

Stakeholder Briefing:

**Urgent dental care services across the Midlands**

**Background**

Since social distancing measures for Covid-19 and restrictions on daily activity were introduced, all non-urgent “face to face” dental activity at NHS practices has stopped. Most practices are offering telephone or video-link consultations and can prescribe pain killers and antibiotics if clinically needed.

In light of the public health control measures and in recognition of the difficulties that dental practices face, including continuing concerns about patient and staff safety, NHS England and NHS Improvement has made a number of immediate changes to the delivery and operation of our dental services in the Midlands.

**Developing the local urgent dental care system**

Across every NHS region local Urgent Dental Centres (UDCs) are being created to provide care for people with urgent and emergency dental problems, including:

1. Those who are possible or confirmed Covid-19 patients, including patients with symptoms, or those living in their household

2. Those who are ‘shielded’, as being at most-significant risk from Covid-19

3. Those who are vulnerable or at increased risk from Covid-19

4. Any other people who do not fit one of the above categories

The centres have been developed to allow appropriate separation and treatment of patients in these categories.

Each patient will be assessed and triaged depending on a number of factors, and their care managed accordingly. Patients will only be seen after a referral via the triage system.

**Locations of urgent dental centres**

UDCs are open at 74 locations across the Midlands region to provide services for the small number of people who need to be seen face to face for dental treatment.

Centres are now open in all Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) areas as below to ensure that we can offer a safe environment for symptomatic, shielded or vulnerable patients and patients without symptoms.

1. Derbyshire

2. Lincolnshire

3. Nottinghamshire

4. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

5. Northamptonshire

6. Staffordshire

7. Shropshire and Telford and the Wrekin

8. Black Country

9. Birmingham and Solihull

10. Coventry and Warwickshire

11. Herefordshire and Worcestershire

The precise UDC locations will not be publicised, as these are accessible by referral only; drop-ins are not permitted.

**How will triage work?**

Telephone triage will be used to decide which care is needed, depending on symptoms and level of pain. Those involved in dental led clinical triage have a detailed operating procedure to help them allocate different dental conditions to the correct care.

**How do patients access these urgent centres?**

People should contact their normal dental practice by phone or contact NHS 111 out of hours. Most NHS dental surgeries will be accessible by phone, even though their doors are shut, and are offering telephone or video-link consultations. They will be able to prescribe pain killers and antibiotics where clinically required. The few patients in need of urgent treatment will be referred to a UDC and once the referral is received the patient will be contacted directly by the service to arrange an appointment if this is needed.

This system also helps manage the flow to centres and avoid queues (in line with social- distancing measures).

People seeking help with dental problems should not attempt to visit A&E departments or GP surgeries for dental care as they will then not be redirected back to a local dentist.

For further details on local arrangements please see the separate STP attachment.

We hope you appreciate that these arrangements have been made at pace to ensure that patients have access to a patient-centred service for the duration of the pandemic. NHS England and NHS Improvement will monitor closely to check these meet the needs of the local population and will take any learning from the Covid-19 incident to help inform the future design, access, resilience and sustainability of dental services.

NHS England and NHS Improvement – Midlands