

MINUTES OF LDC MEETING via ZOOM on Tuesday 21st April 2020

1. APOLOGIES:

Hannah Wilmott and Maria Browning.

2. WELCOME:

to Guest Observer Simon Ellis, Specialist in Restorative Dentistry and Consultant of Restorative Dentistry and Oral Rehabilitation.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING:

Minutes were approved, with no matters arising other than those dealt with under separate headings.

4. ANNUAL ELECTION/ APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:

It was agreed to postpone these elections until the next committee meeting on the 23rd June. JMW suggested that Simon Ellis be co-opted onto the committee to give a view on secondary care. It was also suggested that the Community Dental Service continue to attend. This was approved.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT- Jonathan Mynors-Wallis (JMW)

JMW and Sarah Jackson have been attending regular meetings (daily) concerning NHS England's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the setting up of Urgent Care Hubs in the South West. This committee involves members of the nine LDCs in the region, MCN chairs, members of NHS England South West and Health Education England. He has tried to give any information that he has received by posting it on the recently formed Dorset LDC WhatsApp group. The committee felt that this was a good way to communicate with local dentists, but that it would also be useful to put the information on the Dorset LDC website to try to catch dentists who aren't a part of this group. The chair has asked a committee member (Amy Roberts) to go through WhatsApp postings and repost important items (this is because, when you join a WhatsApp group, you can only see information posted afterwards.) It was also agreed that she would highlight information that was of particular importance that could be put on the website. Given that information is changing so rapidly, these forums can quickly become out of date.

Urgent Dentals Hubs in Dorset

There are currently two hubs up and running in Dorset, one at the Browning Centre and the other at Dorchester Hospital. NHS England South West have been contacting practices with large UDA contracts and more than four surgeries to ask whether they can be used in the second wave of hub openings. It is NHS England's wish that no patient should have to travel for more than 30 minutes to have to attend a hub. Unfortunately, this is not presently the case and JMW has had many concerned dentists contact him about the distance that their patients have to travel. The hubs are currently seeing patients within a couple of days of being triaged and seem to be coping with the present demand. Patients have shown a reluctance to attend these clinics. When they are attending, they are generally being managed by extractions. The hubs are currently open on normal surgery hours from Monday to Friday and they are endeavouring to see patients every 45 minutes. This gives time for any droplets that may have been created by treatment to be dispersed and for the surgeries to be cleaned with the bleach-based product. Over the South West, these hubs have been reported to see between five and eight patients per day. It has been suggested that a hub could be set up in Poole Hospital and be used extensively for extractions. However, Simon Ellis informed the committee that there was only a limited number of surgeries at the hospital that could be used, and he felt that it would be difficult to act as a hub.

At the GDCP meeting, a dentist who rang the hub in Winchester spoke about having an oral surgeon on the team to assist with difficult extractions. Having discussed this with the hubs, they have stated that this was not presently a problem.

Volunteering

There have been a great many dentists who have volunteered to help with the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, there has been some confusion over which online form to fill in. A national form came out first and these names have not yet been released to NHS England South West. However, the South West has produced its own volunteering form and there are currently 81 dentists who have volunteered their services. JMW does not currently have any information on whether any have been mobilised.

6. FEEDBACK ON THE CURRENT SITUATION:

Return After Lockdown

here is currently no information about when the lockdown and social distancing measures will be lifted. However, there was concern at the local GDCP meeting that it would be many months before practices would return to see the number of patients that they had before the lockdown. This would make any UDA targets unachievable. A capitation screen has been proposed, as a temporary measure until dentistry returns to normal. However, there was concern that this could be bringing out a new contract without consultation. Sarah Jackson informed the committee that the BDA were currently looking at reports from Wuhan concerning dentistry getting back to work. Hopefully this information will help to formulate a plan to return dentists to work in their practices.

It was asked when GDPs could return to work by treating patients in the lower categories of need without creating aerosols. We still have no information regarding this.

nhs.net Accounts

Private practitioners have had difficulty obtaining nhs.net accounts, which are required to refer patients to the Urgent Care Hubs. Kevin Brown pointed to the fact that, without an NHS site number, it was impossible to get an NHS email account (this code is a V followed by five numbers). JMW said that he would take this up with NHS England. In the past, a member of Dorset LDC has attended the end-of-year reconciliation meetings with NHS England. With the difficulties that practices are going to have with their end-of-year calculations, JMW felt that it would be important to have a practitioner sit at these meetings to try to enlighten NHS England of the difficulties that the present situation has caused. Unfortunately, NHS England declined our offer of support and also declined to tell JMW who would sit on these meetings.

7. PASS Scheme- Sarah Jackson (SJ)

The PASS Scheme has only had one referral recently. SJ is part of mentoring group, which has been offering support to practitioners during this crisis.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT- Nick Copp (NC)

NC has completed the necessary forms for the levy to be transferred from Wessex to the South West. Unfortunately, confirmation of this transfer has not been confirmed and it is unlikely that we will collect the levy until July. SJ is looking into this. It was discussed and agreed that, as a gesture of goodwill, the LDC would not collect any levy from practitioners for the next three months.

9. AOB:

The committee felt that there was a culture of silence and secrecy within the NHS South West Dental Team, and that information was slow to be passed on to practitioners. These concerns have been passed on to the team.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

It was felt that, during the current crisis, the committee should sit every two weeks. It was suggested that observers should be allowed to attend. However, there was concern that the meetings would become unwieldy if there were too many practitioners attending. It was decided that an invitation should be put out and the response discussed with the committee before sending out formal invitations.

Next Meeting Date: TUESDAY 5th MAY at 7:30pm