

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Health Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2023

Subject: An overview on the provision and access to NHS Dental services across Manchester

Report of: Director of Primary Care & Strategic Commissioning, NHS Greater Manchester

Summary

This report provides an overview on the provision and access to NHS Dental Services across Manchester.

This report provides the context of current provision and services which are in place that are currently providing access to NHS dental services, as well as describing the challenges and pressures dental services are facing and initiatives to support patients in both improving their oral health and to access appropriate care through NHS dental services.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the contents of the report and the action being taken to ensure access to urgent dental care and increase access to NHS dental services in Manchester; including the steps being taken and services that are commissioned to meet clinical need, address health inequalities and improve oral health for the population.
 - (2) Consider and advise on any additional measures that may be taken to support public perception and understanding of dental services and oral health and how to support access to available services.
-

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

None

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
--

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) are considered and completed as part of specific service and scheme design, commissioning and sign off

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Access to dental care and good oral health supports an essential part of societal wellbeing, underpinning people's ability to receive support to have the best health outcomes, which in turn supports people to achieve the greatest opportunities.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	N/A
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Addressing oral health and meeting the need for dental care reflects the prioritisation of reducing health inequalities, recognising the close links of good oral health with inclusion, and wider determinants of health and wellbeing.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	N/A
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	N/A

Contact Officers:

Name: Ben Squires
Position: Head of Primary Care, NHS Greater Manchester
Telephone: 07825 583192
E-mail: ben.squires@nhs.net

1.0 Introduction

This paper provides an update on the provision of, and access to, NHS Primary, Secondary, and Community Dental services and delivery of Oral Health Improvement activity across Greater Manchester and specifically the City of Manchester.

It will highlight the actions taken to address health inequalities and to improve access to dental services to ensure patients are able to receive dental care and oral health improvement in a safe way.

2.0 Background

General Dental Care

Patients are not registered with a General Dental Practice (GDP) in the same way as they are with a GP. Any patient may access dental services from any practice. In the City of Manchester there are:

In Manchester there are:

- 69 (20% of Greater Manchester) General Dental Services providers with contracted activity of 948,614 units of dental activity per annum
- 1 (8% of Greater Manchester) Urgent Dental Care provider (linked to networked provision across Greater Manchester)
- 11 (27.5% of Greater Manchester) Urgent Dental Care Hubs – providing additional urgent dental care capacity in response to COVID pressures

Specialised Dental Services

- Community Dental Services (special care and paediatric) clinics delivered by Manchester University NHS FT in the Manchester locality, A single service provider commissioned to provide specialist dental services to children and adults with additional needs on referral
- 3 Orthodontic providers (43 across GM)
- 1 Specialist Tier 2 Oral Surgery provider (10 across GM)

Secondary Care Dental Services

12 dental specialities (including Oral Surgery, Maxillofacial Surgery, Restorative Dentistry, Paediatric Dentistry, Periodontics) available in Greater Manchester.

These services for Manchester University FT and particularly through the team at Manchester Dental Hospital.

3.0 Main issues

3.1 Impact of Covid

Dental services have been significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic. Risk of cross-infection is significantly increased for services operating in and around the mouth.

On 25 March 2020, dental practices across the Greater Manchester received national instruction to suspend routine, non-urgent dental care as part of the national response to limit transmission of COVID-19.

All practices were required to provide remote telephone triage services delivering the “triple A” approach, ensuring that patients had access to advice, analgesia and anti-microbials if appropriate. Where patients needed face to face dental treatment in addition to the “triple A” service, dental practices could refer their patients to Urgent Dental Care (UDC) hubs across GM.

From 8th June 2020, the second phase of the pandemic response began, as infection rates dropped, all practices reopened for provision of both routine and urgent dentistry under COVID-specific infection prevention and control guidance to ensure patient safety and access steadily increased. It should be noted that during this period due to infection prevention and control guidance and required time intervals between patients, the number of patients seen on a daily basis reduced from 25-30 patients per day to 6-8 patients per day (depending on patient and need).

The reduction in capacity resulted in significant pressures across the system. There was a whole system reduction of approximately 70% across all Dental Services capacity, including Secondary Care, specialist community services and specialist primary dental care services such as Minor Oral Surgery.

