



Access

To

Dental Practices

Produced by

Healthwatch Rotherham

September 2014





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 **Foreword**

Healthwatch Rotherham presents this report into access to dental practices.

In common with all projects undertaken by this service the Board has to first authorise it. The authorisation relies on a standard evaluation model based both on quantitative and qualitative evidence. Furthermore, in most cases, the issue must be seen to have a link to one of the 6 priorities that direct the work of Rotherham's Health and Well Being Board.

I would personally like to thank the Yorkshire Ambulance NHS Trust and The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust for providing data to help with this report.

The report demonstrates people attending A&E when this is not appropriate for them to do so, putting extra pressure on services.

I look forward to seeing the impact of this report.

Naveen Judah

Healthwatch Rotherham Chair



Executive summary

Background

Healthwatch represents and makes known the views of local people on health and social care services. In addition to this function Healthwatch Rotherham also provides information and signposting to Health and social care services. For Healthwatch to carry out its role, it undertakes engagement activities within the Rotherham Borough. Views, opinions and experiences of local people are trend analysed, these trends are then fed into the Healthwatch Rotherham Board. The Board then directs the service using a decision support tool. The support tool takes into account the local evidence and strategic relevance, to ensure that further investigations into issues are a local priority for the people and for those who influence change.

“How to find an NHS dentist¹”.



Everyone should be able to access good-quality NHS dental services. There is no need to register with a dentist. Simply find a practice that's convenient for you, whether it's near your home or work, and phone them to see if any appointments are available.



Strategic relevance

NHS dental services are provided in primary care and community settings, and in hospitals for more specialised care. NHS England commissions dental services for the NHS.

Access to NHS services is based on clinical need, not ability to pay. Adult patients make a financial contribution for receiving dental care from the NHS unless they meet certain exemptions sanctioned by parliament². There is a 3-band fixed charge for primary care treatment depending on the treatment.

NHS England are working closely with a range of national partners across health and social care, including patient groups, the British Dental Association and other professional organisations, Health Education England, Public Health England and Dental Local Professional Networks to develop a strategic approach to inform the commissioning of dental services.

¹ <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/dentists/Pages/find-an-NHS-dentist.aspx>

² The NHS Constitution the NHS belongs to us all (March 2013)

Local Evidence

One of the functions of Healthwatch Rotherham is to provide an information and signposting service. This is open access through the offices on Rotherham High Street, via email, telephone and at outreach events throughout the borough. The most popular signposting request from people is for a list of dentists that are accepting new patients and emergency dentist providers. Healthwatch Rotherham refer people to the NHS Choices website to find a list of dentists accepting new patients. Healthwatch Rotherham has assisted people to contact dentists and make new patient appointments. Healthwatch Rotherham has identified problems in accessing information on available dental provision.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) which provides the local NHS 111 service identified high levels of requests (in comparison with the rest of south Yorkshire) for information on Rotherham dental provision.

Within the Yorkshire and Humber Healthwatch Network, Healthwatch Kirklees identified poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion.³

Decision making

On the 11th June 2014 the Healthwatch Rotherham Board was presented with a project outline regarding access to dentists, including registration, out of hours and emergency care.

Methodology

The aims of the investigation were to:

- Examine the access to out of hours and emergency dental services for residents of Rotherham
- Compare the NHS Choices list of dental practices accepting new patients compared to real time acceptance through contacting the practice.
- Capture the experiences of people accessing dental services.
- Compare the availability and location of dental practices' using the hypothesis that provision of dental practices are higher in more affluent areas.

³ <http://healthwatchkirklees.co.uk/perch/resources/access-to-dentists-in-kirklees-february-2014.pdf>

To enable Healthwatch to achieve the above aims, the following methodologies were used.

- Analysis of the dental practices on NHS Choices Website
- Analysis of the comments held on the Healthwatch Rotherham database
- A review of data provided by Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Case studies
- Community Engagement Event with people who are homeless/unsettled accommodation

These methodologies were purposely designed to collect the views of the citizens of Rotherham and were triangulated to draw overall themes and ideas. This report has been produced to inform commissioning of local services and to identify the challenges people face.

The findings of this report were derived from thematic analysis using frequency of comments as an indicator of priority.

Findings

Dental Provision linked to postcode

NHS Choices website list which practices are registering new patients. A search function using a postcode enables a person to find out if locally there is a dental practice and if it is registering new patient's child or adult.

38.89% of practices are accepting new adult patients.

50% of practices are accepting new children patients

61.11% practices are not accepting new adult patients.

50% of practices are not accepting new children patients

The Rotherham Town centre area (S60) has 8 dental practices, 1 practice is accepting new adult patients and 3 are accepting children.

S62 and S64 area have no dental practices accepting new adult patients.

Using The IMD 2010, part of the English Indices of Deprivation this report has shown there is a correlation between deprivation and number of dental practices. The number 1 quartile (most deprived area in Rotherham) has the highest number of dental practices. Given that poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion it would appear that the needs of people are being considered.

NHS Choices Website

Our findings show that 70% of the dental practices have updated their information on the NHS Choices website, but they are not changing their status regarding acceptance of new patients. 4 practices had not updated either accepting / not accepting patient details or the general details of their practice for over 3 years. It maybe that the information has not changed and does not need updating. However the case studies in this report demonstrated that the information on the NHS choices website is not up to date leading to confusion and frustration. A practice was accepting new patients even when the website said it was not.

The writer found that there were examples of general information on the site which was incorrect. One practice had not had its general details updated since 12/11/2010 and the website address provided on the site was a link to the Poole and District Fisherman's Association.

Dental practices are not regularly updating information on the NHS Choices website, which is the portal for the public to access information.

Accessing Emergency Care

Information on the NHS Choices website regarding how a person should access emergency and emergency out of hours varies. One example directs people to Rotherham Hospital A&E department and another example informs people to ring the practice or call NHS 111.

