



Your NHS dentistry and oral health update

Monday 4th January 2021

An update from Sara Hurley, Chief Dental Officer England

Dear colleague,

As during the last period of national restrictions, dental services are to remain open and see patients.

This should be in line with the [standard operating procedure](#) and the [national dental infection prevention control appendix](#).



The Government [guidance on the national lock down](#) says, "The majority of **public services will continue** and you will be able to leave home to visit them. These include the NHS and medical services like **GPs and dentists**".

Remote consultation, triage and risk assessment remain key prior to patient attendance for face to face dental care. Social distancing measures remain in place. And PPE levels as stated for low, medium and high risk assessed patients remain.

In line with the standard operating procedure, within the available capacity, when recommencing deferred courses of treatment, recall and re-assessments practices will need to prioritise groups with the greatest need, such as children.

Dentistry is an essential medical service. It is a priority for the NHS. Patients are entitled to travel for medical appointments, include dental. I have included some useful resources in this bulletin for NHS practices to spread the word that dental services are open and seeing patients, please use them.

As a reminder, **dental professionals are defined by the Government as critical workers**. The [Government website](#) says "This includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers". **Front line health staff includes dental professionals and their teams**.

England's over 650 urgent dental centres continue to receive patients and are accessible either through referral from a dental practice or NHS 111.

Testing is also available for NHS dental teams, I encourage you to use this service to maximise patient access.

We have the PPE, we have access to lateral flow testing, we have a strong network of urgent dental centres and we are spreading the message that practices are open.

This is a difficult time but I trust in your professionalism to offer the outstanding care the NHS provides and to continue to restore NHS dentistry.

Sara

COVID-19 testing: Lateral flow testing for dental teams

Testing is available for NHS dental practices. It is important that practices use this service.

Primary Care Support England (PCSE) has sent direct invitations to all primary care contractors to place their orders for lateral flow tests onto the portal. Contractors who were not been able to place an order before the 30 December deadline will still be able to go onto the portal and order tests. However, deliveries of orders placed after the deadline may take place at a later date.

Each organisation should order one box for each patient-facing member of staff, for example if there are 10 patient-facing members of staff delivering NHS services within an organisation, the order should be for only 10 boxes of test kits.

Primary care contractors should already have access to the PCSE online portal, which is normally used to order secure stationery and supplies such as prescription pads, needles and syringes. However, if any primary care contractors do not have access, they should [contact PCSE](#).

[SOPs](#) and [FAQs](#) on lateral flow testing in primary care are available for further information.

Its safe to visit the dentist: spread the message

Patients need and deserve to see a dentist as quickly as possible. So please use the communications aides below to spread the word on social media that dental practices are open.

You can save them as pictures by clicking on them in this bulletin, or they are available on the [coronavirus resources government web page](#). Click "download", a file will come up, click on the "Primary Care Access Social Media" folder and you will find them in the "Dental - social" section.

OPEN

Dental practices are open, but may be prioritising the vulnerable or those with the most urgent need.

Get in touch with your practice if you need advice.

OPEN

Get in touch with your dental practice by phone or email where advice or an appointment will be given if appropriate.

OPEN

If you need urgent dental care or do not have a dentist, get in touch with NHS 111 online or by phone for advice.

OPEN

Get in touch with your dental practice by phone or email for advice or an appointment - this may be by phone or video.

Signing up to this bulletin

Have you been sent this email by someone else?

This bulletin is a round up of all the latest news and important resources for anyone working in NHS dental services. We'll send it out as and when important news needs to come your way. If you've already signed up but didn't receive the update, then check your junk folder for the confirmation email and make sure you've followed the instructions to complete sign up.

[Click here to sign up to this bulletin](#)

Previous NHS dentistry and oral health updates

Previous updates can be accessed by clicking on the links below:

- [Issue 1](#): 27 October
- [Issue 2](#): 2 November
- [Issue 3](#): 27 November
- [Issue 4](#): 10 December
- [Issue 5](#): 22 December
- [Issue 6](#): 30 December

NHS primary care bulletin

The NHS primary care bulletin provides resources on health policy and practice and we encourage you to sign up for this, too. It is aimed at teams across general practice, dentistry, community pharmacy and optometry.

[Click here to sign up to the NHS primary care bulletin](#)

A reminder of the latest COVID-19 advice and guidance

NHS updates to the profession

During the course of the pandemic, we have regularly written to the NHS dental profession with important updates and information. This, and previous formal letters from the Chief Dental Officer and the NHS dentistry and oral health team are all [online here](#).

Transition to Recovery: Dentistry's standard operating procedure

This document is the essential guidance for how to dental teams in England. In it, we detail all the key things dental teams need to know about how to run their services safely, for patients and themselves. The latest version was published on Tuesday 27 October. Changes to the previous SOP are in yellow. You can read the SOP [online here](#).

Urgent Dental Centres: Standard Operating Procedure

If you work in an urgent dental centre or are responsible for one as a provider, or as a commissioner, then the Urgent Dental Centre SOP should be your guide. Changes to the previous SOP are in yellow. It was updated on Tuesday 27 October and is [online here](#).



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