



SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD Report

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| Meeting Date | 13 th February 2024 | | | | |
| Title of report | Dental Access in Shropshire - STW Dental Services Equity Audit | | | | |
| This report is for (You will have been advised which applies) | Discussion and agreement of recommendations | | Approval of recommendation s (With discussion by exception) | x | Information only (No recommendations) |
| Reporting Officer & email | Darrell Jackson - Senior Commissioning Manager, Primary Care Commissioning Team NHSE, Office of the West Midlands darrell.jackson1@nhs.net Naomi Roche – Public Health Principal, Healthy Population Lead naomi.roche@shropshire.gov.uk | | | | |
| Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply | Children & Young People | x | Joined up working | x | |
| | Mental Health | x | Improving Population Health | x | |
| | Healthy Weight & Physical Activity | | Working with and building strong and vibrant communities | x | |
| | Workforce | | Reduce inequalities (see below) | x | |
| What inequalities does this report address? | The Dental Services Equity Audit has informed the approach to commissioning additional dental activity in Shropshire with the intension to reduce the highlighted inequalities by increasing NHS dental access. Facilitating access to those most vulnerable in our communities in Shropshire through a coordinated & targeted approach places tackling inequalities at its core. | | | | |

1. Executive Summary

Following receipt of the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dental Services Equity Audit, this paper proposes how recently terminated and rebased NHS dental activity in the form of units of dental activity (UDA) are strategically dispersed across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB to reduce the highlighted inequalities by increasing NHS dental access to 53%, which was the pre-pandemic access level for patients across the ICB.

The supporting presentation will outline how access for those more vulnerable people living in Shropshire is being facilitated through a coordinated approach with services, professionals and community groups in the wards of Market Drayton West and Market Drayton East (priority area 2) and the wards of Underdale, Castlefields & Ditherington, Harlescott, Monkmoor and Sundorne (priority area 7).

2. Recommendations

- Note and discuss progress being made taking a whole system approach to inequalities through commissioning & facilitating access to units of dental activity in Shropshire.
- Note and discuss challenges surrounding access to dental treatment.

- Note the synergy between NHSE Dental Services Equity Audit & commissioning and the local feedback on dental services through the JSNA.

3. Report

Since 31st March 2022 and primarily due to the shortage of NHS dentists willing to work or remain in Shropshire, there have been 2 contract terminations, and 16 providers have rebased their contractual activity target. In total this equates to the surrender of 65,946 UDAs or in monetary terms, £2,010,904 recurrently.

To date, 27,996 of the surrendered UDAs have been successfully locally dispersed to NHS dental practices that had capacity to expand their NHS dental provision to support local NHS access. The total cost of this UDA activity is £842,685 recurrently.

As the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dental Services Equity Audit had been commissioned, since mid-2023, the dispersal of surrendered UDAs across the ICB has been paused pending receipt of the audit.

The STW Dental Services Equity Audit has been received so it must now be used to strategically prioritise targeted action to improve access to NHS dental services and help reduce inequities in access to NHS dental services across the ICB area.

As highlighted above the total financial value of terminated and rebased contracts is £2,010,904 of which £842,685 has been spent recommissioning 27,996 UDAs from alternative local NHS dental providers. A total of £1,168,219 had been reserved to commission additional dental activity in accordance with the priority areas identified within the STW Dental Services Equity Audit.

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dental Services Equity Audit

The NHS England 2023/24 priorities and operational planning guidance reconfirmed the ongoing need to recover services to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan (NHSE, 2023). It includes an ambition to recover dental activity, towards pre-pandemic levels and to ensure fair allocation and distribution of resources towards those most in need. The pre-pandemic access levels i.e. as at 31st March 2019 is 53% of the total population seeing an NHS dentist within the previous 2 years. The Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dental Service Equity Audit supports this ambition.

The Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dental Services Equity Audit has been produced by NHS England's Consultant in Dental Public Health for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

The aim of this audit is to assess levels of access to NHS primary care dental services across Shropshire Telford and Wrekin ICB at ward level and review available oral health and deprivation data for those wards.

Information from the local Dental Advice Line and Healthwatch has provided insights from the public.

Current and planned housing developments supplied by the local authorities, help to identify areas with anticipated population growth.

All of this information has supported the identification of initial priority areas for those with the poorest oral health, who also have the lowest levels of access to services.

The decision making process in regard to NHS dental service commissioning is undertaken against a backdrop of differential population growth and a growing private dental sector. In addition, the public can access NHS dental care wherever they choose as there is no 'catchment' area for dental practices, unlike for general medical practices. These factors create a very dynamic environment for dental commissioning.