Between July 2013 and May 2014 there was 563 attendees to Rotherham A&E. 408 were Rotherham residents, with 155 outside of the Rotherham area. Out of 563, 46 were admitted into Hospital. The most common outcome (164) is to be referred to a general dental practitioner. The second highest outcome (155) is to be sent home with no follow up. 52% of attendees to A&E Rotherham for dental issues took place during the hour of 9-5.

People that are homeless have said that they know how to access a dentist in an emergency. They said that they would go to the Hospital or walk in centre.

NHS111 service reports in September 2013 that percentage of calls in the Rotherham CCG area relating to dental issues rose to 24.9% from 10.3% and has remained above 20% since.

There were two cases of Rotherham residents using the 999 Ambulance service due to dental problems during the three months, April 2014 to June 2014.

Accessing Dental Care

Data released in February 2014 shows Rotherham is performing above the average for England for both adult and child patients seen by dental services within 2 years.

The majority of comments obtained by Healthwatch Rotherham regarding dental services were positive. People valued friendliness of staff and being told what was happening during treatment.

The comments received from nervous patients indicate that once a nervous patient is seen and treated by a dental service they have a positive experience.

The positive experiences are comments again on the friendliness of staff and being told what is happening. The community engagement activity performed also showed those attending emergency dental provision had a good experience.

A comment was received that someone was removed from a dental practice for missing appointments.

Comments indicate that people do not like to be kept waiting without being informed why. It appears that if patients are not happy with the service they receive they register with another practice.

The case studies outline how there were barriers to accessing dental services due to inaccurate or missing information on the NHS choices website. This website was used in 2 of the 3 case studies. The information on the website was inaccurate leading to confusion of where to register with a practice. In case study 2 a special service has been commissioned to provide a special dental arrangement but this service is not mentioned on the NHS Choices website. The issue of choice appears in 2 of the 3 studies. In one case study the person decided not to take the offer of the appointment that was offered to them and in another case study they decided to be put on a waiting list.

Summary

Given that poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion it would appear that the needs of people are being considered.

The NHS Choices website does not given an accurate information of which dental practices are and are not new patients.

Waiting lists and specialised dental services are not mentioned on the NHS Choices website.

Patients are attending A&E when this is not the appropriate pathway for them.

This report was unable to establish how many clinical appointments are available to the people of Rotherham per postcode area.

The comments received from nervous patients indicate that once a nervous patient is seen and treated by a dental service they have a positive experience. People attending dental practices value friendliness of staff and being told what was happening during treatment. This could be that it appears that if patients are not happy with the service they receive they register with another practice.

Recommendations

- To improve the information on the NHS choices website. Clarity on what people should do to access emergency or out of hours care. Being clear all practices give the same message.
- Practices update if they are registering new patients (adults and children) every 4 weeks.
- Waiting list function to be added to the NHS Choices website.
- To consider if current for emergency and out of hours care meets local needs.
- To establish how many clinical appointments are available to the people of Rotherham per postcode area.
- To work with the public, especially children and young people to reduce the issue of nervous patients and to improve oral health through early intervention.





The Current Context

Background

Healthwatch Rotherham represents and makes known the views of local people on health and social care services. In addition to this function Healthwatch Rotherham also provides information and signposting to Health and social care services. For Healthwatch to carry out its role, it undertakes engagement activities within the Rotherham Borough. Views, opinions and experiences of local people are trend analysed, these trends are then fed into the Healthwatch Rotherham Board. The Board then directs the service using a decision support tool. The support tool takes into account the local evidence and strategic relevance, to ensure that further investigations into issues are a local priority for the people and for those who influence change.

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Strategic relevance

NHS dental services are provided in primary care and community settings, and in hospitals for more specialised care. NHS England commissions dental services for the NHS.

Access to NHS services is based on clinical need, not ability to pay. Adult patients make a financial contribution for receiving dental care from the NHS unless they meet certain exemptions sanctioned by parliament⁵. There is a 3-band fixed charge for primary care treatment depending on the treatment.

NHS England are working closely with a range of national partners across health and social care, including patient groups, the British Dental Association and other professional organisations, Health Education England, Public Health England and Dental Local Professional Networks to develop a strategic approach to inform the commissioning of dental services.

⁴ <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/dentists/Pages/find-an-NHS-dentist.aspx>

⁵ The NHS Constitution the NHS belongs to us all (March 2013)

Local Evidence

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Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) which provides the local NHS 111 service identified high levels of requests (in comparison with the rest of south Yorkshire) for information on Rotherham dental provision.

Within the Yorkshire and Humber Healthwatch Network, Healthwatch Kirklees identified poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion.⁶

Decision making

On the 11th June 2014 the Healthwatch Rotherham Board was presented with a project outline regarding access to dentists, including registration, out of hours and emergency care.

The Healthwatch Rotherham Board agreed there was sufficient evidence to warrant a desk top review and report in to this subject also requesting a link to the ongoing work with people who are homeless/unsettled accommodation.

⁶ <http://healthwatchkirklees.co.uk/perch/resources/access-to-dentists-in-kirklees-february-2014.pdf>



Methodology

The aims of the investigation were to:

- Examine the access to out of hours and emergency dental services for residents of Rotherham
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These methodologies were purposely designed to collect the views of the citizens of Rotherham and were triangulated to draw overall themes and ideas. This report has been produced to inform commissioning of local services and to identify the challenges people face.

The findings of this report were derived from thematic analysis using frequency of comments as an indicator of priority.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the dental practices on NHS Choices Website

As part of the signposting functions performed by Healthwatch Rotherham, the NHS Choices website is used to find out dentists and GPs in the local area. The dentists in the defined Rotherham postcode areas were identified and compared against the population for that area as well as examine if they were accepting new patients. The location of the dentists was compared against the index of multiple deprivations 2010.

Data from The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

The accident and emergency admission data for dental treatment was provided. When people attend A&E the date, time, nature of problem and outcome is recorded.

