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28 April 2008

Mahroof Hussain
Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer
Derby City Council
P O Box 6292
Corporation Street
Derby DE1 2XL

Dear Mahroof

Re: Access to Dental Health Services - Final Report of the Commission

Thank you for the report of the Adult Services and Health Commission on the Review of Patient Access to Dental Health Services in Derby, which was received by the PCT on 25 March 2008.

I would like to note that the proportion of PALS queries relating to dental health services varies month on month and over the last 12 months has averaged at 61.9%. This does not however detract as you rightly say, from the fact that oral health remains a significant issue for Derby residents.

I acknowledge the contribution of the PPIF representative and the Local Dental Committee chair and secretary, alongside that of the PCT leads into this review and report and agree that this is an accurate reflection of the PCTs position at the time of the review.

With regard to the Commission's recommendations, I can provide you with the following updated position in order to inform you of actions being taken against recommendations.

- In response to point 36 of the report and for clarity, the PCT dental budgets have been ring fenced for a further two year period up to 2011.
- Recommendation 41 discusses the dental contractors' UDA rates; these reflect the activity as delivered by the contractor during the reference period and are therefore individual to the contractor. However in the Derby City area, the average UDA rate varies only slightly within a small range. There are however outliers and the causes for this will be addressed individually with the contractor and re-considered following the end of the income guarantee period, in order to ensure that those values become more reflective of the area's average rate. The PCT is currently considering the management of complex treatment and will monitor contractors closely to ensure that they deliver against their contractual requirements in relation to such treatments and to respond to patient need as it arises.

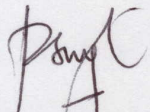
- The PCT has recently completed its Annual Contract Reviews with each dental contractor. These reviews ensure that contractors meet their contractual requirements and as such any contractor not displaying the NHS National Dental Charges Poster, has been instructed to do so with immediate effect. This position will continue to be monitored by the PCT. It is noteworthy that the PCT has just distributed new charges posters and patient leaflets identifying the current uplifted charges to each of its dental contractors. These should therefore be available to patients on request at the practice. This addresses recommendation 43 of the report.
- With regard to oral health promotion and prevention, the PCT has supported the continuation of brushing programmes for a further year and has attributed a proportion of its dental budgets to commissioning additional promotion and prevention, also to reducing inequalities in oral health in those geographical areas identified as having high need. This responds to the recommendations raised in points 44, 46 and 47 of the report.
- In response to point 45 of the report, the PCT recognises that additional promotional support would be of benefit in advertising the services of the local dental contractors and is working not only closely with the media to look at how it can support the PCT in delivering that information but also working to consider new and innovative ways of working with communities. This is to ensure that they are aware of and involved in service design and delivery to ensure these messages are received in a way that is meaningful to them. To commence this process the PCT has worked with the Patient and Public Involvement Forum to devise a Questions and Answers document which has been signed off and supported by the Local Dental Committee and mailed to each practice with a request to display in a prominent place. The PCT will continue to explore other methods of communication and will consider development of its own leaflet regarding dental services.
- With regard to recommendation 48 of the report, the PCT has already commenced work with regard to allaying anxieties relating to contract re-negotiation in 2009. The PCT is following the guidance of the Chief Officer at recent dental events, to ensure that there is no major change to the way in which the PCT commissions dentistry in 2009. The PCT recognises the importance of and values dental professionals and its local dental contractors. The PCT wishes to reach the same aim as those providing NHS dentistry i.e. to provide high quality and accessible services to the patients in the City. This means that the PCT will continue to work closely with the LDC regarding any plans for contracts in 2009 and to provide events such as the one delivered on Saturday 12th January 2009 which allowed the PCT to meet with the dental contractors and outline to them any plans.
- Also worthy of note in response to points 48 & 49 is that the PCT is preparing to tender for additional general dental services in the City area in the very near future. This is for extra dental activity and is another means of encouraging new dental practitioners into the area as well as offering existing contractors an opportunity to increase the amount of NHS dentistry that they provide in the area currently.

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I would like to thank you for the Commission's time in investigating oral health provision in Derby City and for the recommendations put to the PCT in its report.

I trust I have sufficiently outlined the PCT's future plans and those that are underway to address those recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Prem Singh', written in a cursive style.

Prem Singh
Chief Executive