

**Feasibility Report – Access to Dental Services in York**

**Summary**

1. This report asks Members to consider a scrutiny topic registered by Councillor Moore to scrutinise access to dental services in York. A copy of the topic registration form is attached at Annex A to this report.

**Criteria**

2. Councillor Moore believes that this topic fits with the following eligibility criteria as set out in the topic registration form:
  - Public Interest (i.e. in terms of both proposals being in the public interest and resident perceptions)
  - Under Performance/Service Dissatisfaction
  - National/local/regional significance e.g. a central government priority area, concerns joint working arrangements at a local 'York or wider regional context.

**Background Information**

3. At present the Health Scrutiny Committee receives quarterly reports from North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust (NYYPCT) regarding dental services in York. Their reports frequently include statistical information, which is not necessarily easy to interpret. There are positive ongoing discussions between the NYYPCT and the Health Scrutiny Committee regarding the way NYYPCT present their information and this means that the reporting template used to present the information is very much a fluid document and a work in progress.

**Consultation**

4. Councillor Sue Galloway, the portfolio holder for Housing & Adult Social Services (HASS) made the following comment:

'I would see this impacting mainly on the NHS. We could gather information from residents via Ward newsletters/Ward Committees and additionally use other existing structures'

5. The Director of Housing & Adult Social Services made the following comments:

‘This is a health issue and I don't think there are any social care aspects so I do not have any advice to offer the committee in relation to this proposed topic.’

6. NYYPCT have provided the following comments:

‘This topic has been discussed internally within NYYPCT and it will also be raised at our next Oral Health Group meeting due to take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009’

‘NYYPCT can assist in terms of explaining the processes relating to allocations from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) database and provision of ‘Units of Dental Activity’ (UDAs). This can be explained from both a commissioning and a patient perspective. Our assumption is that any interviews with residents, voluntary sector, dental practices etc referred to in the request would not be the PCT’s responsibility (although we would assist in providing contact details etc).’

### **Analysis**

7. Health Scrutiny Committee have been monitoring dental provision in York for many years and are working with NYYPCT to find the most suitable way of reporting data back to the Committee. The data provided to the Committee on a quarterly basis can be technical and is not always easy to understand. It is, also, very focussed on statistics rather than on patient experience of the service.
8. The topic registration form specifically gives two examples of problems that have been experienced by patients trying to access dental services. At present, the quarterly reports provided by NYYPCT do not go into the level of detail required to answer Councillor Moore’s questions regarding whether patients receive the dental treatment they require when they require it.
9. It should be noted from the comments above that NYYPCT appear to be willing to assist with any review, should Members decide to proceed. It is hoped that they will be able to update the Committee at the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February as to the outcomes of the meeting of their Oral Health Group on 22 January 2009. This should give Members more insight into NYYPCT’s thoughts on the feasibility of this topic and ways in which they may be able to help should a review proceed.

### **Conduct of Review**

10. Should Members choose to proceed with this review Councillor Moore has suggested that the Committee look at:
  - i. Patient experience of service provision.
  - ii. The system of ‘Units of Dental Activity’ (UDA) and determine:
    - a. How the units are allocated (per capita, number of dentists within the practice or by some other means).

- b. Whether this system is effective in ensuring that there are sufficient units to maintain the service throughout the period for which they are allocated, so that patients can receive treatment.
  - iii. Whether there are alternative ways in which to guarantee patients receive the treatment they require when they require it.
  - iv. Whether missed appointments have an impact on service provision and if so the severity of this impact.
11. Councillor Moore has suggested that the following be consulted should the review proceed:
  - NYYPCT
  - The Local Dental Committee
  - Residents
  - Voluntary Organisations
  - Dental practices that offer NHS treatment
12. Health Scrutiny Committee might like to consider how best they could progress the topic if it were to go ahead. Contacting a sample of the voluntary organisations may help to determine the severity of the concerns raised in the topic registration form. Once the UDA system has been examined then the Committee might like to look at whether this is the best method that can be used and if not to make recommendations to reflect their findings.

### **Corporate Priorities**

13. This relates to the following Corporate Priority:

‘Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.’

### **Implications**

14. **Financial** – There is a small amount of funding available within the scrutiny budget to carry out reviews. There are no other known financial implications associated with this report however; implications may arise should the review be progressed.
15. **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no known HR implications associated with this report.
16. **Legal** – There are no direct legal implications associated with this particular report however; legal implications associated with this topic may emerge if the topic progresses.
17. **Other** – There are no known equalities, property, crime and disorder or other implications associated with this report.

## Risk Management

18. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, there are no known risks associated with the recommendations within this report.

## Recommendations

19. Based on the evidence presented within this report Members are advised to proceed with this review in order to explore the points raised within the topic registration form. It is suggested that this review begin as soon as possible.

20. In making the above recommendation, the overall aim for this review was recognised together with a number of key objectives. A suggested remit is therefore attached at Annex B to this report and Members are asked to consider this and make any necessary changes, prior to approving a remit for this review.

## Contact Details

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Feasibility Approved	Study	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date	23.01.2009
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## Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

### Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

## Background Papers:

None

## Annexes

<b>Annex A</b>	Topic Registration Form
<b>Annex B</b>	Draft Remit