

NHS Dental services – Wokingham Borough

1. Introduction

NHS England commissions primary, community and hospital services for the country. When the NHS was re-organised in 2013 responsibility for most commissioning transferred to the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), but primary care commissioning was transferred to NHS England. This work is carried out via local offices with NHS South (South Central) commissioning dental services on behalf of the people of the Thames Valley (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire) and Bath, Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire. In addition to primary care dental services, NHS England also commissions community dental services for patients who may find it difficult to attend a 'High Street' service and hospital dental services.

The annual expenditure on NHS dental services in the 'Thames Valley' part of South Central is about £90m with £63m spent on primary care, £9m on community services and £18m on hospital services. The NHS budget takes into account the fact that most patients contribute to the cost of their care when provided outside a hospital setting. This equates to about 25% of the total budget. NHS Dental care is free for children up to the age of 18 and for patients within identified exemption categories.

Access to NHS Dentistry has substantially improved over the last few years as part of the national dental access programme. In the Thames Valley in 2009 43.6% of the population attended a dentist in the previous 2 years. By May 2017 this had increased to 51.3%, which is a growth of 223,780 patients.

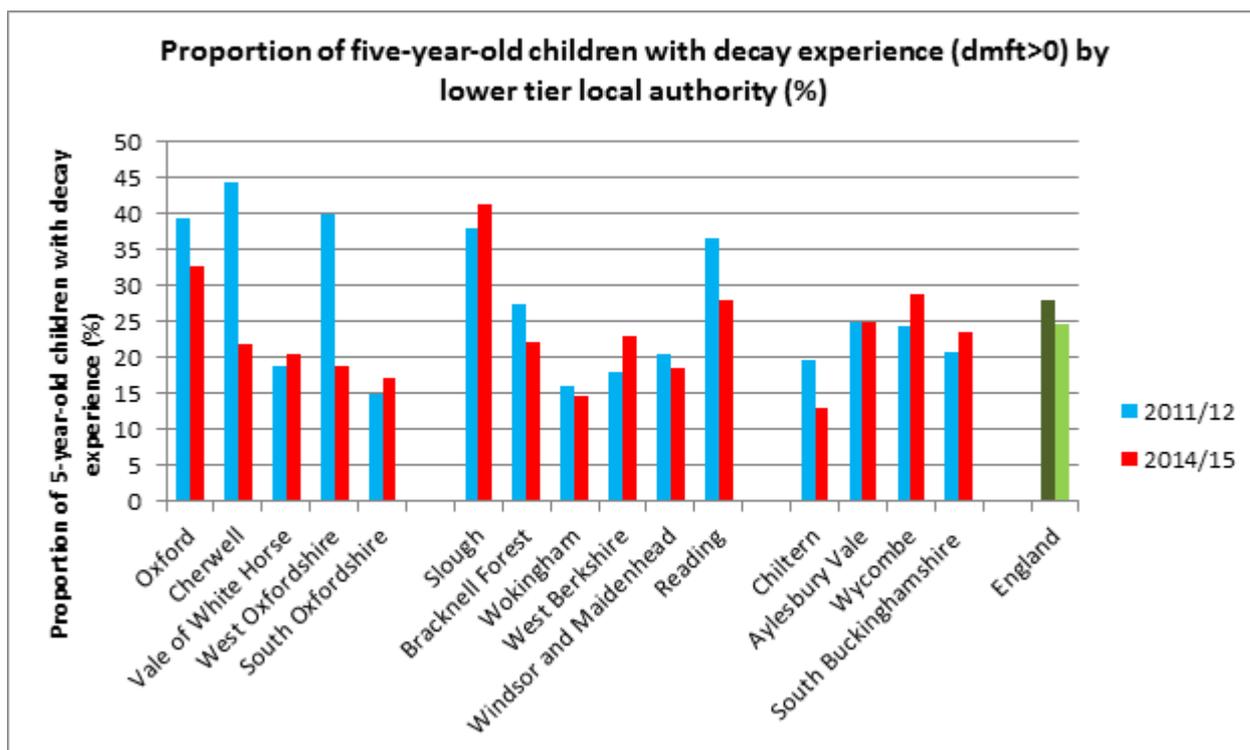
However, there are growing pressures due to budget pressures in the NHS and population growth, particularly due to new housing.

2. Oral Health of the population

Epidemiology surveys are commissioned via local authorities to identify the oral health of the nation. They are usually carried in relation to children and report on their oral health at different ages. The 2014-15 survey was carried out on 5 year olds. There is some variation in whether the local authorities will continue to carry out these surveys going forwards which is likely to impact on data availability.

Young children Wokingham, on average, have amongst the best oral health in the Thames Valley with about 14% of 5 year olds with decay experience. The oral health in Wokingham is considerably better than the England mean with about 25% of children experiencing decay by the age of 5.

