



# Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee

**15 April 2024**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Cabinet Response to the Scrutiny Spotlight Review of Dentistry</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Integrated Health & Care
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Marlene Quinn
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Report of</b>	Mark Palethorpe Executive Director - Peoples Services & NHS Place Director <a href="mailto:markpalethorpe@sthelens.gov.uk">markpalethorpe@sthelens.gov.uk</a>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mark Palethorpe Executive Director- Peoples Services & NHS Place Director <a href="mailto:markpalethorpe@sthelens.gov.uk">markpalethorpe@sthelens.gov.uk</a>

<b>Borough Priorities</b>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	X
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

## **1. Summary**

1.1 The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee held a spotlight review Dentistry on 23 October 2023. The purpose of the spotlight review was to enable elected members, relevant services and key partners to:

- To gain insight into the difficulties residents are currently facing in accessing dental services,
- Improve access for residents,
- To understand the road map to improve services and reassure residents,
- To understand future plans for dentistry in the Borough, the Cheshire and Merseyside Region and the Country, and
- Seek to identify where St Helens Council can add value and provide recommendations to support the work being carried.

1.2 The report of the spotlight review and its recommendations for action were formally agreed by ASCH Scrutiny Committee on 15 January 2024 and was submitted to Cabinet on 13 March 2024 for responses as per the Council's constitution.

## **2. Recommendation for Decision**

**2.1 Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

- i) Note the Action Plan approved by Cabinet attached at Appendix 1b that sets out the recommendations from the Dentistry Spotlight Review.

## **3. Purpose of this report**

3.1 This report provides the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee with the Cabinet response to the report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee spotlight review of Dentistry.

## **4. Background / Reason for the recommendations**

4.1 At the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop held on 9 June 2023, Members agreed to establish a Task Group on 'Dentistry'.

4.2 The topic is highly relevant to the Borough because:

- Residents may struggle to pay for or avoid seeking dental treatment because they cannot afford the costs,
- Residents may only visit the dentist when they need treatment, despite clinical guidelines recommending regular dental check-ups to keep people's mouths healthy,
- Demographic groups who have been affected the most by the lack of NHS dental appointments and NHS dental fees include people on low incomes and those from ethnic minority groups – the same groups who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Increased number of residents experiencing issues accessing the Dentist, and

- The potential impact of wider issues on an individual's health, loss of income in relation to a person's ability to work as well as further economic pressures on the Health Care Sector as a result of poor oral health is a concern.

4.3 Members therefore agreed that a spotlight review was a priority to gain a better understanding of the wider issue, and how the Committee can support reducing the impact of the current situation through collective action.

4.4 Since the 15 January 2024 Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee meeting where the Spotlight Review Report was approved, the Government has announced a series of dentistry reform measures. Given that the Government announcement on reforms to dentistry meet the desired outcome of the Spotlight Review Report in relation to the need for reforms to dentistry, the Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee has suggested that the actions recommended in Recommendation 1 of Appendix 1 of the Spotlight Review Report, are no longer required.

## **5. Consideration of Alternatives**

5.1 N/A

## **6. Conclusions**

6.1 The Report in Appendix 1 and 1b set out the findings, recommendations and proposed actions resulting from the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review of Dentistry.

6.2 The response of Cabinet to the recommendations will be presented to the next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 Members have agreed to a recommendation which will include – 'Public Health to pursue funding opportunities for ongoing promotion of oral hygiene'.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment**

9.1 No Equality Impact Assessment is required for the purposes of this report.

## **10. Social Value**

10.1 The social value of improving density access and oral health is that health and economic inequalities are reduced through improved oral health which is also linked to wider health implications and well-being for the people in St Helens.

10.2 With a higher proportion of the local population needing access to NHS dentistry, it is the most deprived sections of the borough that cannot afford private treatment and are disproportionately affected, resulting in wider health inequalities.

## **11. Net Zero and Environment**

11.1 There are no net zero and environment implications in this report.

## **12. Health and Wellbeing**

12.1 The implications on Health Wellbeing as a result of poor oral health are significant. This report set out how improving dental access and oral health programmes will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents.

## **13. Customer and Resident**

13.1 Action to improve dental access and oral health should have a positive impact on our residents. Due to the link between oral health and general health it is also expected that there will be a significant positive impact on the mental health and general health of residents.

## **14. Asset and Property**

14.1 There are no Asset and Property implications in this report.

## **15. Staffing and People Management**

15.1 The agreed actions in this report will be carried out by existing staff from the Council and provider and partner organisations.

## **16. Risks**

16.1 The Risk implications of not improving dental access and the oral health of residents are increasing health inequalities and further demand on health and social care services leading to budget pressures.

## **17. Policy Framework Implications**

17.1 The Dentistry Services Scrutiny Spotlight Report considers Priority Two in the Borough Strategy – ‘Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities’.

## **18. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

18.1 There are no impact and opportunities on Localities implications in this report.

## **19. Background Documents**

19.1 Public Health England - Local authorities improving Oral Health: Commissioning better oral health for children and young people.

19.2 Public Health England – Commissioning better oral health for vulnerable older people.

19.3 Healthwatch St Helens – Accessing NHS Dental Treatment in St Helens Report

## **20. Appendices**

20.1 Appendix 1 – Adult Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review Report

## 20.2 Appendix 1b – Dentistry Spotlight Review Recommendations Table