Services are now working hard on recovery to pre-pandemic levels and in particular to reduce backlogs and waiting lists for treatment.

3.2 National contracting and performance arrangements

Contract year: 2020 / 2021

A number of national changes and adjustments were made to the activity during this financial year due to the Covid Pandemic:

- Period 1 – April to 7 June 2020 – all practices were closed and providing telephone triage with the exception of Urgent Dental Care Hubs (UDC Hubs), all contracts awarded full 25% of total contracted activity.
- Period 2 – 8 June to 31 December 2020 – practices began to reopen from 8 June with all open fully by 20 July, providing both telephone triage and face to face appts. Practices were expected to provide equivalent of 20% of historic patient care and awarded 50% of total contracted activity.
- Period 3 – 1 January to 31 March 2021 – Practices were to achieve 45% of Q4 (25% of total contracted activity).

Contract year: 2021/2022

As a result of the Covid Pandemic this financial year was also split into 3 time periods each with its own minimum threshold of activity to be achieved.

- H1 – April to September 2021 – 60%
- Q3 – October to December 2021 – 65%
- Q4 – January to March 2022 – 85%

Contract year: 2022/2023

The mid-year review is undertaken using FP17 data from the NHS Business Services Authority as of 30th September and it gives Providers and Commissioners the opportunity to identify, review and correct any potential issues before the annual year-end reconciliation.

Providers whose activity is more than 30% of their contracted delivery at this point are encouraged to review their activity. This will help them to deliver activity for the remainder of the year consistent with their contract. No further action is required.

Providers with less than 30% must complete a mid-year review action plan. This should detail their plans on how they expect to deliver the remaining activity to meet their contract obligations by year end.

Table 1: Contract Mid-Year Performance at >30% and <30% of annual contracted activity

Locality	Contracts (GDS & PDS)	Contracts Performing >30%		Contracts Performing <30%	
Bolton	31	29	93.50%	2	6.50%
Bury	30	24	80.00%	6	20.00%
Manchester	75	64	85.30%	11	14.70%
Oldham	32	27	84.40%	5	15.60%
Rochdale	27	22	81.50%	5	18.50%
Salford	34	29	85.30%	5	14.70%
Stockport	44	38	86.40%	6	13.60%
Tameside	28	22	78.60%	6	21.40%
Trafford	42	35	83.30%	7	16.70%
Wigan	37	32	86.50%	5	13.50%
GM TOTALS	380	322	84.70%	58	15.30%

3.4 Patient Feedback

The national NHSEI Customer Contact Centre (CCC) has received a large number of general enquiries about dentistry, with Greater Manchester area receiving the largest reported numbers of patient enquiries. The main themes include not being able to get an appointment, patients being told that they must pay for PPE on top of the NHS banding, or patients being told that they cannot be seen in the NHS but can be seen the same week privately.

Although a large number of enquiries are being received, these are not being taken forward as formal complaints and are generally dealt with informally. It is also recognised that the reported regional areas are not comparable in size or service provision.

The GM Dental Commissioning Team is working in conjunction with the Local Dental Networks to ensure adherence to national guidance in service delivery; and NHS Greater Manchester Communications Team to develop a suite of communications assets shared across all our partner organisations detailing what is currently available, how patients can access services, and what to expect when attending.

The GM Dental Commissioning Team continues to support the GM Complaints team with advice and written responses to all patient enquiries, complaints, MP enquiries, and enquiries from the Mayoral Office.

All Greater Manchester Local Dental Committee (LDC) Chairs have committed to engaging with local Healthwatch Officers to ensure that there is clear communication and understanding of any issues that are highlighted by clients.

LDC Chairs have agreed to attend local Healthwatch meetings, and it has been agreed that a Healthwatch representative from GM is invited to attend the Dental Provider Board to provide a report on behalf of the 10 Healthwatch organisations.

4.0 Actions to improve access to NHS dental services

4.1 Impact of the covid pandemic

Access is still steadily increasing but has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

All NHS General Dental Practices continue to prioritise patients in pain, children, patients who are deemed as high risk – such as those receiving treatment for cancer, and those who are mid-way through a course of treatment.