Oral Health data is not available at ward level which means it is not possible to identify which parts of Wokingham have worst oral health. However, poor oral health in children is linked to deprivation so it is likely that the more deprived wards will on average contain children with the worst oral health.



3. Access to Dental Services

3.1 Access rates in Wokingham

Improving access to NHS dental services became a national priority after the implementation of the new dental contract in 2006. In the period between the implementation of the 1992 and 2006 contracts there had been a substantial fall in the number of people attending NHS Dentists. In the period 2009 – 2012 ‘ringfenced’ monies were identified to improve dental access.

The table below describes the NHS Dental practices in the Wokingham area. There are 14 practices with 10 delivering services to all groups of patients and 4 to children only. Additionally, there is also one Orthodontic practice in the Borough. Six of the practices have opened since the current Dental contract was introduced in 2006.

About 45.5% of the Wokingham population attended an NHS dental practice in the 2 years to May 2017. This was an increase of about 3,500 patients when compared to May 2015.

Services are commissioned via General Dental Services contracts under the NHS (General Dental /Personal Dental Services) Regulations 2005. This is the same regulatory framework as General Medical Services commissioned via the 2004 contract.

The Wokingham practices are detailed below. One dental surgery = 7,000 Units of Dental Activity (UDAs)

Practice name	Local Authority	Ward name	Contract type	UDAs commissioned 2017-18	24 month access June 2015	24 month access May 2017	Change
Loddon Bridge Dental Surgery 281 Loddon Bridge Road Woodley Reading RG5 4BE	Wokingham	Bulmershe and Whitegates	Full NHS	27,953	9,013	10,801	1,788
Dental Surgery 193 Nine Mile Ride Finchampstead Berkshire RG40 4JD	Wokingham	Finchampstead South	Child only	963	753	675	- 78
The Tooth Booth 422b Finchampstead Road Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 3RB	Wokingham	Finchampstead South	Full NHS	13,000	4,128	4,948	820
The Gallery Dental Centre Maiden Place, Kilnsea Drive Lower Earley Berkshire RG6 3HD	Wokingham	Hawkedon	Child only	4,414	1,950	1,767	- 183
Loddon Vale Dental Surgery Flat E Loddon Vale Centre Hurricane Way, Woodley RG5 4UL	Wokingham	Loddon	Child only	2,000	930	854	- 76
Puresmile Earley Dental Practice Ltd 370 Wokingham Road Earley Berkshire RG6 7HT	Wokingham	Maiden Erleigh	Full NHS	13,000	5,071	4,724	- 347
Bean Oak Dental Surgery 95 Bean Oak Road Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1RJ	Wokingham	Norreys	Full NHS	9,276	3,644	3,610	- 34
Shinfield Dental Centre School Green Shinfield Berkshire RG2 9EH	Wokingham	Shinfield South	Full NHS	16,940	5,045	4,806	- 239
Shine Dental Clinic 3 Wargrave Road Twyford Berkshire RG10 9NY	Wokingham	Twyford	Child only	809	282	335	53
Berkshire Dental Care Twyford 8-10 High Street Twyford Berkshire RG10 9AE	Wokingham	Twyford	Full NHS	15,956	7,584	7,673	89
Twyford Dental Care 3 Church Street Twyford Berkshire RG10 9DN	Wokingham	Twyford	Full NHS	3,556	940	906	- 34

Peach Street Dental Practice 38 Market Place Wokingham Berkshire RG40 1AT	Wokingham	Wescott	Full NHS	14,000	5,188	6,881	1,693
Wokingham Dental Clinic 56 Easthampstead Road Wokingham Berkshire RG40 2EE	Wokingham	Wescott	Full NHS	36,100	14,670	14,556	- 114
Winnersh Dental Practice 410 Reading Road Winnersh Berkshire RG41 5EP	Wokingham	Winnersh	Full NHS	23,809	9,398	9,605	207
				181,776	68,596	72,141	3,545

3.2 How services are accessed

Patients are not 'registered' with dental practices and can attend any practice of their choosing. This means that many attend practices near where they work rather than where they live (e.g. London commuters may choose to attend in London). About half of the population of the Thames Valley attends a dentist on a regular basis. National estimates suggest that about one third of the population attend private practices (this may be higher in Wokingham). There are also some people who very rarely attend the dentist at all.

The latter group is still able to attend NHS care if they have an urgent need which they do via NHS 111 (most patients will attend their own dental practice for urgent care). NHS 111 will direct these patients to practices who will see them on the day. Dentists are only *required* to see patients urgently if they are in the middle of a course of treatment. There is also evening and weekend access for urgent patients, also via NHS 111. About 3.5% of all NHS 111 calls are dental (this is about 50 a day in the Thames Valley).

