

Directorate of Commissioning

Update on NHS Dentistry

This paper provides a summary of the progress West Kent PCT (WKPCT) has made in improving access to NHS dentistry.

1. New Contracts

The PCT awarded in March 2008, 5 new dental contracts totalling £1.8m to provide an additional 87,000 units of dental activity. Each of these contracts was to improve access in the following areas;

- Tonbridge
- Tunbridge Wells
- Sevenoaks
- Maidstone
- Staplehurst

1.1 Current Position

Sevenoaks & Tonbridge Contract was awarded to Oasis Dental Care and commenced from April 2008 providing a total of 29,000 units of dental activity.

Staplehurst contract was awarded to Beaconsfield Dental Services and commenced in June 2008 providing a total of 18,000 Units of Dental Activity.

Maidstone contract was awarded to ADP Healthcare and the contract for 20,000 units of dental activity commencing from the 18 August 2008.

Tonbridge contract was awarded to ADP Healthcare and the contract for 20,000 units of dental activity commences on 8 September 2008.

2. Commissioning Plan for Oral Health services

The PCT board approved at its May public meeting a Strategic Commissioning Plan outlining how oral health services can be delivered most effectively for the population of West Kent in order to:

- best meet local oral health needs,
- address national guidance where this is not already being achieved.

The key challenges for the PCT to address include:

- Delivery of NHS access to meet population needs
- Establish appropriate PCT resources focused on oral health
- Improve performance management throughout oral health services
- Limited PCT ownership and financial transparency for Salaried and Emergency Service contracts

The needs assessment undertaken as part of the commissioning plan indicated that the PCT has enough planned Units of Dental Activity (UDAs) to meet the current needs of its population. The PCT estimate that the additional £1.4m will be sufficient to cover the growing demand through increased population and people returning to the NHS. There is evidence of both under performance and over performance across the full spectrum of providers. The balance of which is a significant under performance across the board, which will be addressed through the new contract management arrangements. The first step is to ensure that current providers are performing to the level commissioned and therefore additional commissioning of services should complement the PCT's commitment to oral health, demonstrated by the renewed rigour for performance management, rather than replace it. This performance management should closely monitor projected performance and to take appropriate with the dental performers.

2.1 Service Priorities

Through stakeholder meetings the following priorities for the oral health service have been highlighted:

PRIORITY AREA:	Individual Priorities:
ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to NHS dental services in order to meet both the baseline set in April 2006 and subsequent annual uplifts (for example 8% uplift in 2008/09); • Transfer appropriate services from secondary to primary care supporting the provision of the appropriate range of services in primary care settings at required capacity levels.
COMMISSIONING CAPACITY & CAPABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a PCT dental commissioning team; • Agree a commissioning process which achieves the required capacity targets and also specifically addresses areas where access is not adequate (regardless of reason such as retirement, move to private practice, etc.); • Increased transparency of financial decisions relating to dental services – e.g. capital monies allocation – which should be clearly aligned to the agreed commissioning processes and associated operational action plans.
PERFORMANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the variance in contracted UDA rates across the PCT (currently between £17.29 to £38.65); • Incentivise performers to provide NHS services; • Effectively manage contract performance; • Improve relations with dental performers; and • Quality monitoring and performance delivery.
HEALTH PROMOTION & PREVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver co-ordinated oral health promotion and prevention across the PCT as part of a structured and funded oral health promotion programme;
TRAINING &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve commissioning liaisons with the Deanery for

EDUCATION	<p>professional training and CPD in order to attract the increased number of trainee posts in local practices and subsequently encourage newly qualified dentists to remain in the area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programmes for Dental Care Professionals (DCPs) and Vocational Training (VTs)
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These priorities have each been addressed in turn in the Strategic Commissioning Plan.

3. Current work programme to address the recommendations of Dental commissioning plan

3.1 Contract Performance 2007/8

The PCT has recently received information from all of its contractors for last year showing an improvement on performance in 2006/7 from 84% to 95% in 2007/8 an increase of 11%. Discussions have now commenced with contractors who have under and over performed their contracts.

3.2 Dental Commissioning Team

The PCT during July is recruiting a new team to take the lead in implementing many of the recommendations contained within the commissioning plan

3.3 Salaried Dental Service

The PCT will by August 2008 produce a revised service specification with Medway PCT to establish that the salaried service delivers the requirements of West Kent PCT. This specification will redefine the standards of service and outline the outcomes expected by the PCT. This specification will seek to incorporate the intended changes with the GDS within the PCT. This will also explore the options to incorporate domiciliary activity within the salaried service.

3.4 Emergency Dental Service

The PCT will by August 2008 have revised the existing service specification with Medway PCT to establish that the emergency service delivers the requirements of West Kent PCT. This specification will redefine the standards of service and outline the outcomes expected by the PCT.

This specification will seek to incorporate the intended changes with the GDS within the PCT. It will be important that this specification also reflects the on-going urgent care programme within West Kent PCT, which could include the national intention of introducing HRG tariff prices for urgent care treatment which will take in dental emergency treatment.

3.5 UDA Incentivisation

The PCT has commissioned a review of the existing rates of pay given to contractors in order to reduce the disparity in UDA rates and provide equity across the system.

This work will be completed by August 2008 to create greater transparency on the treatment of 'basic' and 'complex' procedures.

3.6 Procurement Process

The PCT has commissioned a review of the existing process to award new contracts in order that the timescales can be reduced which will include a revised specification for new NHS dental contracts and undertake further procurement for additional activity later this year.