

## **Update on dental services in the North East and Yorkshire:**

Following the briefing you received last month, we are writing to you again to provide an update on dental services in the North East and Yorkshire.

As you are aware, since 25 March, NHS dental practices have been providing telephone advice and triage. All dental practices have been responsible for triaging patients who contact the practice seeking access to urgent dental care regardless of whether they are considered 'regular' patients of the practice. We have worked with dentists across the Region and have been able to put in place a network of urgent dental centres to ensure that where patients have been triaged for face to face treatment we are able to provide this.

On 28 May 2020, the Government announced that dental practices may begin to reopen from 8 June 2020 and start to provide a limited range of face to face treatment, where practices assess that they have the necessary infection prevention control and PPE requirements in place alongside urgent telephone advice and triage currently operating.

We are actively supporting dentistry across North East and Yorkshire to resume NHS dental services safely and effectively and in accordance with advice set out by the Chief Dental Officer. Although we will see practices in the Region restart some face to face treatments from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020, advice is that the sequencing and scheduling of patients for treatment as services resume should take into account the urgency of needs, the particular unmet needs of vulnerable groups and available capacity to undertake activity. Progression to resumption of the full range of routine dental care will be risk-managed by the individual practice. We anticipate that in resuming services, practices in the North East and Yorkshire will be seeing those with the most urgent issues first and a return to services fully providing routine dental check-ups and hygienist appointments will come later. Advice for the public explains how services will look different as dentists begin to resume services. Resumption of services in a similar manner to that which was previously experienced may be dependent on the further easing of COVID-19 control measures.

As we support practices to resume services, Urgent Dental Centres will remain in operation across the region to provide urgent dental treatment particularly where practices have not yet resumed face to face care. Referral to the urgent dental centres remains the same, either via the dental practice or 111.

### Advice for the public:

- Dental practices will look different as they will be operating in a way that observes COVID-19 social distancing and hygiene rules, as part of measures taken to ensure the safety patients and the dental team alike.
- Whilst we are observing social distancing, patients should continue to telephone or email their practice, rather than attending in person without an appointment.

- If you have a regular dentist, you should call them as a first step. The dentist will assess your situation over the phone, including giving advice and, if needed, prescriptions for painkillers or antibiotics, or arranging treatment.
- If a patient does not have a regular dentist during the COVID-19 outbreak, they can still call any local dental practice as well as visiting 111.nhs.uk or call NHS 111 who will provide advice as appropriate.
- Out of hours for urgent dental issues the advice still remains to visit 111.nhs.uk or call NHS 111. Patients should not be visiting A&E departments or GPs with dental problems.

For further information, please contact NHS England and NHS Improvement by emailing [ENGLAND.DentalCNE@nhs.net](mailto:ENGLAND.DentalCNE@nhs.net) or [ENGLAND.YHdentalreturns@nhs.net](mailto:ENGLAND.YHdentalreturns@nhs.net).