

ACCESSING DENTAL SERVICES IN STAFFORDSHIRE

In line with national guidance issued in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, dental practices in Staffordshire are currently closed for routine “face to face” dental appointments.

People seeking help with dental problems should **not** visit local dental practices in person but instead contact their usual practice by **phone**, between the hours of 9am -5pm, Monday to Friday, for information for advice on alternative arrangements in place. Outside normal hours or if a patient does not have a dentist, they should contact NHS 111.

All local practices are offering telephone or video-link consultations and can prescribe pain killers and antibiotics if needed. The practices will triage patients and be able to directly refer those in need of urgent face to face treatment to an Urgent Dental Care site where they can be seen.

People seeking help should **not** visit A&E departments or GP surgeries for dental care.

There are currently five operational urgent dental centres (UDCs) across Staffordshire for patients who are showing no Covid-19 symptoms. More local sites will be opened in the future according to demand.

For safety, a separate site is operational in Staffordshire that is designated for patients who are possible or confirmed COVID-19 patients, including patients with symptoms, or those living in their household.

There are also a further three specialist sites operational across Staffordshire that will treat shielded patients. The Community Dental Service are continuing to provide urgent care to many of the shielded patients already using their service.

No patient walk in services are permitted as we must reduce the risk to the dental profession.

It is very important for their own safety that patients are clear about whether they have a temperature, are symptomatic, self-isolating or in a vulnerable or shielded group.

We will continue to monitor activity going to these UDCs and should further centres be required due to patient need, this will be addressed by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

If you have any local intelligence of this process not being followed please contact the dental team via ENGLAND.dentalcontractswm@nhs.net whom can investigate and resolve any issues.