

Response to Member Questions
HASC – 15 May 2023

Cllr Ruth Houghton

Bishop's Castle hospital was closed on a temporary basis in November 2021. Some 18 months later it has still not re-opened. What are the plans for the future of Bishop's Castle and other Community Hospitals in Shropshire ?

Response from Shropshire Community Health Trust and STW ICS

In terms of Bishop's Castle Community Hospital, for clarity the Hospital remains open to clinical services. Outpatient physio and ophthalmology is delivered clinically from this site and the Rapid response team for the Bishops Castle area have been based here since January 2022 and operate from this site. The inpatient facility was temporarily closed on safety grounds in Nov 2021. The unit could not be staffed sufficiently to run a compliant rota with registered staff and this remain the case despite best endeavours and very robust recruitment campaigns that have been supported and advertised through local councillors which we were most grateful in terms of support.

The ICB strategic commissioner has commissioned the 'Big Conversation' engagement re: health provision and several events across STW have already taken place including BC, which was well attended. The engagement mentioned above aims to build on this work and more specifically engage and focus on the future of Bishops Castle.

Cllr Bernie Bentick

The response to my Question on 23rd March 2023 to Shropshire Council's Health and Social Care Overview Committee stated:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020) 276,001 Shropshire patients attended NHS dental practices within a 24 month period and this figure had remained relatively static during the preceding 2 years. At the lowest point during the pandemic (February 2022) 204,914 patients attended NHS dental practices and by January 2023 the number of patients accessing NHS dental practices had increased to 239,267. The gap between the historic level of Shropshire patients that regularly accessed NHS dental practices and those that are currently attending NHS dental practices is 36,734 patients.

My question is:

1. What were the number of individual patients who attended Shropshire's NHS Dental Practices and **separately** the number of attendances for the following time periods: April 2020 to March 2021, April 2021 to March 2022, April 2022 to March 2023, as many patients will have had more than 1 attendance during a 12 month time period?

2. How many **new** NHS patients were registered to Shropshire Dental Practices over the above 3 time periods, in the following 3 groups: aged 17 and younger, aged 18 and over and those entitled to free dental care?
3. How many Shropshire residents are not registered with a Dental Practice?

Response

NHS England

1. The table below sets out the number of unique patients that attended Shropshire dental practices during the years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. A proportion of these patients will have attended a practice on more than one occasion and the number of patients that have attended, based on their dentists submitting FP17 forms to record all courses of treatment is also included. A course of treatment will also include all check-ups.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Unique patients in the 12 months	94,389	176,197	198,931
Attendances based on FP17s	120,113	268,544	311,513

2. Registration with an NHS dentist has not existed since 2006. Many practices have maintained a list of NHS patients they offer to recall, but patients are unable to register with an NHS dentist in the same way as for a GP. Dentists are commissioned to provide a level of dental activity rather than to care for a specific group of patients.

The table below sets out the number of new patients by requested category, that attended an NHS dental practice during the years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. New patients are categorised as patients that have not been seen during the preceding 24 months or have never been seen by an NHS dentist. The number of new exempt from patient charge adults are also included within the total number of new patients adults.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
New patients Child 0-17	4,442	16,742	18,429
New patients Adults	11,906	36,328	38,615
New patients Adults - exempt from patient charges (subset of line above)	3,055	7,903	8,685

3. Registration with an NHS dentist has not existed since 2006. Many practices have maintained a list of NHS patients they offer to recall, but patients are unable to register with an NHS dentist in the same way as for a GP. Dentists are commissioned to provide a level of dental activity rather than to care for a specific group of patients.

Update

This item was discussed at the Health and Well Being Board (HWBB) in April 2023 with agreed actions to follow up around communications.