

NHS England and NHS Improvement Midlands Primary Care Do's and Don'ts for all NHS Dental Practices.

Dental Practices Must (Do's):

- Continue to stay open to provide telephone triage - advice, analgesics and prescribing of antimicrobials where appropriate, unless they have been forced to close (due for example to staffing issues due to self-isolation).
- Ensure the practice has sufficient staff to be able to handle the volume of telephone calls. A receptionist and/or nurse should triage incoming calls and a dentist must be available to contact patients back to deal with urgent dental needs via the telephone and prescribe when appropriate.
- Report any forced practice closures to the NHS dental team on the form previously provided, agree and communicate alternate arrangements for patients as per your business continuity plan (LDC will provide assistance with buddying arrangements where there are any issues). The Local Office require this information to inform 111 so that patients are not mis-directed.
- Signpost COVID - symptomatic and self-isolating patients to NHS 111 so they can be assessed and dealt with at a designated hot site. A more direct route for referral will be communicated shortly.
- Be clear with COVID - symptomatic and self-isolating patients that there are designated treatment sites for them (hot sites) – we need people to be honest about their status so as to be able to segregate the different groups and protect 'COVID-asymptomatic' people and professionals from unnecessary contact with those who are displaying symptoms of COVID and/or are household contacts of those who are symptomatic.
- Continue to pay staff working on the NHS contract* (including associates) at previous levels. This is a condition of continuing to receive contract payments. These staff must then either be working or available to redeploy unless they are in isolation.
- Ensure there is an appropriate Out of Hours answerphone message including the COVID information and signposting patients to NHS 111. Please also display clear signage at the practice, that the practice is not accepting walk in's and the patient must call advice / onward referral.
- Ensure there is an appropriate In Hours answerphone message including the COVID information and clarifying that the practice is open for telephone calls and that patients should try and ring back. *The OOH message about the practice being closed **must not** kick in during normal opening.*



Dental Practices Must Not (Dont's):

- Continue to do any routine care.
- Undertake any face to face consultations with patients (video conferencing is allowed) unless designated as a hot/cold site.
- Signpost COVID-asymptomatic patients to NHS 111 during normal opening hours. Symptomatic or self-isolating patients can and should be told to contact NHS 111 as described above.
- Signpost patients to contact hot/cold sites until these have been confirmed as operational. Routes to forward on referrals will be provided but this should be via the GDP. On no account should a practice give out phone numbers or locations for cold or hot sites.
- Seek to access scarce FFP3 equipment or training. This will be arranged separately for the designated hot/cold sites.

*For mixed private and NHS practices the Chief Dental Officer (CDO) has clarified that practices will be allowed to furlough staff associated with the private part of their business through the government scheme. Practices should note that the split used for business rates is the guide. Decisions will need to be made about which staff are assigned to the NHS or private part of the business.

