

NHS England and NHS Improvement (Midlands) out of hours dental services consultation document

Consultation on proposed changes to out of hours dental services in the West Midlands

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Please contact ENGLAND.dentalcontractswm@nhs.net

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Introduction

Out of hours dental care is available for people who need urgent or emergency dental care from a dentist when their dental practice is closed. Urgent dental care covers dental problems that need emergency care (assessment within one hour) or urgent care (assessment within 24 hours) which is often followed by dental advice or treatment in hours. Further details and examples of emergency and urgent dental care are included in the needs assessment document. The number of people using these services each week is small, most dental problems can be dealt with by an urgent appointment with a dentist during normal opening hours.

NHS 111 can help patients with routine and urgent dental problems by providing self-care advice and signposting them to the appropriate service. A separate review of in hours dental services is currently being undertaken to ensure appointments are available for those who need to be seen in between routine check-ups.

This consultation is part of the work being undertaken by NHS England and NHS Improvement to look at out of hours dental services in the West Midlands.

The case for change

Contracts for the current out of hours dental services in the West Midlands expire in March 2020. These services were established when the population and its health needs were very different to what they are now. We are looking to make changes to these services so that services will more closely meet the current and future need of people living in the West Midlands.

We have engaged with service users, dentists and current providers to review existing services and used national guidance to create a proposed service that we feel will meet the needs. There is no intention to reduce the total spend on out of hours dental services in the West Midlands. Our consultation is limited to how and where services are delivered.

We propose the following:

- Fewer sites with longer opening hours offering a more equitable use of resources.
- The vast majority of patients, including those in rural areas, will have access to a service within 30 minutes by car and all patients will have access to a service within 60 minutes by car.

- All services will be situated close to public transport routes and their opening hours will align with public transport services.
- There will be no geographical restrictions, with patients free to choose which service they wish to attend.
- Ensuring easy access to safe and timely out of hours dental care, particularly for those most vulnerable, remains our foremost priority.

What you have already told us

To help inform these proposed changes we undertook an engagement exercise in 2018 to gather information from a range of people on out of hours dental care as we wanted to understand how out of hours dental care could be improved.

- We spoke to existing providers to gather a range of information about the current services and how these are provided.
- We consulted with our local Managed Clinical Dental Network for urgent dental care. This is a group of local dentists who meet regularly to discuss local services and how these can be improved.
- We undertook a market engagement exercise to talk to current and potential providers about their view of how services worked or could work more effectively.
- We contacted patients and the public by face-to-face interviews and a web-based survey. We received over 400 replies that helped us understand what people thought about existing services and which things were most important to them.
- We contacted all local Healthwatch groups in the West Midlands to find out about any local issues.

A report on each element of the engagement exercise is included in the needs assessment. The key findings were:

- Patients were unclear about how to access services in an emergency or that they could call NHS 111 for dental advice.
- Most people said that seeing a dentist within 24 hours was important when accessing urgent dental care.
- Most people thought that the opening hours of urgent dental services were important.
- The majority of people currently access services by car (either themselves or as a passenger). Parking was mentioned as being problematic by a number of patients.

