

Your ref: MG29364

31 August 2023

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP for Surrey Heath
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Gove

Re: Access to NHS Dental services in Camberley

Thank you for your e-mail of 24 August 2023 to me about access to NHS dental services in Camberley. This is in relation to concerns expressed by your constituent about trying to find an NHS practice in the area following their dental practice going private 4 years ago and the impact this is having on their oral health.

The NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board has delegated responsibility for Dentistry, alongside Pharmacy and Optometry. Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) have an explicit purpose to improve health outcomes for their whole population and the delegation will allow the ICB to integrate services to enable decisions to be taken as close as possible to their residents. The ICB is working now to ensure their residents can experience joined up care, an increased focus on prevention and better access to care and advice.

Patients are not registered with a dentist in the same way as they are with a GP. A dental practice is only responsible for a patient's care while in treatment, although many will maintain a list of regular patients so may only have the capacity to take on new patients when patients do not return for scheduled check-ups or advise they are moving away from the area.

Dental practices deliver services via cash limited contracts with the NHS in which they are required to deliver agreed levels of activity each year.

Since the onset of the pandemic dental services have faced major challenges. Enhanced infection control procedures, necessitated by the types of procedures carried out in dental surgeries, led to reduced dental capacity. Their capacity has been very gradually increased as infection rates have dropped, under strict guidance aimed at keeping patients and staff safe.

It is only since July 2022 that practices have returned to full capacity. Although the gradual increase has improved access to dental care there remains backlog of care from earlier in the pandemic that will take some considerable time to address. The rate of recovery is being impacted by the greater oral health needs of patients due to gaps in their attendance with treatment plans taking longer to complete and some practices deciding to cease NHS provision.

In late 2022 changes were made to the NHS dental contract with the aim of improving patient access. This was the first phase of changes with phase 2 planned for later this year.

On checking <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist> the practices near Camberley reporting that they are accepting new patients are:

- Camberley Dental Clinic, 31 The Avenue, Camberley, GU15 3LN.
- Tel: 01276 – 63854
- Berkshire Dental Clinic, 37 Yeovil Road, Owlsmoor, Sandhurst, GU47 0TF. Tel: 01344 – 777399
- Miss A Shawkat, 20 Bell Lane, Blackwater, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 0NW. Tel: 01252 – 861027
- Nightingale Cottage Dental Practice, 7 York Way, Sandhurst, Berkshire, GU47 9DE. Tel: 01252 – 874984
- Bridgeview Dental Surgery, 2 Guildford Road, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5JH. Tel: 01276 – 472254
- Ascot Dental Practice, 13 London Road, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 7EN. Tel: 01344 - 873448

Access has proved particularly difficult for patients who have not attended a local dental practice in recent years. To address this the ICB has commissioned additional sessions from practices for patients who do not have a regular dentist and have an urgent need to receive dental treatment. There are 7 practices in Frimley, detailed below, that currently have the staffing levels to safely undertake additional sessions for urgent care, specifically for patients that would be new to the practice.

- Nightingale Cottage Dental Practice, Sandhurst, Berkshire, 01753 - 536001
- Moonlight Dental Surgery, Slough, Berkshire, 01753 526301
- SC Dental Studio, Slough, Berkshire, 01753 550888
- Smile Dental Care, Slough, Berkshire, 01753 – 523410
- Smile Dental Care, Cippenham, Berkshire, 01753 – 577017
- Abbey Dental Care, Slough, Berkshire, 01753 – 536601
- Westwood Smile Care, Langley, Slough, 01753 - 522901

Should any patient need urgent dental care, or they have been able to access temporary urgent care and still require further treatment to stabilise their oral health, they can contact one of the above practices to obtain treatment.

We hope that one of these practices will be able to assist your constituent in accessing NHS dental care.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Edwards
Chief Executive Officer
NHS Frimley ICB