The aim of the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dental Services Equity Audit is to inform dental commissioners when prioritising targeted action to improve access to dental services and help reduce inequities in access to dental services across the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB area.

The Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Dental Services Equity Audit recommends future dental service commissioning in seven priority areas and calculates the number of additional UDAs required to increase local access in the most challenged areas to the pre-pandemic level across the ICB.

Individual priority wards have been grouped together to create larger priority areas so that commissioners can commission additional NHS dental activity on a more viable footprint and to increase NHS dental access for the wider local priority population.

In priority order, the areas identified are –

1. The wards of Madeley & Sutton Hill, The Nedge, Woodside, Dawley & Aqueduct, Malinslee & Dawley Bank and Brookside.
2. The wards of Market Drayton West and Market Drayton East.
3. The wards of Oswestry East, Oswestry West, St. Oswald, Gobowen, Selattyn & Weston Rhyn, Ellesmere Urban, Llanymynech, St. Martins, Whittington and Oswestry South.
4. The wards of Ludlow North, Ludlow East, Ludlow South, Clee, Corvedale and Church Stretton & Craven Arms.
5. The wards of College, Haygate and Hadley & Leegomery.
6. The wards of Oakengates & Ketley Bank, Wrockwardine Wood & Trench, St. Georges and Donnington.
7. The wards of Underdale, Castlefields & Ditherington, Harlescott, Monkmoor and Sundorne.

The full Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Dental Services Equity Audit is attached as appendix 1.

Dispersal Plan

For priority areas, 1, 2, 5 & 7 it is proposed that qualifying local NHS dental practices that are located within each of the identified priority wards are invited to submit an expression of interest if they want additional recurrent UDAs to expand their NHS dental provision. As a General Election was held on 4th July 2024, it was suggested that any expression of interest process did not commence until a new government was formed.

It is crucial wherever possible, that any additional local activity is targeted at patients that live within the identified wards. For this reason it is proposed that practices that receive additional activity do not initially advertise this openly via the national NHS website. It is proposed that the well establish, clinically led, Shropshire Dental Advice Line directly directs local patients to the accepting local practices. Healthwatch Shropshire and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin would also be official sign posters. Commissioners will also work closely with the ICB Inequalities Team to ensure that harder to reach patients are made aware of the additional local NHS dental activity. Only when all local work has been completed to raise targeted awareness of the additional activity, will the practices be required to update their acceptance status on the national NHS website.

Under normal circumstances, as part of previously agreed local dispersal plans, all UDAs have been commissioned at the ICB average UDA rate, which in the case of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB is currently £32.80. As this ICB wide exercise is to specifically targeted to increase NHS dental access in the most deprived areas, it is recognised that practices will need work harder to reach the targeted patients. It is therefore proposed that for this ICB wide exercise, the UDA rate for the additional commissioned activity is increased to £36 to include a recurrent inequality premium of £3.20. This higher rate will hopefully make the additional activity more attractive to practices, help recruit and/or retain dentists to a very challenged area and to incentivise the practices to work with local communities to promote the additional local NHS dental access and subsequently work with these patients to promote the need for them to have regular ongoing NHS dental check-ups.

As highlighted above, currently £1,168,219 is available within the STW dental budget following recent dental terminations and contractual rebases. If UDAs were commissioned at the rate of £36, it would enable commissioners to commission an additional 32,450 UDAs under this exercise.

Priority areas 3, 4 & 6 do not currently require dispersal plans as alternative solutions are in place (priority area 4) or recent procurement undertaken (priority area 3) or recent UDA dispersals (priority area 6) should have improved access issues locally.

Commissioning to Date

- Priority Area 1 ~ 10,616 UDAs offered to local dental providers but no applications due to the lack of available NHS dentists. Golden Hello payments of £20k per new NHS dentists made available within this priority area to increase the dental workforce and the additional activity (UDAs) will be offered again during 2025.
- Priority Area 2 ~ 12,297 UDAs offered to local dental providers and all of this activity was awarded to two dental providers.
- Priority Area 5 ~ 3,419 UDAs offered to local dental providers and all of this activity was awarded to one dental provider.
- Priority Area 7 ~ 23,963 UDAs offered to local dental providers, two applications received and 17,000 UDAs awarded to these dental providers. Applications for the remaining activity will be sought during 2025.

Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

Financial implications

(Any financial implications of note)

Climate Change Appraisal as applicable

Where else has the paper been presented?

System Partnership Boards

Voluntary Sector

Other

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

STW Dental Services Equity Audit

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Portfolio holders can be found [here](#) or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead

Appendices

Appendix A: STW Dental Services Equity Audit