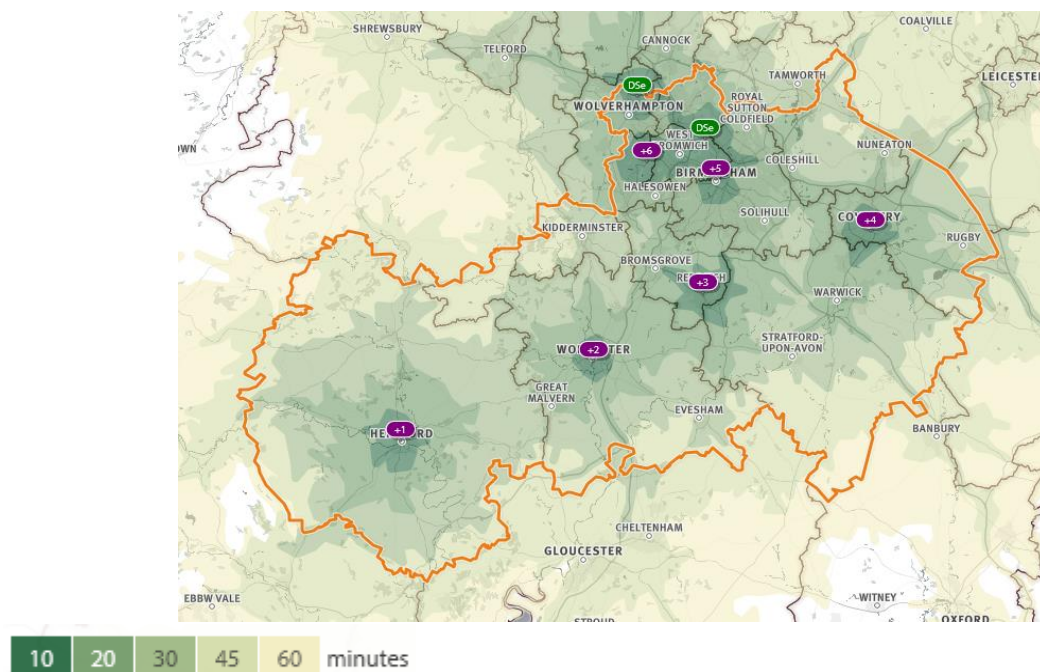
- Most people agreed that they received the level of service they expected, but some patients felt that they had ongoing issues that were not resolved on their first visit.
- A large number of patients received or expected to receive medication when accessing services.

What changes are we proposing?

Having considered the needs assessment, commissioning guidance and feedback from our engagement activities, we propose:

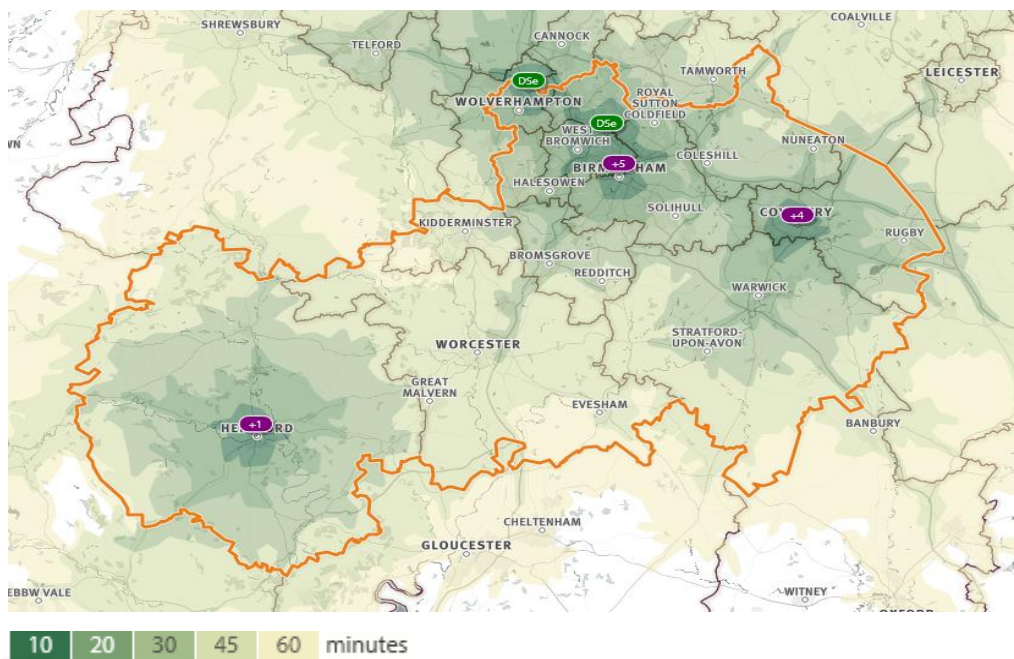
- To operate out of hours dental services at weekends and on bank holidays from eight sites; six new sites (marked purple on Map 1), in addition to two sites from which the existing services will continue on account of their contractual arrangements (marked green on Map 1). The sites marked in purple are indicative only and the actual locations selected will be informed by the outcome of this consultation and any feedback received.

