

1st April 2020

To all Practices in Surrey & Sussex LMCs

Dear Colleagues

Primary Care Dental Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

I am writing to advise colleagues that following the advice of the Chief Dental Officer [CDO] (enclosed), it is likely that GPs locally may be contacted – at least over the next few weeks – by patients unable to access dental services.

The CDO has advised that all routine, non-urgent dental care, including orthodontics, should be suspended until advised otherwise. Dentistry represents a high-risk exposure, and some dental colleagues are being redeployed to secondary care.

Dental practices are being asked (individually or collaboratively) to establish an AAA service [Advice, Analgesia and Antibiotic] whilst in addition across England the NHS is asking dentists to establish Urgent Dental Care facilities to provide treatment for patients with urgent dental conditions that could cause serious/systemic illness. At present these services are being established and are likely to be geographically widely spaced; there are currently, I understand, plans for only 14 across the South East. The list of conditions these facilities are recommended to treat is within the accompanying letter.

Dental practices are, in many cases, not linked to the EPS (and so cannot undertake remote prescribing) The LPC have advised there may be an emergency solution to this using scanned prescriptions via nhsmail but this is still being considered.

As colleagues know, whilst dentists retain professional responsibility for recently seen patients; there is no NHS patient list at dental practices analogous to the GP registered list, and therefore patients who have not recently received dental treatment may find it less easy to access such services

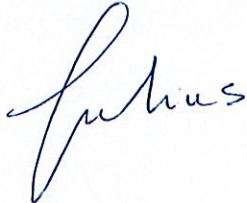
For these reasons it is probable colleagues will be contacted, in-hours, by a small number of patients with dental pain. Previously the LMC's advice was that GPs should not treat dental conditions, or having examined patients, should advise those with dental diagnosis to see their dentist. However, noting the GMC's advice that during the pandemic it is likely practitioners will at times be practicing outside their normal areas of competence, the LMC is advising colleagues that, whilst it remains an individual decision, there may be occasions where you believe it is in the patient's best interest to advise and treat probable dental pain if patients are unable to access a Dental Practitioner, or temporarily unable to do so.

Local Medical Committees for
Croydon, Kingston & Richmond, Surrey,
East Sussex and West Sussex

The White House **T:** 01372 389270
18 Church Road **F:** 01372 389271
Leatherhead
Surrey KT22 8BB **www.sslmcs.co.uk**

Clearly over time the LMC hopes individual dental practices and the Urgent Dental Care facilities will establish a more comprehensive service.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julius', written in a cursive style.

Dr Julius Parker
Chief Executive