Data from Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Yorkshire Ambulance Service provided information gathered from the NHS 111 Service. They also provided the frequency of emergency responses to people with dental problems or overdoes on pain medication due to dental pain.

Patient Experience

Analysis of the dental practices on NHS Choices Website

As part of the signposting functions performed by Healthwatch Rotherham, the NHS Choices website is used to find out dentists and GPs in the local area. The dentists in the defined Rotherham postcode areas were identified and the written profile for dental practices reviewed.

The Healthwatch Database

The Healthwatch Rotherham database holds a list of members who wish to have their views and opinions heard and/or want to be informed of changes in health and social care in Rotherham. We also hold comments which citizens of Rotherham have made in relation to services by which they have been affected.

The comments collected by Healthwatch Rotherham staff and volunteers have been collected since July 2013. The comments are from conversations with the public at

events, drop-ins including those visiting the Healthwatch office. These comments are from none lead conversations.

In addition to the comments collected from the public, the database collects information from national surveys, patient opinion website, and the local media. All comments collected are in relation to Rotherham services.

Healthwatch Rotherham operates a signposting service, and signposting activity is recorded on the Healthwatch Rotherham database.

Case Studies

During the time this report was written, three separate people had contacted Healthwatch Rotherham to ask about accessing dental services. This enabled the writer to capture real-time experience of accessing dental provision.

Community Engagement Event

Attendees were asked three questions by an engagement officer, regarding access to emergency dental provision. The activity took place at Shiloh in Rotherham on the 22nd August 2014. Shiloh predominantly works with Rotherham people who are homeless or in unsettled accommodation.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the dental practices on NHS Choices Website

On the 3rd July a search took place on the NHS Choices website looking for dentists in Rotherham and 25 miles from Rotherham. This search generated a return of 463 dental practices.

The search was then broken down to the postcodes⁷ within the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council footprint and compared against the number of residents in that postcode area⁸.

Postcode	Population	Number of dental practice	Population per Dental practice
S25	10723	2	5362
S26	13248	2	6624
S60	18970	8	2371
S61	18064	2	6021
S62	10282	2	5141
S63*	19490	5	3898
S64*	15598	4	3900
S65	18095	5	3619
S66	23580	5	4716
		35	4230

*Note, 3 out of the dentists in both S63 and S64 are not classed according to the postcode as Rotherham dentists

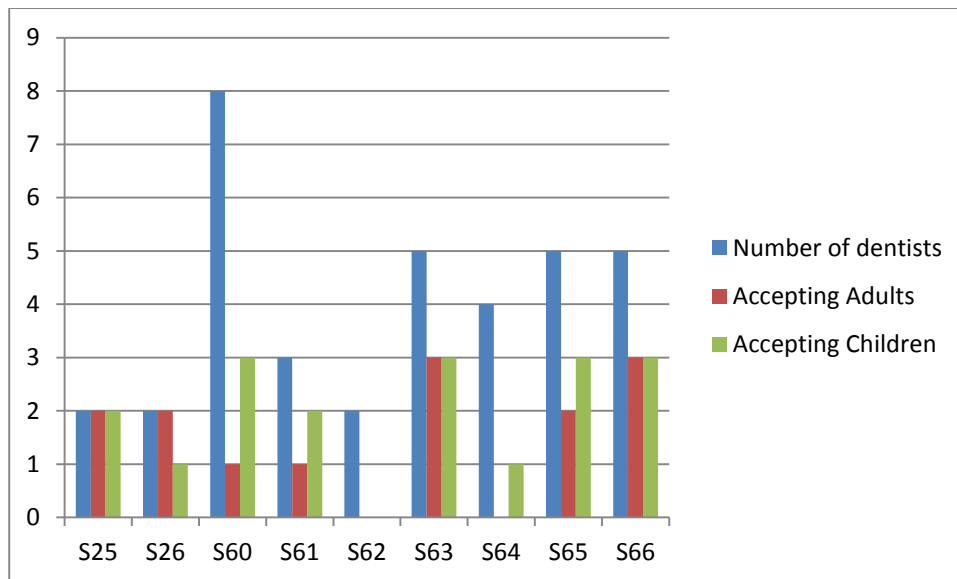
The above table shows that the highest concentration of dental practices is in the S60 postcode. The highest population is in the S66 postcode area. The S26 postcode has the highest population per dental practice. The S60 postcode has the lowest population per dental practice. The lowest population is in S25 postcode. There is no area with less than 2 dental practices.

There is no ability to determine the dental practices capacity to deliver service to the population i.e. number of clinics or number of dentists per practice.

⁷ Postcode areas from <http://www.postcodes-uk.com/S66-postcode-district>

⁸ Population stats are from <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/business-transparency/freedom-of-information/previous-foi-requests/people--population-and-community/population-for-every-postcode-district-in-england-and-wales/index.html>

Dental practices accepting new adult and children patients on NHS Choices



*Note, 3 out of the dentists in both S63 and S64 are not classed according to the postcode as Rotherham dentists

38.89% of practices are accepting new adult patients.

50% of practices are accepting new children patients

61.11% practices are not accepting new adult patients.

50% of practices are not accepting new children patients

The S25 area has the two practices in the area which are accepting both adult and children patients.

The Rotherham Town centre area (S60) has 8 dental practices, 1 practice is accepting new adult patients and 3 are accepting children.

S62 and S64 area have no dental practices accepting new adult patients.

Reviewing location of dentists based on IMD Ranking

The IMD 2010, part of the English Indices of Deprivation, is an overall measure of multiple deprivation experienced by people living in an area

Rotherham postcodes were used to link data from the index of multiple deprivation (IMD).⁹

Within the Yorkshire and Humber Healthwatch Network, Healthwatch Kirklees identified poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion.¹⁰

For the purpose of this report the Rotherham areas were ranked, with the lowest IMD ranked as number 1 and the highest area ranked as 165. The lowest IMD shows the most deprived area. The 165 areas were split into quartiles to explore which areas in retain to depravation and affluence had the highest concentration of dental practices.

Rotherham IMD Ranking	Rotherham IMD Quartile	National IMD Ranking	Number of Dental Practice
4	1	679	6
7	1	847	1
8	1	851	1
11	1	1162	2
17	1	2040	1
25	1	3025	2
30	1	3510	1
40	1	4787	1
66	2	7832	1
71	2	8822	1
74	2	9238	1
79	2	9781	1
84	3	10905	1
86	3	11238	1
89	3	11564	1
94	3	12514	1
113	3	16144	1
114	3	16762	1
133	4	20233	3
135	4	20342	1
162	4	27719	1

⁹ <http://www.yhpho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=110224>

¹⁰ <http://healthwatchkirklees.co.uk/perch/resources/access-to-dentists-in-kirklees-february-2014.pdf>

Rotherham IMD Quartile	Number of Dentists
1 (less affluent)	15
2	4
3	6
4 (most affluent)	5

There is a correlation of deprivation and number of dental practices. The number 1 quartile (most deprived area in Rotherham) has the highest number of dental practices. Given that poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion it would appear that the needs of people are being considered.

Updating on NHS Choices website

Each dental practice has a page on the NHS Choices Website. Those pages show when the information on that surgery regarding open times and accepting patients sections were last updated. The site also has a function to report if the information contained within that page is incorrect. Each surgery manages their own details on the NHS Choices website.

The writer of this report reviewed when the NHS Choices website was last updated for the dental practices in Rotherham.

	Accepting / Not Accepting Patient Details	General Details
0-3 months (90 days)	20%	45%
3-6 months (91-180 days)	10%	5%
6-9 months (181-270 days)	0%	20%
9-12 months (271-365 days)	5%	0%
12-24 months (365-730 days)	20%	0%
24-36 months (731 - 1095 days)	5%	0%
37 months (1096 days +)	40%	30%

30% of the accepting / not accepting patient details section had been updated in the last 9 months. In the same period 70% of the general details of the practices had been updated.

4 practices had not updated either accepting / not accepting patient details or the general details of their practice for over 3 years. It maybe that the information has not changed and does not need updating.

The writer found that there were examples of general information on the site which was incorrect. One practice had not had its general details updated since 12/11/2010 and the website address provided on the site was a link to the Poole and District Fisherman's Association.

Dental practices are not regularly updating information on the NHS Choices website, which is the portal for the public to access information.

All dental related attendances at Rotherham Foundation Trust A&E July 2013 to 30th May 2014.

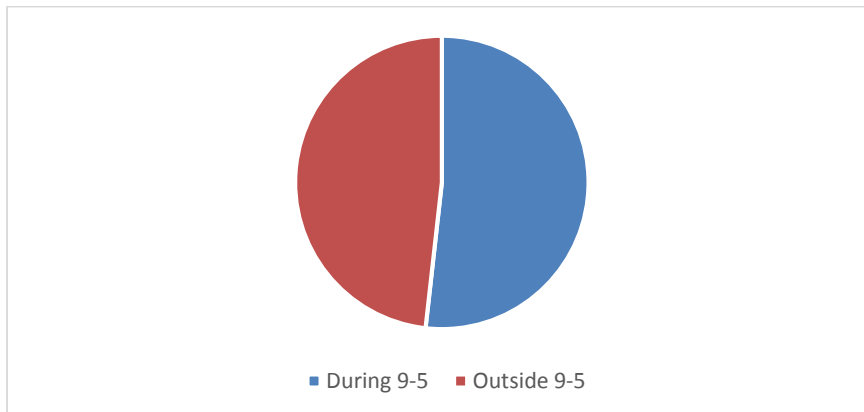
The below chart shows where people are directed following attendance at A&E.

Postcode	General Dental Practitioner	Seen by A&E GP	Other Referral	Home No Follow Up	Own GP	Admit to Hospital	Out Patient Appointment	Did Not Wait	Out Patient Appt via Discharge Lounge	Immediate ENT Clinic	TOTAL
S25	1	0	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	8
S26	2	1	1	7	0	1	1	2	0	0	15
S60	26	6	4	24	13	5	4	3	0	0	85
S61	13	4	2	15	12	5	3	4	0	0	58
S62	10	1	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	25
S63	8	2	1	8	7	3	3	2	0	0	34
S64	16	1	4	8	2	4	4	1	0	0	40
S65	28	6	2	26	9	6	3	3	1	1	85
S66	18	4	3	18	7	2	3	5	0	0	60
Rotherham Total	122	25	21	113	54	30	23	20	1	1	408
Outside of Area	42	12	5	42	24	16	9	5	0	0	155
All	164	37	26	155	78	46	32	25	1	1	563

Between July 2013 and May 2014 there was 563 attendees to Rotherham A&E. 408 were Rotherham residents, with 155 outside of the Rotherham area. Out of 563, 46 were admitted into Hospital.

The most common outcome (164) is to be referred to a general dental practitioner. The second highest outcome (155) is to be sent home with no follow up.

Time attending Rotherham Hospital for dental treatment, for people living in Rotherham Postcodes



52% of attendees to A&E Rotherham for dental issues took place during the hour of 9-5.

Note, the above diagram shows all attendance between 9-5, including Saturday, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

YAS provides the NHS 111 service and the emergency 999 ambulance service in Rotherham. The following data shows the number of calls NHS 111 service received relating to dental related information in the Rotherham CCG area.

Month	Total number of calls	Number relating to dental	Percentage relating to dental
Apr 2013	1158	91	7.9%
May 2013	1235	106	8.6%
June 2013	1142	97	8.5%
July 2013	1316	116	8.8%
August 2013	1385	142	10.3%
September 2013	1775	442	24.9%
October 2013	1872	465	24.8
November 2013	1871	427	22.8%
December 2013	2197	539	24.5%
January 2014	2332	498	21.4%

From NHS 111 Dashboard

This table shows an increase in the numbers of dental related calls occurred in September and that percentage has remained at 20-25% since.

NHS 999 (YAS)
Emergency Ambulance Attendance
April to June 2014

The Yorkshire Ambulance Service gathered the number of emergency ambulance attendances which were related to oral health. They searched using words associated with dental symptoms such as 'tooth', 'dental', 'teeth' and 'pain' in the records. The data was broken down to CCG and month level.

CCG	April	May	June
NHS Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven CCG	0	0	0
NHS Barnsley CCG	0	0	0
NHS Bassetlaw CCG	0	0	0
NHS Bradford City CCG	0	2	3
NHS Bradford Districts CCG	1	1	2
NHS Calderdale CCG	0	3	0
NHS Doncaster CCG	1	2	2
NHS East Riding of Yorkshire CCG	0	1	0
NHS Greater Huddersfield CCG	0	1	1
NHS Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby CCG	1	0	0
NHS Harrogate and Rural District CCG	0	1	1
NHS Hull CCG	0	2	1
NHS Leeds North CCG	0	1	1
NHS Leeds South and East CCG	0	1	0
NHS Leeds West CCG	0	1	1
NHS North East Lincolnshire CCG	0	0	0
NHS North Kirklees CCG	3	1	0
NHS North Lincolnshire CCG	0	0	0
NHS Rotherham CCG	1	1	0
NHS Scarborough and Ryedale CCG	0	0	0
NHS Sheffield CCG	2	1	2
NHS Vale of York CCG	1	0	3
NHS Wakefield CCG	0	0	0
Total	10	19	17

Two cases for Rotherham were reported during the three months.

6 out of the 23 CCGs had no reports in the three month period.

Patients seen in the previous 24 months as a percentage of the population, by patient type and local authority from 31 March 2006, 30 September 2013, 31 December 2013 (including orthodontic patients)

LA Code	LA Name	Adult			Child			Total		
		31 Mar 2006	30 Sep 2013	31 Dec 2013	31 Mar 2006	30 Sep 2013	31 Dec 2013	31 Mar 2006	30 Sep 2013	31 Dec 2013
	England	51.5	52.2	52.4	70.2	68.8	69.0	55.6	55.7	55.9
E08000016	Barnsley	..	64.5	65.2	..	77.0	77.5	..	67.2	67.8
E08000017	Doncaster	..	70.1	69.9	..	78.2	78.0	..	71.8	71.6
E08000018	Rotherham	..	60.7	60.8	..	73.9	73.8	..	63.6	63.6
E08000019	Sheffield	..	59.7	59.8	..	75.6	75.9	..	62.9	63.1
UnA	Unallocated

Sources:

Health and Social Care Information Centre
NHS Dental Services, of the NHS Business Services Authority

Notes:

1. Patients seen are allocated to a clinical local authority via the dentist which they attend for treatment and not by the home postcode of the patient. Most patients will live within the local authority in which they receive primary care dental services but some will attend a dentist further afield (near their place of employment, for example).
2. Please note: it is not possible to map data prior to 2013/14 to Local Authority level.

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Data released in February 2014 shows Rotherham is performing above the average for England for both adult and child patients seen by dental services within 2 years.

Patient Experience

Access to emergency appointments, information added on the NHS Choices

Information on the NHS Choices website

The NHS Choices website has a page called “*How can I access an NHS dentist in an emergency or out of hours*” that page states “*If you have a regular NHS dentist and need urgent treatment, contact your dentist for advice. If you do not have a regular NHS dentist, you can contact NHS 111. They can give you details of out-of-hours dental services in your area.... Dental practices are normally open during the daytime and sometimes at weekends.....If your problem is more urgent, you can access out-of-hours dental services in your area by calling your dentist, who should have an answerphone message with details of how to access treatment out-of-hours or NHS 111*”

The page further says that “*NHS dental care is available in an emergency if it is clinically necessary, whether or not you have a regular dentist.*”

Not all practices included details of emergency appointments; this was included within the text description for each surgery. Two examples of information provided follow:

“If you would like to arrange an appointment please contact us on 01709 362496 during normal working hours For dental emergencies outside of these hours please contact:- NHS 111- Tel:111 www.nhs.uk, A&E RDGH – 01709 820000” (Last verified on 10/01/2014- A2 Dental Studio)

“Patients requiring urgent or emergency dental care on one of our normal working days, should telephone the practice on 01709 382351 as early as possible in the morning. We always endeavour to hold back a few appointments each day for emergencies and will try our utmost to see you the same day, although at busy periods this may involve a considerable wait. If you require urgent or emergency dental care outside our normal hours please ring either 01709 82171 for further instructions, or ring the NHS111 Service on 111.” (Ivy Cottage Last verified on 07/07/2014)

These examples shows that information regarding how a person should access emergency and emergency out of hours varies. The first example directs people to Rotherham Hospital A&E department and the second example shows to ring the practice or call NHS 111.

Database

Signposting

There has been 12 requests made to Healthwatch Rotherham asking for a list of dental practices in Rotherham since July 2013 to June 2014

Comments

Since July 2013 to June 2014, Healthwatch Rotherham has received a number of comments regarding dentistry in Rotherham. Those comments are listed within this report.

The comments received are from family members of the service users. Comments received come via telephone calls received, people visiting the Healthwatch Rotherham Shop or from outreach engagement events.

