

Changes to Primary Dental Care services:

1. Regular dentist appointments

All routine, non-urgent dental care including orthodontics should be stopped and deferred until advised otherwise.

2. Urgent care

All practices should establish a remote urgent care service; independently, or in collaboration with others. This should provide telephone triage for their patients with urgent needs during usual working hours.

Where possible, these services should provide:

- Advice.
- Analgesia.
- Antimicrobial means where appropriate.

3. Urgent care – more serious cases

If people's conditions cannot be managed through the remote urgent care service, they will be referred to their Local Urgent Dental Care system.

Conditions that might be referred include, amongst others:

- Life threatening emergencies, such as breathing/swallowing difficulties due to facial swelling.
- Fractured teeth.
- Swelling round the mouth and jaw that is significant and worsening.
- Post-extraction bleeding that the patient is unable to control with local measures.
- Dental conditions that have resulted in acute and severe systemic illness.
- Severe dental and facial pain: i.e. pain that cannot be controlled by the patient.

4. Designated providers

Some practices and community dental services may need to become designated providers of urgent dental care as part of these Local Urgent Dental Care systems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While not in place yet, these will be set up to meet the distinct needs of the following groups within the population with urgent dental care needs:

- Patients who are possible or confirmed COVID-19 patients – including patients with symptoms, or those living in their household.
- Patients who are shielded – those who are at most significant risk from COVID-19.
- Patients who are vulnerable / at increased risk from COVID-19.
- Patients who do not fit one of the above categories.

5. Community outreach

All community outreach activities such as oral health improvement programmes (e.g. Starting Well, routine non-urgent work in care homes) and dental surveys should be stopped until advised otherwise.