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Wednesday 17 May 2023

Via email

To: Healthwatch colleagues and all who attended the NHS West Yorkshire oral health and dental engagement discussion on Tuesday 16 May 2023

Cc:

- Cathy Elliott, Chair of NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- Rob Webster CBE, CEO for NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- Kathryn Giles, Associate Director for Primary and Community Care, NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.

Dear colleagues

NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board – dental and oral health engagement session

I am writing as a follow up to the letter sent to you by Cathy Elliott, Chair of the NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board on Tuesday 16 May.

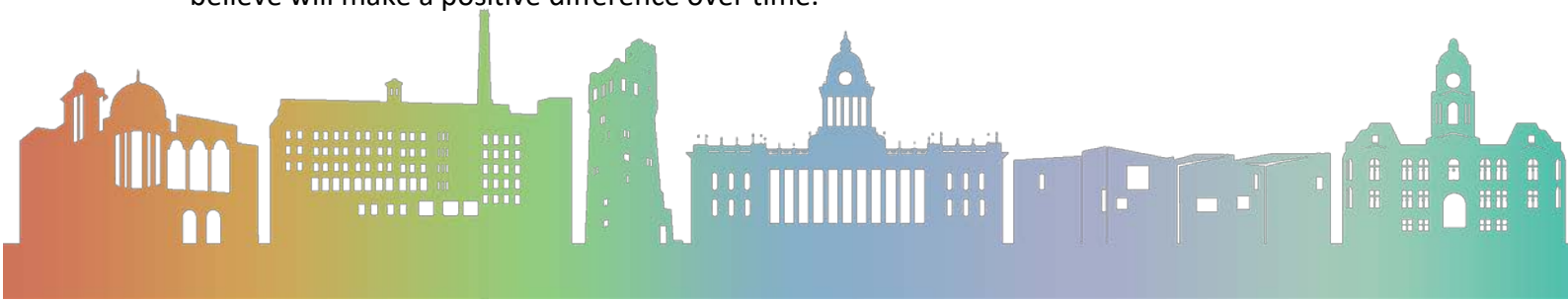
Thank you for your attendance at the NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) engagement session in Halifax.

I want to write and update you on the Board meeting that followed where the delegated commissioning for dental care services from NHS England to our ICB was discussed.

The [dental and oral health report](#) and the film of the Board meeting in public on 16 May, are on our [website](#), in case of interest and for reference.

The Board absolutely recognised the issues that were raised in the engagement session. We understand that access to NHS Dental Services can be difficult, and this is down to several systemic and long-standing issues, which we are working hard to address.

We are committed to making improvements on dental and oral health services for people and communities. At the meeting we approved a series of recommendations which we believe will make a positive difference over time.



These include:

- Making sure we have the right focus on preventing poor oral health, by sharing and scaling up prevention schemes across West Yorkshire where inequalities exist
- Exploring the possibility of water fluoridation with local partners, such as [West Yorkshire Combined Authority](#) and the Department of Health and Social Care
- Maximising the budget and resources we have to best support peoples need – including expanding local flexible schemes so that dentists can operate more freely
- Taking a more proactive approach to the use of any dental budget underspend so that we can use the funding for patient care
- Developing a workforce plan that helps to address the recruitment and retention of people working in dentistry
- Strengthening the commissioning capacity within our ICB, so there is more support available to address the challenges people and communities face.

We are confident that these measures will make a positive difference to people's lives.

We also recognise we have a role in influencing national policy on dentistry, particularly around the limitations of the national contract. Flexible commissioning of dental services was highlighted throughout the Board meeting, and we are committed to doing all we can to move forward positively.

Thank you again for attending the NHS West Yorkshire Board meeting. We are very grateful for the time you spent with us.

Yours sincerely



Ian Holmes
Director for Strategy and Partnerships
NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