The comments received are grouped together around some main themes

- Service
- Treatment
- Nervous patient
- Registration
- Appointments

Service

- “Extremely disappointed with the poor level of service and attitude of dentist.”
- “First class and professional and warm family practice.”
- “All of the people that work there, from the reception staff through to the actual Dentist are thoroughly brilliant. You are put at ease immediately, from the moment you walk through their door. Their advice and explanations when you ask a question are clear and understandable, there is no long, full on dental terminology used, just easy to understand explanations. They even produced a disc for me to watch to help me understand what had happened to my teeth. My father would usually go to a private Dental surgery and would pay quite a substantial amount for any work that may be needed or advice that may be given. He is now thinking about joining this surgery after I have explained how fantastic it really is”
- “Very Good service. Explained everything doing, talk through the process, allowed daughter to calm patient down. Have lots of time for us. Had choice”

- “Love this dentist. Lovely friendly service that involves you in every process of treatment. All staff are very friendly and put me at ease.”
- “Visited dentist they were friendly and experience things well - let me know what will happen next”
- “I have had a good experience at the dentist”
- “Good experience at the dentist”
- “Very good service. Very polite and friendly staff”
- “Top class service. All staff very good”

Treatment

- “I have been a patient at this practice since 2008 and have had numerous treatments. The level of which has been exceptional. The entire staff are helpful, courteous and professional.”
- “I am certain this is the best dentistry I have ever experienced. This is in terms of the quality of the technicalities and the outcome. The discussion about the course of the treatment plan was inclusive and accurate, I can only say how satisfied I am.”
- “I have been going to my dentist since February after my GP referred me to them. I was getting shooting pains in my head and the GP suggested that I see the dentist to see if it was my teeth were causing the pain. I have not had the pain resolved even after several appointments and after a tooth being removed. I have had 3 x-rays. I have had to pay for my treatment. I now need more work doing which is part of the same treatment but they told me I will have to pay £49 again. They have told me that because the work is over 2 months old I have to pay. I would have had a sooner appointment but there was none available which I could attend.”
- “The dentist said what he was doing step by step and said he would stop at any time if I wanted - all I had to do was raise my hand”
- “Dentist explains what was happening well”

Nervous Patient

- “After not having the nerve to visit a Dentist for over 6 years, I thought that I'd better not leave the wait any longer and I am so glad I went”.

- “My dentist in Rotherham is fantastic, I visited them after not attending a dentist for 20 years as I was so scared. They put me at ease and gradually worked me into the chair. I have no worries going back.”
- “After many years of fearing a dentist visit and suffering with toothache hoping it would go away, I decided it was time to change. I was pleasantly surprised with the care and consideration when visiting the practice. My treatment was done with a very caring approach and I felt I was in a relaxed environment. I would recommend this practice to anyone.”
- “I was quite nervous about having two wisdom teeth removed yesterday but I needn't have been because the dentist was fantastic. They talked me through everything I needed to know and completely put my mind at ease. They were very gentle and in the end I honestly felt no real pain at all, just a tiny bit of a scratch for the injections. The dentist is very professional but also just a really nice caring person and definitely the best dentist I've ever had. I don't know about the other dentists, they might be great too, but I know for sure this one makes you feel very well looked after, and I strongly recommend them to anyone.”

Registration

- “Was removed for the dentists for missing two appointments. Not happy about it”

Appointments

- “I made an appointment for some urgent treatment as I had pain in a tooth. I was kept waiting for 20 minutes past my appointment time even though there was no patient in with the dentist. Three staff was in a room discussing hairstyles. By the time I was called in the next patient had arrived. I was then told that my treatment would be in 2 weeks. The dentist wanted to prioritise the more expensive crown work. I had told the dentist that I was taking pain killers during the night and told them that if the pain got worse I would expect to be treated as a priority. As I was leaving the dentist they had sent a message to the receptionist saying that they had a cancellation later in the morning if I wanted to wait around. By this time I was upset and cancelled all appointments as I had completely lost trust in a dentist who would prioritise a staff social gathering before a patient with tooth pain. My appointment time had expired by the time I got in to see the dentist. I would not advise anyone to use this dentist. They had ensured they covered his back by saying they would see me later as I guess they had realised that I should have been treated. Not a good attitude.”
- “They are very flexible in making appointments and have a pleasant manner. They are very warm and welcoming.”

- “Had a dentist appointment at 16:00, arrived 20mins early only to be informed that I am 2 hours late, as appointment was at 14:00. Dentist can't fit me in, so its yet another day off work next week. Cost of a new Crown: £210. 2 days off work will cost me: £200+. Parking in rip off Rotherham: £2.50p X 2 days, total for parking: £5 It's going to cost me almost as much in time off work and parking than it does for the crown, do Dentist Care: Doubtful, will I get a reduction in charges: Extremely doubtful. Complaint submitted whilst there, apparently I'll get a response by Monday next week. Lets just say i'm not holding my breath!”
- “Was 5 mins late for my 2year olds appointment due to accident on the road was told when got there the receptionist who may I add was extremely rude and should learn some manors and how to speak to people told me the dentist would not see her and couldn't book another appointment as won't see her again.. I think this is appalling but glad it happened as found a lovely dentist couple of doors down who were really friendly and polite totally different to this one. I wouldn't attend this dentist if was the only dentist around.”
- “I have always been treat politely by the reception staff. The dentist is always informative about my treatment. I can always get an appointment for routine treatment within a reasonable time. Any time I have had problems I have always been fitted in for an emergency appointment with my own dentist if available or another dentist if not.”
- “Pay £13 a month and get 2 check-ups a year which includes cleaning. Can get an appointment easy.”

Summary of comments

The majority of comments regarding dental services were positive. People valued friendliness of staff and being told what was happening during treatment.

The comments we received from nervous patients indicate that once a nervous patient is seen and treated by a dental service they have a positive experience. The positive experiences are comments again on the friendliness of staff and being told what is happening.

A comment was received that someone was removed from a dental practice for missing appointments.

Comments indicate that people do not like to be kept waiting without being informed why. It appears that if patients are not happy with the service they receive they register with another practice.

Case Studies

Case Study 1

On Friday 25th July 2014 a women visited the Healthwatch Rotherham shop asking for help to access emergency dental care as they were suffering for tooth ache. The person said that they were not registered with a dentist.

