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Tuesday, 05 September 2023

***Via email***

**To:**

- West Yorkshire System Leadership Executive Group, including Place-leads and local Place Committee Chairs, Council CEOs, for sharing with Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs and Council Leaders please
- NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- West Yorkshire Partnership Board
- Local Dental Network Chair
- Local Dental Committee Chairs
- West Yorkshire Community Provider Collaborative
- West Yorkshire Clinical and Care Professional Forum
- Primary Care Leads
- Healthwatch CEOs
- West Yorkshire Programme Leads.

**Cc:**

- NHS local communication and involvement leads.

Dear colleague

**Dental services in West Yorkshire**

On 1 April 2023, the [NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board](http://www.wypartnership.co.uk) (ICB) took over responsibility from NHS England for the commissioning of NHS dentistry services across West Yorkshire.

The ICB recognises that dentistry services, like other parts of primary care, are under significant pressure and facing a number of challenges. We also acknowledge that access to NHS dental services is a key concern for members of the public, elected officials, and local authorities alike.



We are writing to provide clarity on our current plans, both to keep you informed and also to enable you to respond to any queries, and to set out our intention to work together so we can address these challenges.

On 16 May 2023, the [ICB Board approved a range of recommendations](#) that seek to improve dentistry across West Yorkshire, for both patients and the profession. Our core ambition is threefold:

- Improve access to dental services through commissioning (through ensuring full investment of the dental budget and flexible commissioning)
- Develop a long-term dental workforce plan
- Work with local authorities on oral health improvement and prevention.

We have developed this ambition in collaboration with clinical leads and experts across the system. The way in which we plan and deliver the ambition will be co-produced, for example using forums such as the West Yorkshire Oral Health Action Group to support opportunities for collaborative working with public health colleagues. We are also committed to working nationally in our collective interests, for example, through influencing policy decisions, discussion on water fluoridation and the development of the dental contract. The challenges in access and the quality of oral health that both the profession and public tell us about are significant, often longstanding, and may not have immediate long-term solutions. We know that this is frustrating and has a profound impact on people's lives.

We are eager to maximise the impact we can make immediately as well as over the medium and long term. We have already developed, with experts in the profession, a proposal to invest an additional £4.5m this financial year. This investment will continue access to urgent dental care for all people in West Yorkshire, enhance or introduce access initiatives aimed at specific population groups, and invest in prevention work. We are simultaneously working on an innovative and ambitious approach to flexible commissioning, developing policies and approaches with the profession that aim to prevent a deterioration in access, and in the process of establishing a public reference group for dentistry, as well as looking at where we can improve communications.

In addition to this letter, which sets out at a high-level our intention and some progress to date, we have recently published our [Frequently Asked Questions](#). If there is additional information that is not covered there, please email [Westyorkshire.ICS@nhs.net](mailto:Westyorkshire.ICS@nhs.net) where your query will be appropriately directed. We know that there is much to do in the face of the significant challenges we have for dental services. In developing solutions, we are keen to collaborate and welcome all suggestions, questions or reflections. We look forward to working with you and sharing further positive updates soon.

Yours sincerely

*J W Holmes*



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

