

23rd March 2020 5p.m.

Dear colleagues

Message from East of England NHS, Public Health and Local Dental networks

1. Current situation:

We are aware that dental staff will be reading messages and information from various sources, on dental care in the current pandemic.

Advice from the Office of Chief Dental Officer, 20th March

(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/Issue-2-Preparedness-letter-for-primary-dental-care-20-March-2020.pdf>) states:

1. Reduce the number of routine check-ups by cancelling patients from vulnerable groups (and offering cancellation to anyone else who wishes to do so) to reduce the need to travel.
2. Consider the potential risk of asymptomatic cases attending in this delay phase and reduce exposure of staff and patients to infection by avoiding all aerosol generating procedures wherever possible.
3. Agree local arrangements to consolidate, where necessary, the provision of any essential, routine NHS work that cannot be delayed and urgent dental problems.

With these principles in mind, you should

- a) stop all aerosol generating procedures unless there are no other viable options and, in such circumstances, implement best practice principles in infection prevention.
- b) Give careful thought as to whether routine dental care can be deferred in light of the risks of onward transmission from dental settings.

Our priority is to ensure regional implementation of national policy, as this evolves, to halt and limit the spread of COVID-19, and to prepare for rapid change, keeping both the public and you as our valuable dental profession, safe.

In addition, we would highlight guidance as to PPE

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>) and IPC guidance

(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/guidance-supply-use-of-ppe/>)

2. Next steps for the East of England:

We are preparing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for our contracted dental services in preparation for a time when potentially all dental care ceases other than to treat those in urgent need.

Anticipating the establishment of centres to receive patients after appropriate triage, we will be looking for dental professionals to be involved in providing this care. We hope you will think about this, and you, or your practice be prepared to offer services when asked.

3. Our thanks to all our dental teams in the East of England

We value the spirit of togetherness we have seen thus far, and thank you for your valued and continued support to work with us in the weeks and months to come.

We are all in this together!

Yours

NHS England, Public Health England, Local Dental Networks.