3.3 Access challenges

The local office has carried out work to assess which wards face the greatest challenges in terms of trying to access NHS dental services. This was done by reviewing deprivation ranking of the wards, the access rate to NHS Dentistry by people living in the wards and distance to travel to access NHS Dentistry. The wards were then RAG (Red, Amber, and Green) assessed to identify which wards had the greatest challenges. The wards with the lowest numerical score in terms of access and distance to travel were identified as having the greatest challenges. Most wards in Wokingham achieve a green score which meant services were identified as being accessible. There were a few wards with amber scores but overall people living in Wokingham have good access to NHS Dental services.

Ward Name(Access)	Ward Population 2013 MYE	Rank deprivation	All Access Rate (%)	Rank access all	All - ave distance travelled (km)	Rank ward ave dist all
Arborfield	2,894	241	52.3	225	7.0	103
Barkham	3,807	357	47.1	125	5.9	144
Bulmershe and Whitegates	8,488	95	50.5	196	3.8	270
Charvil	3,132	350	55.8	299	4.1	243
Coronation	5,706	345	54.5	272	4.4	225
Emmbrook	8,324	255	55.7	297	3.5	287
Eventons	8,902	366	57.3	324	4.1	240
Finchampstead North	5,511	370	56.6	315	4.4	227
Finchampstead South	5,594	342	53.3	249	5.5	166
Hawkedon	9,587	359	47.1	128	4.7	206
Hillside	8,223	294	46.4	110	5.1	187
Hurst	2,878	360	56.9	319	6.3	126
Loddon	9,124	268	51.3	208	4.1	242
Maiden Erlegh	9,616	280	47.8	142	3.9	259
Norreys	9,108	136	58.4	338	3.0	331
Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe	5,411	213	45.6	102	6.8	117
Shinfield North	3,696	153	44.4	76	4.5	218
Shinfield South	7,022	206	51.9	219	5.5	163
Sonning	3,232	266	45.4	97	5.8	148
South Lake	5,237	338	49.2	167	3.8	264
Swallowfield	3,072	258	42.5	52	8.7	69
Twyford	5,928	351	58.8	341	3.5	290
Wescott	5,461	223	58.7	340	3.1	320
Winnersh	9,747	163	55.3	292	3.8	265
Wokingham Without	8,166	341	52.8	236	5.1	186

However, this describes current access issues rather than looking at future pressures. Across the Thames Valley there are a number of local authorities with plans to substantially increase their populations via housing developments. One of those is Wokingham Borough. The local office is looking at how this can be factored into long term planning for dental services. The dental 'ringfence' was lifted in 2012 and pressures on NHS resources

have substantially increased since then, which means there is competition for the NHS resources.

One of the challenges in terms of developing robust plans is an understanding of the number of new houses planned over 3 – 5 year periods. The local office has contacted all local authorities to try to achieve this information, but the local authority plans tend to look in longer time lines.

If it is possible to achieve data that clearly describes 3 – 5 year plans this help to identify the need, but the issue of competition for NHS resources remains.

4. Community Dental Services

For some patients, it is very difficult for them attend High Street Dental practice due to the stress it may cause them. This particularly relates to learning disability patients and those with severe anxiety issues. Community Dental Services are designed to support these patients with staff trained in providing care for patients whose 'management' may be more challenging.

The Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Service provides this service for the county from a number of community based clinics. They also provide General Anaesthetic services at the Royal Berkshire and Wexham Park Hospitals for special care patients and children.

5. Hospital services

If patients have more complex clinical needs, they are referred to hospital for the following services:

- Oral Surgery (complex extractions)
- Maxillofacial Surgery (surgery of the areas around the jaw)
- Restorative (Root canal, gum disease and dentures and implants)
- Orthodontics

In Berkshire there are also community based alternatives if the treatments are too complex to deliver in primary care, but don't need to be treated in hospital. This applies both to Oral Surgery and Restorative. These services are based in High Street practices with specialists attending to provide these treatments.

The specialist services will both provide treatments, sometimes in partnership with primary care and also provide advice in relation to proposed treatment plans.

In 2015 – 17 NHS England issued commissioning guides in relation to a number of these services. These were designed to clearly define the appropriate treatment settings on the care 'pathways' for these specialities. These are now under review by the local office, working in partnership with other offices in the Region. The aim will be to achieve more efficient pathways to achieve care in the right setting with improvement in terms of value for money.

6. Summary

Wokingham is an area of good oral health where there has been a substantial increase in NHS provision over the last few years. There are also strong arrangements in place to support primary care practitioners in terms of providing community and hospital based referral routes for treatment and advice.

There are growing pressures in terms of achieving timely access to NHS Dentistry. These services face competition from other NHS services to achieve any increase in funding. This is why following the substantial increases in funding in the period 2009 – 2012 the focus has been on trying to achieve improvements in the efficiency through care pathway design and primary care contract management.

Hugh O’Keeffe,
Contract Manager – Dental,
NHS South Central,
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