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*Sent by email*

27 April 2023

Dear Dr Fox

As you already know, Integrated Care Boards took on the responsibility for pharmacy, dental and optometry services on 1 April 2023.

We are aware that access to NHS dentistry in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire is challenging and we will be working hard to try and improve the situation for residents. Overseeing services at a more local level will allow us to make decisions which will, in time, help us to improve provision. Taking on the service just a few weeks ago, we are now in the process of starting to work with key stakeholders to help us review current services and understand population need. This work will help to inform a local strategy. Work is also ongoing on a wider Southwest Dental Reform programme, which is offering practical support to enable dental practices to take on more NHS dentistry in the area.

The pressures on NHS primary care dental teams in the area, as well as across the country, is severe, with workforce shortages, high demand and a backlog to address.

In BNSSG there are 64 NHS dental practices, with recently procured additional capacity in Southmead and Winterbourne.

There are a number of other measures we are putting in place to increase dental access for local patients. This includes:

- The commissioning of additional urgent dental care appointments that people can access by calling NHS111 with an urgent dental need. There are 64 appointments each week in the BNSSG area.
- There are 13 sessions of Stabilisation per week across BNSSG, equating to about 65 appointments providing a more permanent solution to a dental problem. This is for people requiring urgent care treatment (e.g., broken teeth, broken fillings) that don't currently have an NHS dentist.
- There is a dental helpline that patients can access via NHS111.
- We are supporting an oral health improvement initiative, in partnership with Local Authorities, called First Dental Steps where health visitors and midwives are trained to give oral health care advice to families with children under two and have oral health care packs (toothbrushes and toothpaste) to give to families in need and hope to have this fully in place later this year.



- We continue to work to secure additional urgent care provision that patients can also access via NHS111.

Resolving these long-standing issues will take time but we are committed to working with our partners to bring about a positive resolution that provides the right support for local people.

I hope this update provides assurance but if you have any immediate concerns, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DJ', with a horizontal line crossing through the middle of the letters.

**David Jarrett, Director of Integrated and Primary Care – Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board**