Map 1. Proposed locations for weekend and bank holiday out of hours dental services. The green shading indicates the travel time by car outside of rush hour to each location.



- To operate out of hours dental services on weekday evenings from five sites; three new sites (marked purple on Map 2), in addition to two sites from which the existing services will continue on account of their contractual arrangements (marked green on Map 2). The sites marked in purple are indicative only and the actual locations selected will be informed by the outcome of the consultation and any feedback received.

Map 2. Proposed locations for weekday evening out of hours dental services. The green shading indicates the travel time by car outside of rush hour to each location.



The consultation is proposing to retain weekday evening services to reflect the fact that further work is needed to improve access to in hours dental care. The reduced number of sites we are proposing during the week reflects the fact that this service will predominantly provide telephone assessment and advice and that fewer people than at a weekend will need to travel to receive treatment from one of the centres.

This service will be available to everyone across the West Midlands for the next two years and will be reviewed again once we have completed our review of in hours services.

Please note that apart from a few dental emergencies where people are seen in A&E, most people need to be seen for urgent dental care within 24 hours. Because of this some areas at present, including Worcestershire, Walsall and Solihull, currently have no weekday evening dental services. Where services are in place, most people receive advice from a dentist and attend a next day appointment. Very few people currently travel to a dentist for treatment in the evening.

Please note that special care dental patients will be telephone triaged by a specialist dentist who will determine the most suitable location should a person require out of hours dental care. For some people this may be A&E. Arrangements for these patients have been considered as part of a separate review of community dental services and are not part of the scope of this consultation.

What do we want to hear about?

We want to hear about your views on the proposed changes to the locations and opening times of out of hours dental services across the West Midlands. This consultation is only on **out of hours dental services** and not general dental services or any other dental services operating in hours.

Who do we want to hear from?

We welcome views from anyone who has opinions to offer on out of hours dental services.

In particular, we want to hear from:

- People who have used the services previously.
- Parents or carers of those who may have used these services.
- Members of the public who may need to use services in the future.
- Any organisations who work in dentistry or who represent groups of people who often access out of hours dental care.

Who is responsible for commissioning the services?

NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for commissioning all NHS dental services delivered in England. This consultation relates to services in the West Midlands which consists of the ten local authority areas of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Wolverhampton.

What do we want you to do?

We want you to share your views by completing the questionnaire. The consultation opens on Monday 15 July 2019 and will close at 23:59 on Friday 30 August 2019.

If you don't wish to complete the questionnaire, but would still like to give us your views please contact us:

By post: Dental Contracting Team, NHS England & NHS Improvement – Midlands,
St. Chad's Court, 213 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9RG

By email: ENGLAND.dentalcontractswm@nhs.net

On the internet: <https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/survey/9ed984b7>

By phone: 0113 825 1709

Confidentiality and next steps

All responses will be analysed by NHS England and NHS Improvement and will be handled in the strictest confidence.

- Responses from individuals will be made available to NHS England and NHS Improvement, but any identifiable data will be removed. No individual data will be shared or presented in any report. We may use quotations from responses in our final report about the consultation, but we will anonymise them.
- Responses made on behalf of an organisation may be made available to the public. Responses made on behalf of an organisation should not include any confidential or sensitive data.
- The responses provided will be used to create a consultation report which summarises people's views on the proposed changes to out of hours dental services.
- NHS England and NHS Improvement will provide feedback to patients, families, carers, clinicians, commissioners, other key stakeholders and the public regarding the results of this consultation activity. This feedback will reference clearly what may have changed as a result of the consultation and what the next steps are.
- Following careful examination of the responses to this consultation NHS England and NHS Improvement will consider any necessary amendments that need to be made in

respect of plans for out of hours dental care during week day evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

- It is our intention to run a procurement to identify new providers for services to start from Wednesday 1 April 2020. The findings of this consultation will be used to finalise the plans, service specification and criteria for the opening hours and locations of the new sites.