The graph below (Fig 1) clearly shows the direct impact of the pandemic on the numbers of patients who have accessed NHS dental services between April 2020 and March 2022. Services are currently facing the backlog of

patients not able to be seen during the pandemic in addition to current demands for services.

Figure 1: NHS Access to General Dental Services – Manchester patients accessing dental services over previous 24-month period (2020/21 & 2021/22)

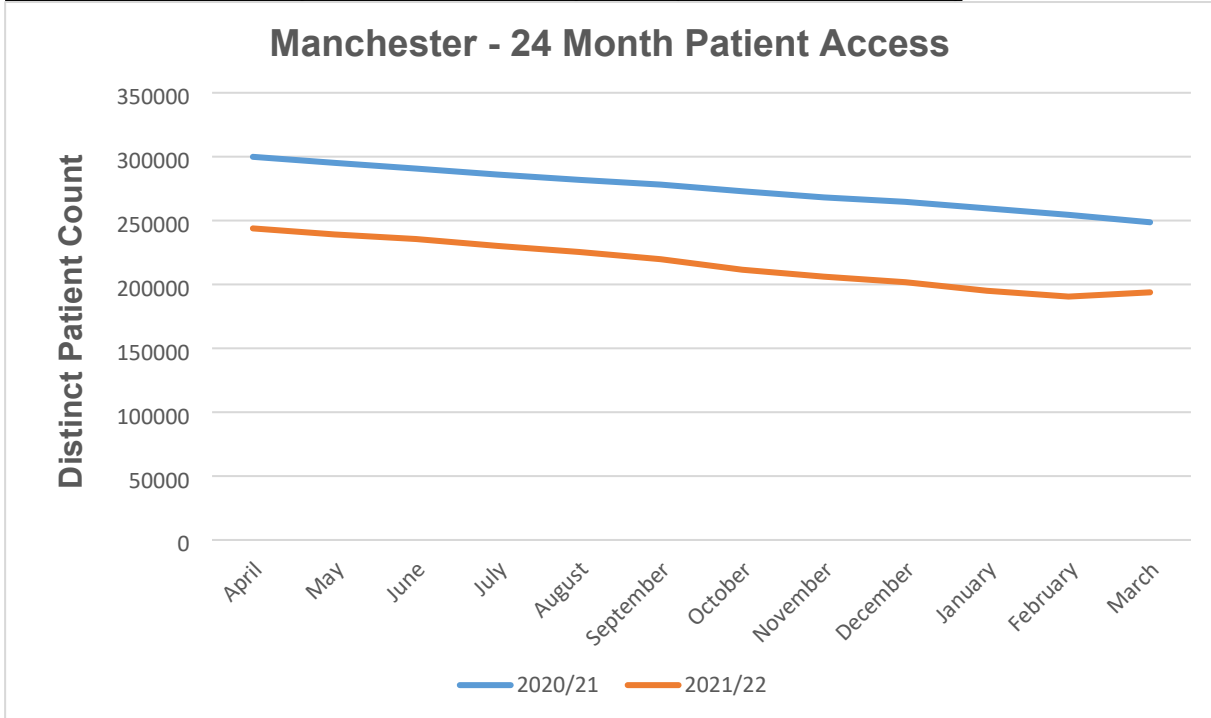


Figure 2a: Manchester adult patients seen in previous 24 months to June 2022

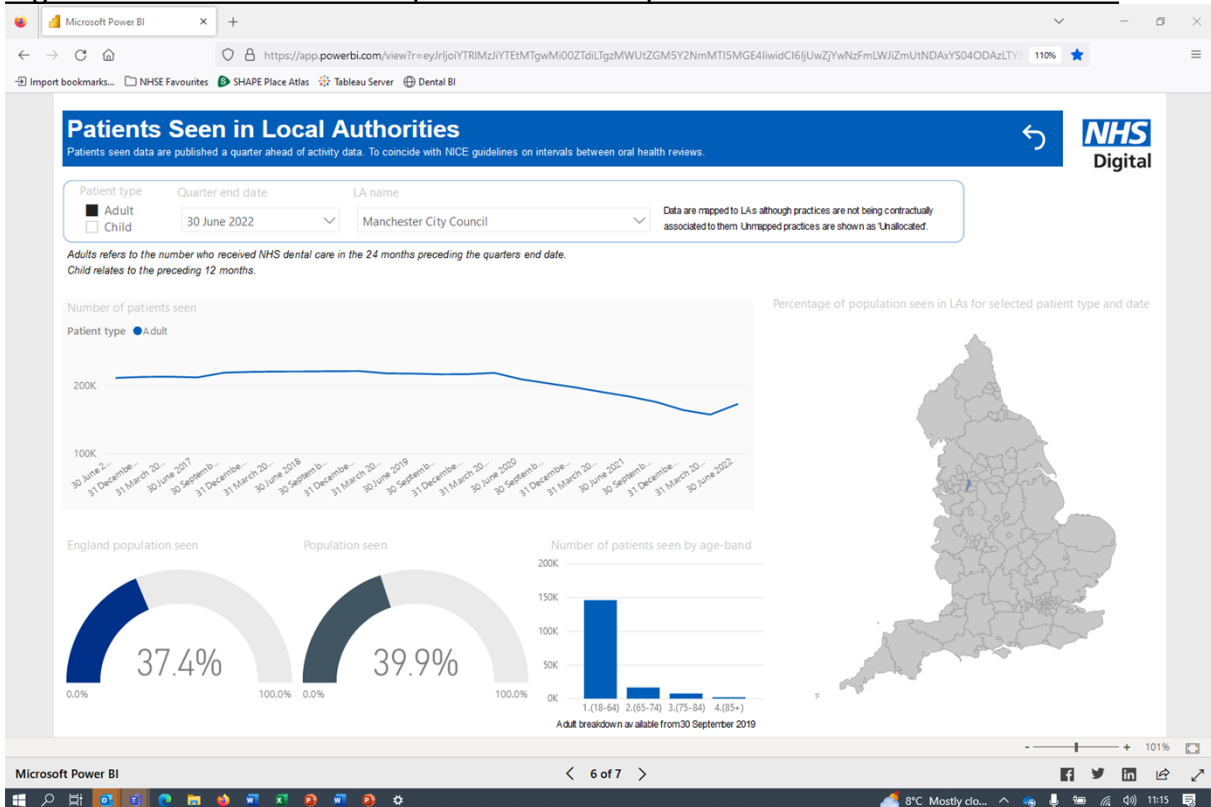
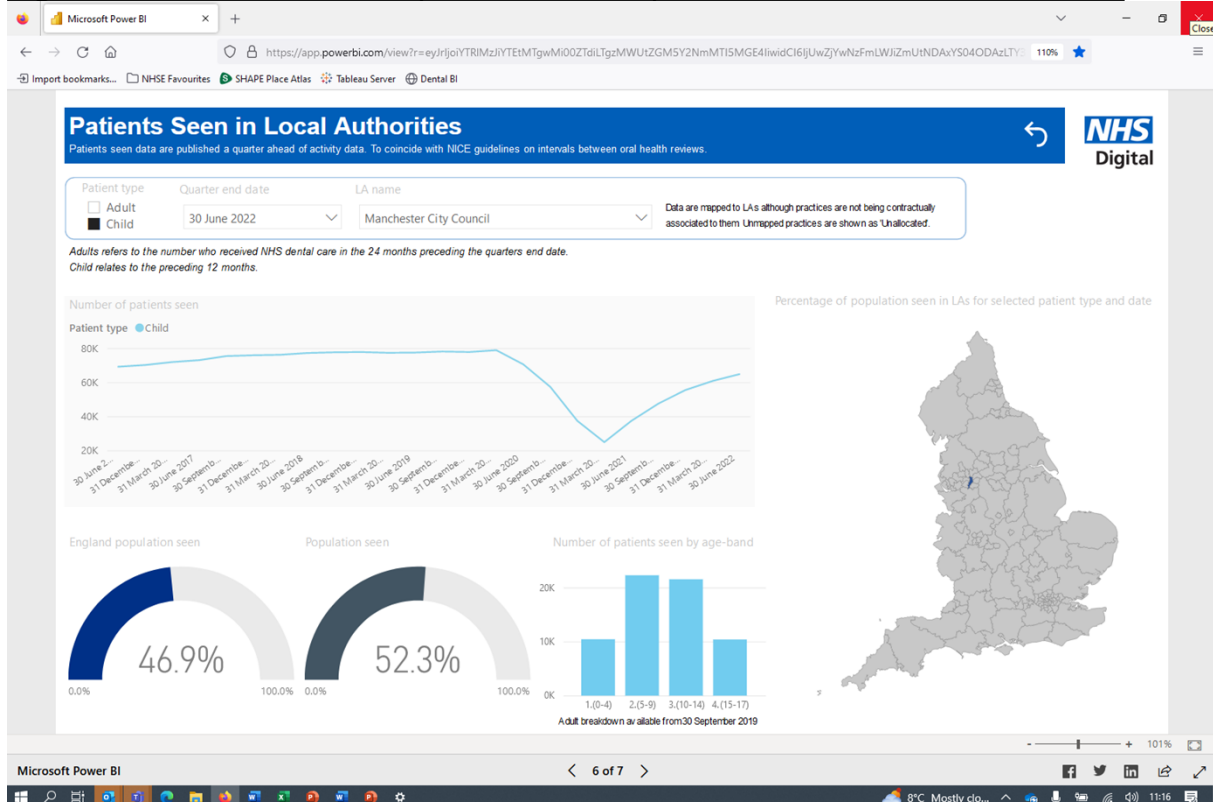


