

Health Scrutiny Committee

26 January 2022

Access to NHS Dentistry in Suffolk

Summary

1. This report considers access to NHS dentistry in Suffolk. The report sets out details of an in-depth scrutiny review of access to NHS dentistry conducted by East Suffolk Council's Scrutiny Committee undertaken in October 2021 and information gathered by Healthwatch Suffolk in respect of the patient experience of dentistry services across Suffolk.

Objective of Scrutiny

2. The objective of this item is for the Committee to receive the findings of East Suffolk Council Scrutiny Committee's review of access to NHS dental services and to consider the extent to which the findings are relevant to Suffolk as a whole and what action is being taken to address the issues raised.

Scrutiny Focus

3. The scope of this scrutiny has been developed to provide the Committee with information to come to a view on the following key questions:
 - a) What were the findings of the East Suffolk Council Scrutiny Committee's review of access to NHS dental services held on 21 October 2021?
 - b) To what extent are the findings of the review reflective of the position across Suffolk?
 - c) What action is being taken to address the issues raised in the review?
4. Having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:
 - a) Comment on the findings of the review and its relevance to patient experience in other areas of Suffolk;
 - b) Make recommendations to NHS commissioners;
 - c) Seek to influence partner organisations;
 - d) Request further information.

Contact details

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Background

5. On 21 October 2021 East Suffolk Council Scrutiny Committee reviewed the current situation with regards to the access to dental services across the district. The Committee received evidence from Norfolk Local Dental Committee, Suffolk Local Dental Committee, the Joint Chairman of the Local Dental Network for East of England, Local Dental Clinical Adviser for NHS England and Executive Member of the National Association of Dental Advisers, Healthwatch Norfolk, Healthwatch Suffolk, the Head of Commissioning for NHS England, Peter Aldous MP and the Cabinet Member for Community Health and Head of Communities for East Suffolk Council.
6. It was agreed that the findings of the review would be reported back to the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee, as the statutory health scrutiny body for the area, and that the Committee would consider the extent to which the findings were of relevance to the wider population of Suffolk.

Main body of evidence

The following information has been provided to support this review:

Evidence Set 1 has been provided by East Suffolk Council's Scrutiny Committee and sets out the detailed evidence presented to the Committee, and a summary of the key conclusions and resolutions made.

Evidence Set 2 has been provided by Healthwatch Suffolk, and provides a summary of comments and enquiries Healthwatch has received related to NHS dental services between the period January 2021 and December 2021. The feedback in the summary has generally been obtained through delivery of Healthwatch Suffolk's Information and Signposting service, rather than through dedicated research regarding NHS dental services.

NHS representatives have been invited to attend the meeting to address questions from the Committee on the day.