Briefing intended for use by Communications colleagues in CCGs,   
Trusts, ICS, LRF, LA, Healthwatch, social care

26th October 2020

The aim of this document is to provide public-facing content for colleagues to use on their websites, social media and other channels describing what dental provision is available across the north west during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following information is contained below:

* Overview
* Key messages
* Web copy
* Internal communications copy
* Social media posts
* Resources

If you have any questions or queries about the information contained in this briefing, please contact GM Comms Team – please add in contact details.   
  
**Overview**

Every dental practice in Greater Manchester is now open and able to offer patients face-to-face care, although the level of service and number of available appointments have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels due to additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection prevention and control (IPC) requirements and current government guidance relating to social distancing measures.

Practices are working on safely restoring services and are committed to prioritising care for high risk patients and children and the completion of pre-COVID treatment plans, whilst maintaining capacity for unscheduled care.  
  
The messages in this document aim to inform stakeholders and the public about the restoration of dental services in order to reassure them that dental services are available, while managing their expectations of the services they will receive.

**Key messages**

**General messages**

* All dental practices have been following guidance set out by the Chief Dental Officer (CDO) for England, Dr Sara Hurley, to resume face to face care as rapidly as practicable, while ensuring the safety of patients and staff.
* In Greater Manchester all dental practices have resumed face to face care, supporting patients with urgent or complex ongoing dental care needs.
* For all face to face care, enhanced infection prevention and control measures and personal protective equipment requirements are in place to ensure the safety of patients and staff.
* Due to the requirements needed with enhanced personal protective equipment and infection protection and control measures, all dental practices are currently working at a reduced capacity. This is likely to affect the range of services and the number of appointments each practice can offer and services may not be fully restored for some time.
* Greater Manchester dental commissioners are working with dental practices and Local Dental Committees and Networks to safely restore services that Dental Practices are able to provide.
* It will be up to individual dental practices to determine the level of service they are able to safely offer based on their premises, equipment, training and workforce capacity.
* Dental practices are operating at a reduced capacity and priority will be given to patients with urgent dental needs.   
    
  This could include:
* completion of temporary treatment which was carried out as an emergency
* patients who have been treated with painkillers and antibiotics through the lockdown period and have continued to have issues
* treatment for patients who are at high risk of dental disease and need regular treatment
* treatment for patients whose general health affects their oral health such as those with diabetes
* patients with dental disease which needs regular maintenance.
* While dental practices work to ensure that those who need dental care most can receive it, they may be unable to offer routine examinations and other non-urgent care for some time.
* Urgent dental services have been established across the region for patients and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic and they are continuing to see and treat patients who have been referred by their regular Dentist.

**Patient advice messages**

* The priority for dental practices is to ensure public and patient safety. Whilst observing social distancing, you should continue to telephone your practice in the first instance, rather than attending in person without an appointment.
* When you contact your dental practice, you will be assessed over the phone and may be given advice, medication or a face to face appointment if needed.
* Your practice will look different than normal, as it will be operating in a way that observes COVID-19 social distancing and hygiene rules.
* As part of measures taken to ensure your safety and that of the dental team the treatments you will be offered may be different to those you received before 25 March 2020 and may differ from practice to practice.
* The dental team will be wearing different or additional protective equipment than you are used to seeing.
* It will likely be some months before services return to what you previously experienced as normal and will be dependent on the further easing of COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures.
* Please be patient with dental practice staff. They are working extremely hard to restore dental services and ensure that they are safe for everyone.
* If you don’t have a usual dentist, you can find one by going to: [www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist)
* Urgent dental centres are not a drop-in service. They are appointment-only and appointments are only accessible via referral from your own dental practice.
* Urgent dental centres will treat people who have an urgent need. Each patient will be assessed based on clinical need.
* If you are in pain or in need of support please phone your usual dental practice. If you do not have a regular dentist please contact the dental helpline.   
  + Greater Manchester: 0333 332 3800

**Web copy**

**What to do if you have a dental problem during COVID-19 pandemic**

If you have a dental issue during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that you know how to access help when you need it.

All dental practices in the Greater Manchester are now open and have resumed face-to-face care, although many are working at reduced capacity and may not yet be able to offer the full range of services due to increased infection, prevention and control guidelines.

If you need dental help or advice, please contact your dental practice over the phone first, rather than in person. You will be assessed over the phone and may be given advice, medication or a face to face appointment if needed.

Your practice will look different than normal, as it will be operating in a way that observes COVID-19 social distancing and hygiene rules as part of measures taken to ensure your safety and that of the dental team. For all face to face care, infection prevention and control measures and personal protective equipment requirements are in place to ensure patient and colleague safety.

While dental practices work to ensure that those who need dental care most can receive it, they may be unable to offer routine examinations and other non-urgent care for some time.

Patients who require completion of pre-COVID treatment plans will be prioritised alongside high risk patients and children.

Urgent dental services have been established across Greater Manchster for patients and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic and they are continuing to see and treat patients who have been referred from their regular Dentist who may not be able to offer specific treatments. .   
  
If you are in pain or in need of support, help or advice, please telephone your dental practice in the usual way.

If you don’t have a usual dentist and have an urgent need you can call your local dental helpline:

* Greater Manchester: 0333 332 3800

You will be assessed and given advice over the phone, which may result in a remote consultation with a dentist or a face to face appointment.

To support NHS services, it is important that you do not visit hospitals or doctors’ surgeries with dental problems unless you are advised to do so.

ENDS

**Social posts**

* Help is available if you need urgent dental care. All dental practices in Greater Manchester are now open and offering face to face care. If you need certain types of treatment, or don’t have a dentist, you may be given an appointment at an urgent dental centre. Contact your practice or local dental helpline: 0333 332 3800 #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* While dental practices work to ensure that those who need dental care most can receive it, they may be unable to offer routine examinations and other non-urgent care for some time. If you need urgent dental care, contact your practice or local dental helpline: 0333 332 3800 #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* All high street dental and orthodontic practices can give advice, guidance over the phone and in certain circumstances may prescribe medication which you can collect from your local pharmacy, . If you need urgent dental care, contact your practice or local dental helpline: 0333 332 3800 #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* Dental patients who require completion of pre-COVID treatment plans will be prioritised alongside high risk patients and children. If you need urgent dental care, contact your practice or local dental helpline: 0333 332 3800 #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* Whilst we work to restore all non-urgent dental treatment and check-ups that stopped due to the #COVID19 pandemic, urgent help is still available, contact your dental practice for more information. If you don’t have a dentist go to [nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist) or contact your local dental helpline if you need urgent treatment: 0333 332 3800 #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* Please be patient with dental practice staff. They are working extremely hard to restore dental services and ensure that they are safe for everyone. If you need urgent dental help, please phone your practice. If you don’t have a dentist go to [nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist) #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* If you need dental help during #COVID19 you can contact your dental practice in the usual way and they will be able to assess you over the phone. If you aren’t registered with a dentist go to [nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist) #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* Dental help and advice is still available. Contact your dental practice in the usual way and they will be able to assess you over the phone. If you aren’t registered with a dentist go to [nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist) #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* To support NHS services, it is important that you do not visit hospitals or doctors' surgeries with dental problems. Contact your dentist who will be able to help over the phone. If you don’t have a dentist go to [nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist) #NHSNWDentalCOVID19
* Your dental practice will look different as it will be operating in a way that observes COVID-19 social distancing and hygiene rules, as part of measures taken to ensure your safety and that of the dental team #NHSNWDentalCOVID19

**Resources**