The NHS Choices website was used to look for dentists in the local area that said they were accepting new patients. When those dental practices were called they were not actually accepting new patients. Other practices were identified as they were close as the crow flies, but if reliant on public transport could take considerable time to reach and were therefore not always a viable option.

NHS 111 was called to see if they could assist. The operator at NHS 111 informed the Healthwatch Rotherham member of staff to use the website but to look at out of area into other parts of South Yorkshire. After many phone calls a service in the middle of Barnsley said they could see the person the following day; however the person requesting the dental appoint said they could make that appointment as they were busy. The person at the practice commented “they cannot be in that much pain then”

Case Study 2

On Monday 28th July 2014 a gentleman rang the Healthwatch Rotherham shop asking for replacement dentures for his mother. She was house bound due to poor mobility. The person was asked for his postcode and a search was performed on NHS Choices website. A number of dentists accepting new patients according to the website were identified. After trying the first few surgeries on the list that said they were accepting, the closest practice which said it was not accepting was called and it turned out that they were actually accepting new patients. The person required a domiciliary visit and treatment. These required a GP referral to the community dental service. This information was passed to the person contacting Healthwatch.

The person then contact Healthwatch a few days later to follow this up

“We spoke the other day regarding replacement dentures for my mother.

Having enquiring whether or not a doctor could see my mother to provide a referral letter I was contacted by the referral service at the Community Health Centre in Rotherham to be told that because my mother could get out with the assistance of 2 people that she was not eligible for a home visit, but because there are few dentists that have disabled access if she were to go to the health centre she would still need a referral letter that my doctor will not provide.

I am utterly disgusted with the service that I have received.

As a result of this I have to try and find a dentist with disabled access and myself and my partner will lose at least 2 days pay for a consultation and fitting appointment.”

Healthwatch Rotherham contacted NHS England for assistance over this, and was informed that some practices were commissioned to provide a domiciliary service, though it was not clear who they were.

Case Study 3

Three year old suffers from travel sickness and the nearest practice is not taking on new patients. The family was given the next surgery close to where they live but they have used it before and did not like it. They are now on a patient list waiting to be registered at the practice nearest to them. They were told that if they need dental due to emergency to use the out of hours and emergency dentist.

Summary

The case studies outline how there were barriers to accessing dental services due to inaccurate or missing information.

The NHS choices website was used in 2 of the 3 case studies. The information on the website was inaccurate leading to confusion of where to register with a practice.

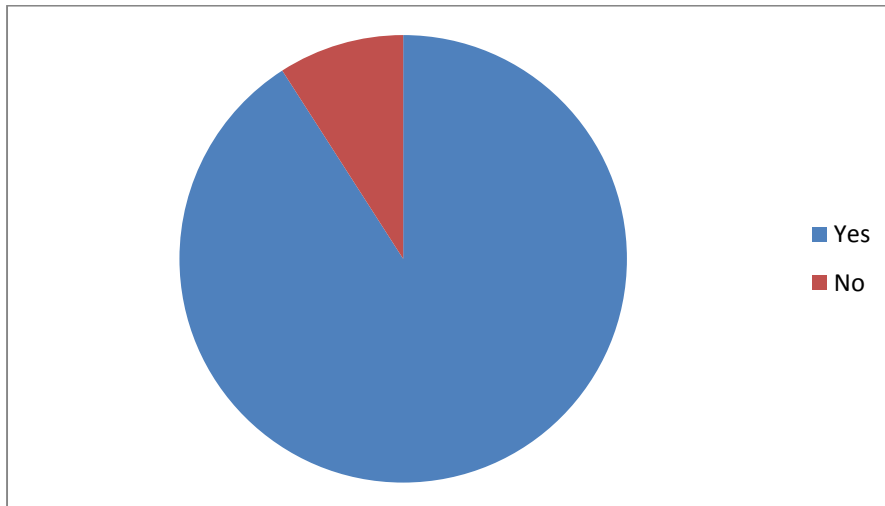
In case study 2 a special service has been commissioned to provide a special dental arrangement but this service is not mentioned on the NHS Choices website.

The issue of choice appears in 2 of the 3 studies. In one case study the person decided not to take the offer of the appointment that was offered to them and in another case study they decided to be put on a waiting list.

Community Engagement Event

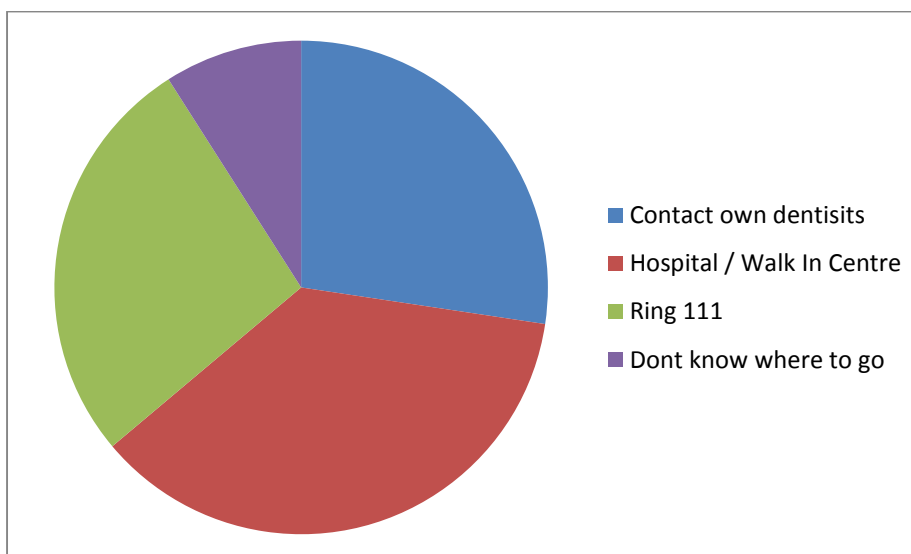
At a Community engagement event, attendees were asked three questions by an engagement officer, around access to emergency dental provision. The activity took place at Shiloh in Rotherham on the 22nd August 2014.

