



| Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee | |
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| Report Title: | Motion 910: Tackling the crisis in NHS dentistry |
| Meeting Date: | Wednesday 19 April 2023 |
| Presenting Officer: | Rob Ayliffe |
| Purpose of Report: | To update members on progress to date for resolutions passed under Motion 910. |
| Background documents: | Motion 910 Council discussion Health Scrutiny Committee NHS Dentistry report Health Scrutiny Committee minutes |
| Appendices | N/A |
| Recommendations | In light of the detail in this report, the Committee are asked to agree how they would like to proceed in relation to resolution 4. |

1. Background

- 1.1. At the Full Council meeting on 9 November 2022, members considered a motion relating to NHS Dentistry, where members expressed concern about the quality and cost of dentistry in Gloucestershire.
- 1.2. At the meeting, councillors resolved that:

This Council is concerned about the quality and cost of dentistry in Gloucestershire. This Council believes that every Gloucestershire resident should have a right to a healthy mouth at affordable NHS rates.

This Council notes that:

- *Only 28.6 per cent of Gloucestershire's adult population had access to an NHS dentist over the last 12 months – far below the English average – along with just 43.9 per cent of children and young people under 18.*
- *Between 2021 and 2020 Gloucestershire lost over five per cent of its NHS dentists, 316 to 299, and that one in six of the remaining dentists are nearing retirement.*
- *Not a single dental practice in Gloucestershire is accepting new adult NHS patients.*

This Council is particularly concerned by the impact of a lack of dental care for children and the impact this can have on the rest of their lives, and vulnerable adults residing in Gloucestershire care homes.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- 1) *Write to the new Health and Social Care Secretary as well as Gloucestershire's six MPs to express our concern for dentistry provision in Gloucestershire.*
- 2) *Call on Cabinet to ensure that council services work with schools, care homes and the NHS to coordinate dental visits to the people who need it most.*
- 3) *Ask the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Director of Public Health to bring a report to HOSC to explain what they are doing to promote good oral hygiene, specifically in children and young people and our vulnerable residents.*
- 4) *Ask the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a report on making Gloucestershire a magnet county, especially for healthcare professionals.*

- 1.3. The full minute of discussion for this motion can be accessed [here](#).

2. Resolution progress to date

- 2.1. At their meeting on 6 December 2022, Health Scrutiny members, in response to the council motion and as part of a planned update to the

committee on access to dentistry, received a full update on oral health promotional initiatives in Gloucestershire. This was a joint item between NHS England, NHS Gloucestershire, and Gloucestershire County Council.

2.2. The full report can be accessed [here](#).

2.3. The Committee noted the following points during their discussions:

- NHS England was responsible for the commissioning of dental services across England, having taken over from Primary Care Trusts when the NHS was reorganised in 2013. Whilst the funding for dental provision was decided nationally, NHS England's regional team in the South West manages these contracts locally.
- Gloucestershire County Council was statutorily responsible for improving the oral health of its local population. There was an expectation for the Council to provide, (or commission), appropriate oral health programmes for the County and to carry out oral health surveys to assess outcomes, (oral health surveys are carried out as part of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) National Dental Epidemiology Programme).
- A key factor impacting on accessing NHS dentist services related to workforce issues. A lack of dental practitioners in the area was significantly impacting on the ability of high street dental practices being able to meet their contracts. As NHS England did not employ dentists directly, it was difficult to assess the exact shortfall. However, based on the underperformance in UDA's, (units of dental activity, and projected capacity, it was concluded that Gloucestershire was currently experiencing a shortfall of about 31 whole-time equivalent dentists.
- The committee was asked to work in partnership with the NHSE South West Dental Reform Team and to consider ways to market Gloucestershire as attractive place to work for dental and other clinical workforce members, and to encourage more young people in Gloucestershire schools and colleges to consider a career in healthcare.
- Work force capacity was also impacted by things such as: dentists withdrawing from NHS contracts because of unfavourable terms and conditions. It was noted that the current position reflected issues on a national level. Another limiting factor cited at the meeting was the reluctance by some dentists to take on the business requirements of running a practice.
- To try to overcome some of the issues, dental students and recent graduates were being targeted to encourage retention within the area. Salaried positions were also being funded, and leadership and learning opportunities were being offered to make Gloucestershire a more competitive professional environment.
- The Committee requested a further report on this issue post the transfer of responsibility from NHS England to the Integrated Care Board on 1 April 2023.

2.4. The full minutes can be accessed [here](#).

2.5. In relation to resolution 4) as outlined above, some initial consideration has been given to how this might be approached. This has confirmed that, while both the County Council and GFirst LEP have a role to play in making Gloucestershire an attractive place to live and work, there is no specific

activity around attracting dental healthcare professionals, mainly because responsibility for this rests with the NHS. It is not clear what role those bodies might usefully play in this space.

- 2.6. In light of the above information, the Committee are asked to agree how they would like to proceed in relation to resolution 4).