Figure 2b: Manchester Child patients seen in previous 12 months to June 2022



The above figures (2a and 2b) illustrate the direct impact on access for both adults and children in Manchester. The improvement in access in recent months is also shown. Manchester does have a higher level of access compared to the national average for both children and adults.

The Greater Manchester dental commissioning team is progressing a plan which outlines the stages leading to recovery for dental services across the whole system. The purpose being to standardise the approach across Greater Manchester, to strategically plan a range of dental services, and to support opportunities for locally responsive transformational change thus reducing health inequalities.

The purpose of the plan:

- Ensure capacity is in place for on-going activity
- Return critical services to agreed standards
- Address backlog of services
- Retain changes and innovations from the pandemic that we wish to keep

As part of this work a Task & Finish Group has been established working on a Dental Access Plan response for primary care, which includes contributions from Healthwatch colleagues.

4.2 Access to Urgent Dental Care services

In 2019 the GM Dental Commissioning Team procured a new Urgent Dental Care service for the population of GM. This service is available for all patients in GM who require to access urgent dental care.

This service can be accessed by calling 0333 332 3800. There are 13 Urgent Dental Care sites across Greater Manchester, with provision in the City of Manchester.

In response to the pressures caused by the COVID pandemic additional capacity has been commissioned from both the telephony and clinical providers of this service. This additional capacity is in place until March 2023 and is under review for the coming year 2023/24.

From April 2020, Urgent Dental Care (UDC) Hubs were established across Greater Manchester offering face-to-face dental treatment after remote triage. UDC Hubs are linked with the GM Urgent Dental Care call handling service to receive referrals for patients in pain. The UDC Hubs provide extractions and extirpations (first stage of Root Canal Treatment) to save the tooth that get patients out of pain.

In GM there are currently 40 UDC Hubs. 11 of these UDC Hubs are situated within the City of Manchester.

On calling the GM Urgent Dental Care Service patients are able to attend the most convenient urgent dental care provider and are not restricted by local authority or CCG boundaries within Greater Manchester.

4.3 Secondary Care Dental services

A key NHS priority is the restoration of all services with a view to returning to a “normal” position as quickly and as safely as possible. Paediatric and Oral Surgery Clinical Reference Groups have been established to lead recovery of elective surgical cases supported by five GM Managed Clinical Networks. The work programme is to ensure patients can receive elective care at the right time, in the right setting and reduce wait times. This includes:

- Population oral health needs assessment and support for the correct coding of specialist activity so it can be monitored and appropriately commissioned.
- Continue to develop e-referral management system with robust clinical triage to direct referrals to the right setting at the right time, including referrals from non-dental professionals with potential use of virtual consultations
- Workforce and training for dental professional are being reviewed to meet current and future needs
- Referrals are made with complete treatment plans so that shared care can be planned and waiting lists validated and care prioritised with patients are seen in the right setting for their dental care need

4.4 Further improving access

A proposal is currently being worked with the aims of, working within national contracting arrangement and regulatory requirements, to adapt locally commissioned services to provide stability to NHS Dental Providers and enable them to open access for patients.

