

Gunnery House
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London
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020 8301 8340 or info@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk

Healthwatch was established in 2013 in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Within this legislation Healthwatch has a right to a reply within 20 working days to Reports and Recommendations submitted by Local Healthwatch to a service provider/commissioner.

Report & Recommendation Response Form

Report sent to: NHS SOUTH EAST LONDON CCG

LMC (Blackheath standard PMS and Valentine Health

Partnership)

Federation: Greenwich Health

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

LDC

Royal Borough of Greenwich

Circle MSK

Date sent:	<u>28/3/22</u>
Title of Report:	Feedback Report 2021-22 Summary
Response	If there is no response, please provide an explanation
	for this within the statutory 20 days (by 26th April 2022)
	Please note: This form and its contents will be
	published by Healthwatch Greenwich.

Date of	19/04/22
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Date response received		
Within 20 days		



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Gener al respon se ¹	The LDC is grateful to Healthwatch Greenwich for raising important issues around the provision of dental services in the borough, its regular feedback from patients and the public, and its engagement with the LDC. The key points raised about dental services are underpinned by historic issues with dental commissioning and the dental contract which has been in operation since 2006. In order to address the issues raised by Healthwatch Greenwich in a long term and sustainable way, complete reform of the contractual arrangements for NHS dental services is required.
	Response to the key issues raised:
	• inability to access routine dental care for more than a year/two years: The LDC sympathises with patients who have had this experience and would like to extend our support to these patients for their attitude to maintaining their oral health through regular appointments. Regular appointments are an important part of oral health and prevention and are absolutely to be encouraged. The last two years have, however, caused enormous disruption across the entire health service. With dental practices closed at the start of the pandemic and, once reopened, operating at a significantly reduced capacity because of new infection and prevention control guidelines, as well as staff sickness the number of appointments was significantly reduced. As will be appreciated, practices had to prioritise finishing courses of treatments that had been started before the pandemic started and then, because of the reduced number of appointments, prioritising those patients who required pain relief or significant treatment over routine appointments. We recognise that this has caused considerable frustration and some distress to patients, but lack of access is an issue predating the pandemic. For instance, access for adults in June 2016 stood at 53 per cent of the adult population in Greenwich. While above the England average this clearly leaves a significant proportion of the population of Greenwich without access to an NHS dentist even during non-pandemic times. By December 2021 access had dropped to 36.9 per cent of adults in Greenwich. The drop in numbers of patients seen is correlated to an increase in the number of urgent treatments and more complex treatments provided. As we move out of the pandemic it will take time for the backlog of unmet dental need to be addressed so we anticipate an ongoing issue with access to routine NHS dental care. We hope to work with local commissioners and other local stakeholders including Healthwatch Greenwich in the new NHS structure of the Integrated Care System to improve and increase the amou

¹ Please expand boxes as needed for your response.

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- resorting to DIY methods to take care of dental issues:
 The LDC is very concerned to hear reports of DIY dentistry. This is not to be encouraged at all as significant harm can result. If care is urgently required the pathway has been, and continues to be, to call NHS 111 and speak to the dedicated dental triage team if the patient does not have a regular dentist.
 - having to re-join practices, as names are sometimes removed if they've not had an appointment for a year/two years or more:

The current NHS dental contract introduced in 2006 removed registration from dental practices. The recent Healthwatch England report on dental services identified this and the continued reference to "registration" as an issue that needs to be addressed so that patients are clear about the relationship they have with a dental practice. As noted above, regular attendance is an important part of oral health and to be encouraged.

We also note under "adult social care" the point that: "care home residents having long waits to access dental and optician services". This is a long standing concern of the LDC. Domiciliary care is provided by the Community Dental Services, which are considerably overstretched. We hope to work with local stakeholders to improve referral pathways for those in residential care settings so that they have access to dental care in a timely fashion. We consider that all those in a residential care setting, or noted as requiring domiciliary GP services by their GP, should automatically be referred to the Community Dental Services for care. We hope to be able to work with the new Integrated Care System to facilitate improved ways of working and connectivity.

The LDC would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with Healthwatch Greenwich in the future to improve services for local people.

Respo	
nse to	deaf service users not being able to access services as BSL interpretare were not provided.
recom	interpreters were not provided This is concerning and we will communicate to practices the correct procedure
menda	for arranging interpreter services. As such we will act on recommendation 27.
tion	The LDC would be happy to present at any event Healthwatch Greenwich arranges or is involved in for service users to explain how NHS dental services
no: 27	work and what to expect.
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Signed	Martin Skipper
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Name:	Martin Skipper
Positio	Head of Policy LDC Confederation on behalf of Bromley, Bexley
n:	and Greenwich Local Dental Committee

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