

Stakeholder Briefing: **Urgent dental care services across the North East and Yorkshire**

Background

Since the Prime Minister announced social distancing measures to slow down the spread of COVID-19, a set of restrictions on daily activity to contain the spread of the virus were introduced. As a result of these restrictions, the Department of Health and Social Care has taken the decision to suspend **all non-urgent dental activity**.

In light of the public health control measures and in recognition of the difficulties that dental practices will face, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) is making a number of immediate changes to the delivery and operation of our dental services in the North East and Yorkshire to ensure people are still able to access urgent dental care.

General Dental Practices

General dental practices are expected to remain open to act as a primary contact point for all local patients to secure initial urgent dental care through the provision of remote telephone triage, self-care advice and treatment through prescription of pain killers and antibiotics to manage urgent dental care symptoms where appropriate.

They will also be able to refer those patients in need of urgent treatment to a designated treatment centre where they can be seen, but only where clinically this is absolutely necessary.

Outside of normal dental practice hours and at weekends, patients should contact NHS111 to access advice and support.

Urgent dental care treatment services

Across every NHS region, local Urgent Dental Care (UDC) treatment hubs are being established to continue to provide face to face care for people with urgent and emergency dental problems.

All dental practices are responsible for triaging patients who contact the practice seeking access to urgent dental care (UDC) regardless of whether they are considered 'regular' patients of the practice. This means patients that do not have a regular NHS dentist can still access urgent care.



Patients with an urgent or emergency dental condition must not attend any clinics as they need to be triaged first. This system also helps manage the flow to centres and avoid queues (in line with social- distancing measures).

Community dental services (CDS) are responsible for triaging patients with additional and complex health or social care needs, who contact the service seeking access to urgent dental care.

Triage will also include a COVID assessment of the patient, in line with national guidance to ensure their care can be managed accordingly.

As mentioned, patients will only be seen after a referral via one of two of the triage systems. During weekdays, patients can be referred through their local dental practice and outside of normal dental practice hours and at weekends, patients should contact NHS111. Drop-ins are not permitted.

Locations of urgent dental centres

Locations have been chosen to cover the North East and Yorkshire region to ensure access during this period.

As drop-ins are not permitted, we are not publicising the precise locations of these urgent dental centres.

With the initial service now operational, further centres are likely to be added to increase provision and reduce journey time across the region

For further information, please contact the NHS England and NHS Improvement local dental teams as follows:

- North East and North Cumbria - England.dentalcne@nhs.net,
- Yorkshire and Humber – england.yhdentalreturns@nhs.net.