The primary purpose of this proposal is to ensure that members of the public can access NHS dental services with NHS Providers committed to seeing both new patients and urgent cases.

The strategic intention is to establish integration and delivery at neighbourhood, and GM level.

The proposals include aspects of strategic contribution with a focus on priority patient pathways (e.g. cancer, diabetes, cardiology, and children's care), prevention (e.g. Delivering Better Oral Health) and integration and neighbourhood networking (Healthy Living Dentistry)

5.0 Addressing health inequalities

5.1 Access Plus Scheme

Following urgent treatment patients are encouraged to seek definitive care at a high street dentist. Unfortunately, the pandemic has led to a reduction in capacity and patients were struggling to access routine dental care, such as check-ups and the treatment indicated to restore dental health. As a result, patients were then returning to the urgent service with the same problem or worsening problem.

In response to the unmet need as a result of the ongoing challenges we face within NHS Dental services we developed the Greater Manchester Access Plus Scheme which improves access and delivers continuation of care to patients who have received urgent care but who require further care and treatment within an NHS Dental practice. This scheme was rolled out on 1st February 2022.

The GM Access Plus Service will provide a minimum of a one-off courses of treatment for adults (18+ years) who have been seen by the GM Urgent Dental Service / UDC Hubs for urgent care that requires further treatment. There are 15 of these practices are within the City of Manchester, out of 59 across Greater Manchester).

5.2 Afghan evacuee and Asylum Seeker Pathway

Led by the GM Dental Commissioning Team and Consultant in Dental Public Health linking with Local Authority Teams and CCGs supporting health care for Afghan Evacuees and Asylum Seekers, a new referral service has been developed that will support this cohort of patients in Greater Manchester to access urgent dental care.

The service was rolled out in October 2021 and provides access to urgent dental care for those placed in Bridging Hotels and Contingency Hotels across GM. In GM the Bridging and Contingency hotels are currently located in Manchester, Wigan, Stockport and HMR.

The objective is to seamlessly connect referrals for Afghan Evacuees and Asylum Seekers with a provider in within their locality.

Across Greater Manchester there are currently 20 practices signed up to this scheme.

5.3 Healthy Living Dentistry project

The Healthy Living Dentistry (HLD) project continues to be developed and delivered.

Currently there are 60 Practices across Greater Manchester signed up to deliver this quality assured scheme where Dental practices undertake national & local health campaigns, often linked to local GPs & Pharmacies. Plans are in place to begin a further recruitment campaign to encourage all Practices to sign up to this scheme.

Practices who sign up to HLD deliver targeted health promotion to specific groups such as:

- Dementia Friendly Dentistry
- Baby Teeth DO Matters
- Mouth Cancer Awareness
- Sugar free diet and medicines
- Flu awareness

To deliver these quality initiatives, all practices have access to training and development which is supported by Health Education England North West and available to be accessed [online](#),

These resources are publicly available: www.cpgmhealthcare.co.uk/dental.html

5.4 A Dental Home for Looked After Children

Led by the GM Dental Commissioning Team and Consultant in Dental Public Health linking with Local Authority Teams supporting health care for Looked After Children (LAC), a new referral service has been developed that will support all LAC in Greater Manchester and Cheshire & Mersey to find a dental home.

The objective is to seamlessly connect referrals for any child who is looked after with a LAC provider within their locality. In Greater Manchester there are 39 Practices accepting referrals for LAC.

The child will be seen and treated and offered regular appointments and recalls dependent on their oral health risk.

The long-term objective will be to strengthen the links of the Manchester Safeguarding Team with Child Friendly Dental Practices to ensure that there is ease of access for all Looked After Children to find a dental home.

