

Briefing: Future of Community Special Care Dental Service provided at Parkway Health Centre

Briefing for: Croydon Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Briefing from: King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

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Subject Relocation of Community Special Care Dentistry service from Parkway Health Centre to other primary care sites in Croydon

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Review of clinic utilisation and conclusions
3. Future plans for delivering the services

1. Introduction

In 2016/17 NHS England carried out a competitive tendering exercise for the provision of Community Dental services across London. The service specification was new and differed in many ways from the historical patterns of service.

A number of the new contracts for were awarded to King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (King's) and these included the contract for Croydon, Merton and Sutton.

The Community Dental service in Croydon, Merton and Sutton is delivered from a network of Health Centres across the boroughs. The health centres are not owned by King's; the dental clinic space in them is rented from NHS Property Services. This arrangement applies to the dental clinic space in the Parkway Health Centre.

Since the award of the contract King's has sought to further improve the quality of the service for local patients. One element of this has been a review of the estate with the aim of:

- Ensuring that all clinic space is well utilised and that resource is spent on service delivery rather than on under-used buildings.
- Ensuring that clinic space supports contemporary best practice for models of care, particularly by consolidating services into larger clinics with multiple dental surgeries so that groups of clinicians can work together.

More recently the Trust's financial position has become extremely challenging to the extent that King's has been placed in financial special measures by the NHS regulator. This has prompted detailed scrutiny of all services to ensure that they are financially sustainable over the longer term.

The Trust has since set about an ambitious savings plan and all services including the Community Dental service are required to contribute to savings targets.

2. Review of community dental service clinics and conclusions

As part of King's ongoing Cost Improvement Programme a detailed review of patient activity throughout the Community Dental service has been carried out. This has included services at the Parkway Health Centre where levels of patient activity were set against site rental and running costs to assess the long term affordability of the clinics there.

The review found that the utilisation of the clinics at the Parkway Health Centre was very low compared to other King's run sites. Only 50% of available appointment slots were being used and only 125 patients were being seen each year.

On this basis the continued operation of the site is not deemed cost effective and the service could be relocated to other health centres with no reduction in the number of patients seen but with a significant saving in terms of rental costs.

As well as being poorly utilised the clinic space at the Parkway Health Centre is dated in terms of design and layout. Due to space constraints it is not possible to provide dental treatment, under sedation, for patients who are phobic or who have high levels of anxiety. Changing this and redesigning the clinic is simply not possible within the space available. The existing building is due for demolition in the next two to three years and health agencies in the borough are planning a new Health and Leisure Centre to be based in New Addington.

As a result of the review the Trust has taken the decision to close the dental clinic at the Parkway Health Centre and to move the patient activity to other nearby clinics that are also operated by King's - the Thornton Heath Health Centre, the Edridge Road Health Centre and the Jubilee Health Centre in Sutton. All of these Health Centres are within a reasonable travel time by public transport or by car from Parkway Health Centre. Where clinically appropriate King's can arrange for transport to and from one of these alternative clinics for non-ambulant patients who require specially adapted vehicles and / or a support crew.

King's will continue to work with other health agencies on the planning of the new Health and Leisure Centre in New Addington and – subject to cost- may opt to develop a new dental clinic on this site.

By spending less on renting under used sites King's can continue to treat the same number of patients as now and can also continue to provide other dental services for patients in the borough. For example:

- Our dental staff will continue to carry out approx. 110 domiciliary visits each month to patients in Croydon who are housebound or otherwise unable to visit one of our clinics.
- Our Oral Health Promotion teams will continue to visit target schools in Croydon – two of which are very close to the Parkway Health Centre – as well as visiting Children's Centres, Best Start groups and children's play groups.

In summary, the closure of the dental clinic at the Parkway Health Centre can be achieved with minimum impact on patients and the resulting rental savings will help to ensure that the service as a whole is sustainable and we can continue to provide community dental care to those who need it.

3. Future plans for delivering the services

The process for our withdrawal is as follows:

- Notice served to NHS Property Services of intention to vacate the site.
- All patients who had been seen in the dental clinic at the Parkway Health Centre over the preceding two years (250 patients) have been notified of the change by letter and offered support in transferring to another King's run site.
- The clinic space will be returned to NHS Property Services to be made available to other tenants on the site.
- The proposed service transfer date is 1st November 2018.

King's remains committed to the provision of high quality dental care to the people of Croydon and we look forward to continuing to delivering services from our remaining sites in the borough.