Do you know how to access a dentist in an emergency, regardless if you have a regular dentist or not?



The overall response was that people did know how to access a dentist in an emergency.

How do you go about accessing emergency case?



The response was that the majority of people would go to the Hospital or walk in centre.

People were asked for their experiences, if they have had to use emergency dental care. The responses were limited, due to the number not having to use it. The responses were:

- “Good experience saw me straight away, quick service “
- “Yes in prison, was treated fairly “
- “Yet but in Russia whilst studying there. Was advised to fly to Denmark. Had treatment in Russia, it was horrendous”
- “Yes and it was superb”
- “Only in Spain. Brilliant but cost me 400 Euros”

Some references were made to the treatment they received aboard. Those accessing dental services in Rotherham have had a good experience.

Summary:

People that are homeless have said that they know how to access a dentist in an emergency. They said that they would go to the Hospital or walk in centre. Some references were made to the treatment they received aboard. Those accessing emergency dental services in Rotherham have had a good experience.



Findings

Dental Provision linked to postcode

NHS Choices website list which practices are registering new patients. A search function using a postcode enables a person to find out if locally there is a dental practice and if it is registering new patient's child or adult.

38.89% of practices are accepting new adult patients.

50% of practices are accepting new children patients

61.11% practices are not accepting new adult patients.

50% of practices are not accepting new children patients

The Rotherham Town centre area (S60) has 8 dental practices, 1 practice is accepting new adult patients and 3 are accepting children.

S62 and S64 area have no dental practices accepting new adult patients.

Using The IMD 2010, part of the English Indices of Deprivation this report has shown there is a correlation between deprivation and number of dental practices. The number 1 quartile (most deprived area in Rotherham) has the highest number of dental practices. Given that poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion it would appear that the needs of people are being considered.

NHS Choices Website

Our findings show that 70% of the dental practices have updated their information on the NHS Choices website, but they are not changing their status regarding acceptance of new patients. 4 practices had not updated either accepting / not accepting patient details or the general details of their practice for over 3 years. It maybe that the information has not changed and does not need updating. However the case studies in this report demonstrated that the information on the NHS choices website is not up to date leading to confusion and frustration. A practice was accepting new patients even when the website said it was not.

The writer found that there were examples of general information on the site which was incorrect. One practice had not had its general details updated since 12/11/2010 and the website address provided on the site was a link to the Poole and District Fisherman's Association.

Dental practices are not regularly updating information on the NHS Choices website, which is the portal for the public to access information.

Accessing Emergency Care

Information on the NHS Choices website regarding how a person should access emergency and emergency out of hours varies. One example directs people to Rotherham Hospital A&E department and another example informs people to ring the practice or call NHS 111.

Between July 2013 and May 2014 there was 563 attendees to Rotherham A&E. 408 were Rotherham residents, with 155 outside of the Rotherham area. Out of 563, 46 were admitted into Hospital. The most common outcome (164) is to be referred to a general dental practitioner. The second highest outcome (155) is to be sent home with no follow up. 52% of attendees to A&E Rotherham for dental issues took place during the hour of 9-5.

People that are homeless have said that they know how to access a dentist in an emergency. They said that they would go to the Hospital or walk in centre.

NHS111 service reports in September 2013 that percentage of calls in the Rotherham CCG area relating to dental issues rose to 24.9% from 10.3% and has remained above 20% since.

There were two cases of Rotherham residents using the 999 Ambulance service due to dental problems during the three months, April 2014 to June 2014.

Accessing Dental Care

Data released in February 2014 shows Rotherham is performing above the average for England for both adult and child patients seen by dental services within 2 years.

The majority of comments obtained by Healthwatch Rotherham regarding dental services were positive. People valued friendliness of staff and being told what was happening during treatment.

The comments received from nervous patients indicate that once a nervous patient is seen and treated by a dental service they have a positive experience.

The positive experiences are comments again on the friendliness of staff and being told what is happening. The community engagement activity performed also showed those attending emergency dental provision had a good experience.

A comment was received that someone was removed from a dental practice for missing appointments.

Comments indicate that people do not like to be kept waiting without being informed why. It appears that if patients are not happy with the service they receive they register with another practice.

The case studies outline how there were barriers to accessing dental services due to inaccurate or missing information on the NHS choices website. This website was used in 2 of the 3 case studies. The information on the website was inaccurate leading to confusion of where to register with a practice. In case study 2 a special service has been commissioned to provide a special dental arrangement but this service is not mentioned on the NHS Choices website. The issue of choice appears in 2 of the 3 studies. In one case study the person decided not to take the offer of the appointment that was offered to them and in another case study they decided to be put on a waiting list.

Summary

Given that poor oral health is directly linked with socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion it would appear that the needs of people are being considered.

The NHS Choices website does not give an accurate information of which dental practices are and are not new patients.

Waiting lists and specialised dental services are not mentioned on the NHS Choices website.

Patients are attending A&E when this is not the appropriate pathway for them.

This report was unable to establish how many clinical appointments are available to the people of Rotherham per postcode area.

The comments received from nervous patients indicate that once a nervous patient is seen and treated by a dental service they have a positive experience. People attending dental practices value friendliness of staff and being told what was happening during treatment. This could be that it appears that if patients are not happy with the service they receive they register with another practice.



Recommendations

- To improve the information on the NHS choices website. Clarity on what people should do to access emergency or out of hours care. Being clear all practices give the same message.
- Practices update if they are registering new patients (adults and children) every 4 weeks.
- Waiting list function to be added to the NHS Choices website.
- To consider if current for emergency and out of hours care meets local needs.
- To establish how many clinical appointments are available to the people of Rotherham per postcode area.
- To work with the public, especially children and young people to reduce the issue of nervous patients and to improve oral health through early intervention.