



REPORT TO: MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD CLINICAL AND CARE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON 26 MAY 2022

SUBJECT: DENTAL SERVICES IN MORAY

BY: DENTAL CLINICAL LEAD

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1. To inform this Committee of the current position in relation to provision of dental services in Moray.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of the report and the actions being taken forward to mitigate risks.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1. Dental service capacity has reduced across Scotland during the pandemic. Dentistry was disproportionately affected due to the high number of Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs) performed.

3.2. There are currently no General Dental Service (GDS) dentists (local independent NHS contractors) in Moray accepting new patients for NHS registration. This is a chronic issue and has been ongoing in Moray for approximately two years.

3.3. Moray Public Dental Service (PDS) (salaried NHSG service) is operating well. Moray PDS are still able to register priority group patients and have activated contingency plans to temporarily support NHS dental access.

3.4. Recruitment of new dentists to Moray, and nationally, is a major challenge. This is in part due to adverse impact of the Covid-19 on dental education leading to the deferred graduation of dental students in 2021/22, as well as regulation requirements for overseas dentists.

3.5. Week commencing 9 May 2022, a local GDS dental practice has notified 3000 Moray NHS dental patients that they will be de-registered in August 2022.

4. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. Urgent dental care provision in Moray remains comprehensive for all, signposted via the NHSG Dental Information and Advice Line (DIAL).
- 4.2. Unless they have priority needs, unregistered patients are unable to access a Moray NHS dentist for routine care.
- 4.3. There have been an increasing number of enquiries from concerned patients, MSPs, and the MOD, about issues with NHS dental access in Moray. The recent notice of de-registrations has amplified these concerns.
- 4.4. Current risk factors:-
 - Inadequate access to routine NHS dental care for the unregistered Moray population may result in unsatisfactory patient outcomes, an increase in complaints and adverse media coverage.
 - Core Moray PDS patients (vulnerable priority groups) may also experience unsatisfactory wait times as a result of increased demands on the PDS.
 - Risk of further NHS dental de-registrations due to recruitment issues, or if GDS practices choose to reduce their NHS commitment.
- 4.5. The interim Scottish Government funding package for GDS dentists has been revised to encourage a higher activity level and reward increasing treatment provision. This should see the local access situation improve from April 2022 but could also potentially induce the final risk identified in 4.4.
- 4.6. Scottish Dental Access Initiative (SDAI) Grants and Recruitment & Retention Allowances have both been approved for Moray, in an effort to encourage new dentists and/or practices into the area.
- 4.7. Funding has been made available across Scotland to increase capacity within GDS dental practices. £5m SG funding to improve ventilation and £7.5m SG funding for the purchase of Red Band Handpieces.
- 4.8. Moray PDS has increased provision of single courses of “occasional” dental treatment - routine dental care for unregistered patients identified with the highest dental needs. Unregistered children with urgent issues, or identified via the dental public health programmes, Childsmile and NDIP, are directed to the PDS and offered all necessary treatment (registration offered if a Priority Group patient).
- 4.9. Limited funding has been secured to allow Moray PDS to continue to support NHS capacity locally during 2022/23 FY. However, recruitment of new dentists to Moray remains a challenge.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan “Moray Partners in Care 2019 – 2029”**

Availability of services is key to enable people to build resilience and maximise the health and wellbeing potential, one of the core themes of MIJB strategic plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

The actions within this report are in line with Scottish Government guidance and requirements.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report.

(d) Risk Implications and Mitigation

The risks of the current local situation are set out in 4.4 and mitigation measures are described in 4.5 to 4.9.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising as a direct result of this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising as a direct result of this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as there are no changes to policy or procedures as a result of this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no impacts directly arising from this report

(i) Directions

There are no directions arising from this report.

(j) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Chief Officer, Head of Service, Sean Coady HSCM and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer, Moray Council, who are in agreement with the report where it relates to their area of responsibility.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. This paper sets out the current position in relation to the provision of NHS Dental care in Moray and the actions that have been taken to mitigate immediate risks.

Author of Report: Laura Stevenson, Dental Clinical Lead
Background Papers: with author
Ref: