Dentistry

1. What is the availability of places with NHS dentists within the Dover District, particularly with reference to children?

   Of the 12 NHS dental practices in the Dover District, 8 are currently accepting new NHS patients, including children. As a practices ability to accept new NHS patients can change dependent on demand, patients that do not have a regular dentist and wish to access care should ring the Kent Dental Helpline on 0300 123 4412 or use the NHS Choices website to identify practices accepting new patients.

2. How do you calculate the number of NHS Dentist places there should be in the Dover District? (e.g. is it one dentist per x number of persons)

   There is no national calculation of Dentist to population ratio. Primary care dentistry is commissioned as units of dental activity (UDAs), again there is no national calculation of UDAs per person but national analysis is that where patients access NHS dental care this equates to an average of 2.3 UDAs per patient in a year. Dental practices do not have catchment areas and some patients may choose a practice closer to their work, school, university or where they have historically gone, rather than choosing a practice close to their home. In addition some patients only access care when they perceive they have a need or can afford payment of NHS dental charges, others may choose to access private care.

3. How does current provision compare to the required number and if there is a shortfall what steps are being taken to address it?

   In Kent, 48.6% of the population have accessed care in the preceding 24 months (October 2015) compared to a national average of 55.8%. Data is not currently broken down by Ward or District Council area although a bespoke report has been requested from NHS Business Services Authority to establish this and will be forwarded when available.

   Using an average of 2.3 units of dental activity per patient per year, the number of UDAs commissioned in the Dover district would treat 41.1% of the current Dover district population; this does not mean that this activity is used by residents of Dover district as some may choose to access care in other areas, likewise residents who live outside Dover district may choose to access care in Dover. Other Local Authorities that are also below the Kent average are Dartford at 34%, Tonbridge and Malling at 33% and Sevenoaks at 27%. The dental budget in Kent is fully committed and existing contracts cannot be varied to reduce provision in areas with greater access to even out provision across the county. Given the range of local healthcare priorities it is unlikely that NHS England will be in a position to invest additional funds in local dental services in the immediate future, as this would mean decreasing levels of spend on other local health services. However, should existing dental provision reduce, a needs assessment will be carried out by colleagues in Public Health England to establish area(s) of greatest need to reinvest the dental funding.

4. Which hospitals in East Kent offer emergency dental treatment and how do members of the public find this information?

   Daytime emergency and urgent care is available from a number of dental practices, the Kent Dental Helpline (0300 123 4412) has details of which practices have urgent access sessions each day. DentaLine (01634 566650) provides out of hours emergency and urgent dental
care on an appointment only basis from a variety of settings. Posters are displayed in dental practices, GP surgeries and various other locations, 111 also has these contact details to pass to patients. Dental practices give the Dental Helpline number to patients that contact them and they are unable to offer a timely appointment; dental practices also give DentaLine’s contact details on their out of hours message. DentaLine locations are not advertised to discourage patients from attending without first phoning in order to be assessed to establish if DentaLine is the most appropriate service for their need and if this is the case an appointment that session is offered, alternatively advice and details of more appropriate service provision may be given.

5. What are the opening hours for emergency dental treatment?

The Kent Dental Helpline is open from 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday, although appointments within practices are available outside this time. DentaLine call centre is open from 6pm to 10.30pm Monday to Sunday evenings (including Bank Holidays) and from 8.30am to 1.30pm Saturday, Sundays and Bank Holidays in addition to the evening sessions, again appointments are available outside of this time.

6. How many people in the Dover District are not registered with a dentist?

Dental Registration ceased when the current dental contract was introduced in 2006. Practices will usually prioritise existing patients returning for their next examination and course of treatment (recall intervals now extend this up to 24 months for adults with good oral health) and only accept new NHS patients if they have the capacity to do so. The number of patients resident in Dover District that have accessed care in the preceding 24 months will be sent when this is available.

7. Whose responsibility is it to encourage people to register with a dentist and what at steps are being taken to encourage those unregistered with a dentist to register?

NHS England is responsible for commissioning dental services. Local Authorities are responsibility for commissioning health improvement programmes, these programmes may include encouraging attending a dentist regularly.

8. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that all children are registered with a dentist?

As above.

9. Whose responsibility is it to provide dental health advice to children?

Children (and adults) that attend a dentist will receive oral health advice as part of a course of treatment. Local Authorities are responsible for commissioning health improvement programmes, including the provision of oral health advice.

10. The Aylesham Garden Village development will see 1200 new houses being built at Aylesham. What is being done to ensure full dentist provision at the Aylesham Health Centre, where there are currently two under-used dentist chairs?

NHS England is aware of the concerns raised by residents from Aylesham Garden Village and has responded in more detail to communication raised on their behalf. The dental service currently provided from Aylsham Health Centre is undertaken by the Community Dental Service who are commissioned to provide care upon referral to patients with special needs and one course of treatment in the Dental Access Centre where patients cannot access NHS
care elsewhere. It is not possible to change the service currently commissioned from the Community Dental Service to routine dentistry as this would reduce the provision of special needs dentistry and the ability for patients to access one course of treatment from the Dental Access Centre.

There are other villages and towns within Kent (and the rest of the country) that do not have general dental provision and residents are therefore required to travel to other towns to access care. As identified in 3 above, should funding for dental activity be released, a needs assessment will be carried out to determine the area(s) of greatest need to reinvest this funding and this will take into account the large number of housing developments currently underway or planned throughout Kent.

11. The Royal College of Surgeons (Faculty of Dental Surgery) report 2014 stated that with fluoridation of water as many as 45% fewer children aged 1 to 4 years would be admitted to hospital with tooth decay. What is being done to encourage fluoridation to supply in the Dover District?

NHS England is not aware of any plans to fluoridate water in Kent, should Local Authorities consider this alongside other public health initiatives they should seek advice from Public Health England in carrying out their statutory duties on consultation in line with The Water Fluoridation (England) Regulations 2013.

**GP Provision**

1. The recent withdrawal by private firm Concordia Health Limited from the Dover Medical Practice resulted in c.3,500 patients having to find a new doctor at short notice. Were all of the patients re-registered with an alternative local GP practice?

   As expected with any dispersal not all patients re-registered. Approximately 85% had re-registered by the time the practice closed which is in line with expected numbers. Some patients will be ‘ghost’ patients. We would need to go to Capita support services if detailed numbers were required.

2. How much notice was provided to patients of the withdrawal of Concordia Health Limited from the Dover Medical Practice?

   Patients were written to following Concordia handing in their notice to terminate the contract on 18 June 2014. Patients were written to on 27 October 2014 to notify them that they needed to register with a new GP by 28 November 2014 as the list was being dispersed.

3. How do you calculate the number of GP Surgery places there should be in the Dover District (e.g. is it one GP per x number of persons) and how does current provision compare to the required number?

   There is no fixed calculation of GP to population ratio as practices have other clinical staff.

4. It was reported in the Health Service Journal that nearly 600 GP Practices had closed in England and Wales during the last five years. If there is a difference between the required number of GP Surgery places in the Dover District and the actual number of GP Practice places, what steps are being taken to address any shortfall?
As above.

5. Are GP practices required to take on patients from other practices when they close?

If a practice is open to new patients this would cover any patient who needs to find a new GP if a list is being dispersed. We work with practices to ensure there is capacity in the area and signpost patients through letters, a Registration helpline and patient events.

6. Were the GPs operating from Dover Medical Practice when Concordia Health Limited closed reassigned to other practices?

We do not reassign GPs as they work for the practice and not for NHS England.

7. What measures/safeguards have been taken to minimise the risk of this happening again in the future?

It is difficult to predict where closures will occur next. We maintain a risk register if we have practices of concern and we have processes in place to ensure patients are consulted, options are considered and patients informed of the outcome.

8. What cuts, if any, have been made to your budgets for East Kent in the last 12 months or are due to be implemented in the next 12 months?

None planned. GMS contracts are nationally negotiated.

9. Is there a maximum number of patient places per GP?

There is no maximum; patient needs vary with some needing more care than others. This can lead to variation in patient list sizes.

10. Is there a target for maximum waiting time to see a GP and if so, how is this factored into your calculations for the number of GP’s in the Dover District?

No maximum time. Practices need to meet the ‘reasonable needs of patients’ as stipulated in their contract.

Building the NHS of the Five Year Forward View – NHS England Business Plan 2015/16?

1. What is NHS England doing to improve the diagnosis, quality of care and access to cancer treatment?

2. What is being done to identify and tackle rising levels of obesity?

In addition to the attached copy of the Five Year Forward View, the following link provides an overview of NHS England’s position with cancer care.

https://nhsengland.sharepoint.com/Knowledge/News/Pages/Cancertaskforcereport200715.aspx