5.5 Child Friendly Dental Practice (CFDP) Scheme

Service development pilots initiated in November 2020. Rolled out to across GM following the successful pilot. There are currently 2 providers within Manchester, which are part of a network of 8 across Greater Manchester. Children who have been referred for an oral health assessment to a specialist setting (including those referred for dental extractions under general anaesthesia) are instead offered evidence-based treatment at a general dental practice.

Treatment includes:

- Prevention – Oral Hygiene Instruction, diet advice, fluoride varnish application, fissure sealants
- Stabilisation – Silver Diamine Fluoride, Temporary Fillings
- Restoration – Hall Crowns, Definitive Fillings
- Extractions

This primary care service supports our specialist community services for children and reduces referrals and pressures into secondary care.

6.0 Oral Health Improvements

6.1 Oral Health of 5-year-olds

The need for dental access and treatment is directly linked to the oral health of the local population. Unfortunately, oral health is particularly poor in Manchester, and across Greater Manchester, as shown by the table below which presents the percentage of 5-year-old children with obvious dental caries.

Fig 2: Percentage of 5-year old children with obvious dental caries in Greater Manchester (epidemiology survey 2018/19)

Area	%
England	23.4
CA-Greater Manchester	
Bolton	32.7
Bury	35.2
Manchester	38.3
Oldham	43.2
Rochdale	40.7
Salford	39.0
Stockport	22.0
Tameside	33.1
Trafford	26.0
Wigan	31.9

A further survey is currently being undertaken to understand the position and particularly the likely impact of the pandemic.

6.2 Evidence-based oral health improvement programme

An initial programme to support reduction of health inequalities across four priority oral health areas Bolton, Rochdale, Salford and Oldham has been undertaken. This delivered evidence based oral health interventions at scale seeking to reach all under 5-year olds.

- Daily supervised toothbrushing in all nursery and reception Early Year settings for children aged 2-5 years.
- Deliver Health Visitor 0-3 years training; support fluoride dental packs distribution at 1 year and 2-2 ½ year checks.

Delivery of these programmes was interrupted with the closure of earlier settings and schools during lock down there was a suspension of community based oral health improvement programmes.

Over 58,000 children participated in Supervised Daily Toothbrushing Programme in Greater Manchester since October 2018:

- 33,307 children in 645 early years settings take part (88.4% of population, in 88% of settings)
- Engagement highest in most deprived areas - 79% of settings in IMD 1, compared to 72% in IMD 10.

With VCSE partners, 120,000 most vulnerable children received take home fluoride dental packs during lockdown.

This programme is now progressing planned roll-out across wider Greater Manchester, including the City of Manchester working with the local oral health improvement team.

6.3 Oral health training

In response to the cessation of the delivery of face-to-face training during the COVID response, the Greater Manchester team support oral health team in the localities in development of open access online training packages. These are available to partners across the health and care sector, notably in residential care and hospitals.

Mouth Care Matters in the community - training material suitable for the wider care team, including care managers and care staff carrying out admissions, assessments and provision of daily mouth care. It ensures dignity and comfort.

<https://www.gmthub.co.uk/dentistry/mouth-care-matters-in-the-community>

Mouth Care Matters in the acute sector – developed to support NHS Nightingale North West and for all nurses and care staff providing and supporting effective mouth care for all hospitalised patients during COVID. Daily mouth care in hospital reduces the risk of infection such as Hospital-acquired pneumonia (HAP), which in turn reduces the length of a hospital stay.

<https://www.gmthub.co.uk/dentistry/mouth-care-matters-in-the-hospital-setting>

Supervised Toothbrushing in Early Years and Educational Settings - training material intended for early years and education staff who are working with their local health teams to deliver a supervised toothbrushing programme.

<https://www.gmthub.co.uk/dentistry/workforce/starting-well-improving-childrens-oral-health/stb-early-years>

The Manchester oral health team undertake significant engagement with local dental practices and other local partners to support improvement in oral health for the population.

7.0 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the contents of the report and the action being taken to ensure access to urgent dental care and increase access to NHS dental services in Manchester; including the steps being taken and services that are commissioned to meet clinical need, address health inequalities and improve oral health for the population.

- (2) Consider and advise on any additional measures that may be taken to support public perception and understanding of dental services and oral health and how to support access to available services.