in Walsall have been stable.

There continue to be 38 dental contracts (in 26 practices) of varying sizes which offer a range of routine dental services. Most of these practices are taking on new patients, however waiting times differ for each practice.

Walsall residents also have access to the following NHS dental services,

- Secondary care is provided by Walsall Health care NHS Trust e.g. oral surgery and other Black Country acute hospital services.

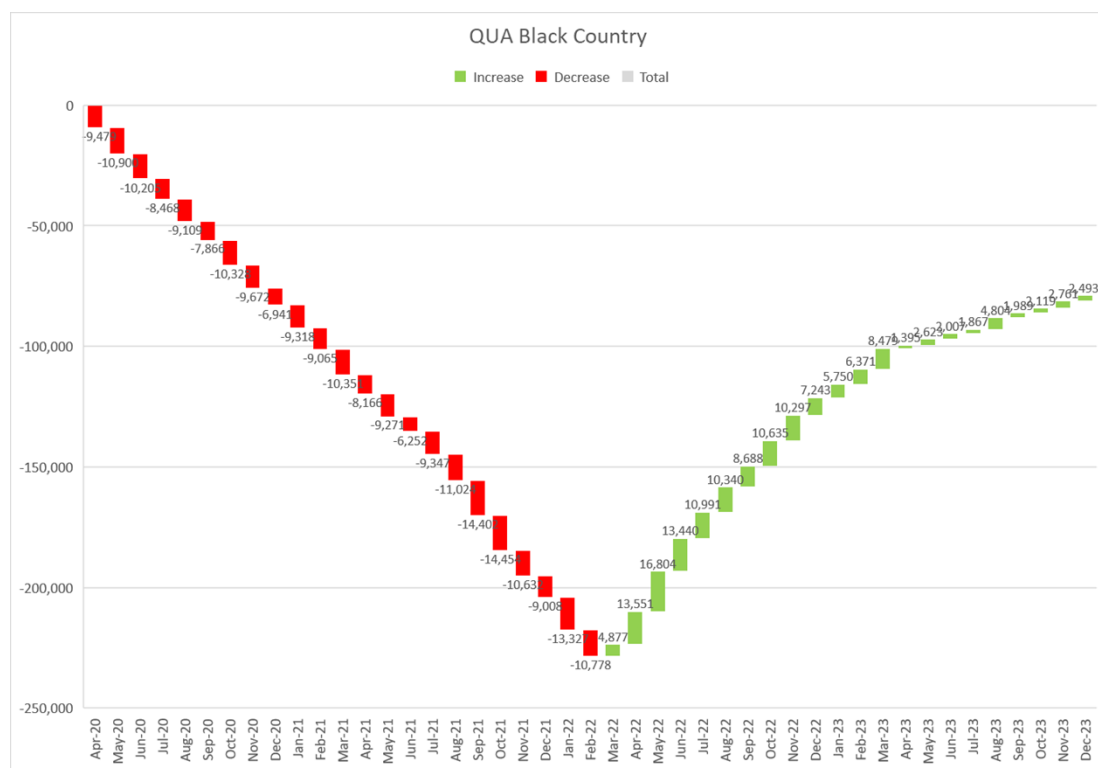
- Community Dental Services for special care adults and children being delivered by Birmingham Community Health Care Trust (BCHC) (from a number of clinics across the Walsall area).
- Residents may have to travel to the Dental Hospital in Birmingham for more specialist services such as complex Restorative dentistry, Oral Medicine or to the Children’s Hospital should a child have complex medical issues.

All other dental services are private and therefore outside the scope of control of dental commissioners.

3.2 Improving Access

The focus of work for the past 12 months has continued to be on the recovery of dentistry services post COVID.

Data on dentistry activity is recorded and reported at a Black Country level. The latest available data set from December 2023, shows that the situation continues to steadily improve however the a gap still exists with fewer patients being seen in the 2 preceding 2 year period compared to pre-pandemic.



Access to Urgent Care

To ensure that Walsall residents have access to urgent dental care for on the day treatment three practices have been commissioned to provide this service. Access to these appointments is via NHS 111 who can make direct referrals.

Access to Orthodontics

In the last report to Committee a problem in relation to access to orthodontic services was highlighted as the consequence of 2 providers handing back their contracts. Orthodontic services provide treatment to children to straighten misaligned teeth, give a healthy bite and prevent disease.

It has proved difficult to identify new providers via procurement however additional capacity has been secured to ensure children waiting to start treatment do not experience further delays.

Waiting times for orthodontics have been restored to pre-pandemic levels.

Access for residents in receipt of Domiciliary Care

Work has continued since the last update Committee to ensure that care home and housebound residents can access dental care. It has not been possible to date to establish a domiciliary dental provider in Walsall and services are currently provided through a Wolverhampton based service.

The commissioners for dental services have confirmed that Walsall remains a priority area for the development of domiciliary dental services with further work being undertaken to address the gap.

3.3 Changing Commissioning Arrangements

In April 2023, the commissioning responsibility for dentistry services transferred from NHSE to ICBs. This delegation was undertaken to bring services closer the local populations and support integration.

Following an options appraisal conducted by ICBs across the West Midlands the decision was taken to establish the Office of the West Midlands to receive the delegation on behalf of all ICBs within the region. This decision was taken to provide stability to the sector in the post delegation period. Representatives from each of the ICBs to include the Black Country come together to steer the work of commissioners located in the Office of the West Midlands, which is hosted by Birmingham and Solihull ICB.

4. Financial information

No specific financial implications identified.

5. Reducing Inequalities

In the work undertaken to date to recover access to dentistry services specific consideration has been given to ensuring that recovery is equitable across protected characteristic groups to include children requiring orthodontics, older people living in care homes and the housebound.

6. Decide

The Committee are asked to request any additional information or an update on dentistry services in the future.

7. Respond

Any recommendations from the Committee will be responded to by the Black Country ICB jointly with the Dentistry Commissioners located in the Office of the West Midlands.

8. Review

Progress in relation to the recovery of dentistry services will continue to be monitored through Dentistry Commissioners located within the Office of the West Midlands. The Black Country ICB will work alongside the commissioners to ensure that the needs of the Walsall population are taken into account and remaining access issues addressed. The Committee can receive an update on the improvement work in future as part of an update report on NHS Dentistry.

Background papers

None

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