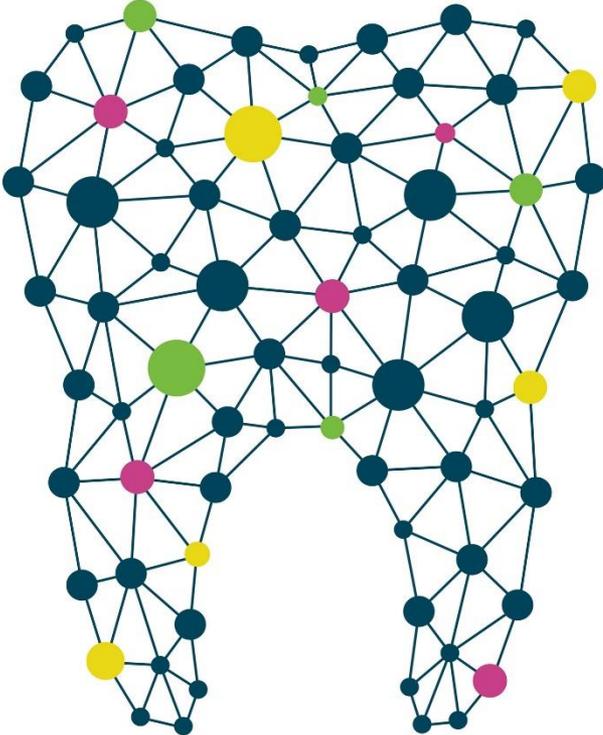


# Dentists : The Tooth be Told



Making your voice count

May 2017

# Dentists in Tunbridge Wells

The story so far

You - the people of Kent - consistently tell us that you are confused about dental charges and how to access treatment

In 2016, 44 people shared their experiences - good and bad - and their views by contributing to the report:

*'The Tooth be Told'*

You told us about difficulties accessing treatment, confusion around charges and challenges accessing emergency treatment.

Healthwatch Kent has been working to *make your voice count*

## The challenge



The evidence you provided needed to reach the ears of decision makers.

# Reaching decision makers

## Dental Network

We now regularly attend the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Local Dental Network and a range of meetings where commissioning decisions are discussed:

- Orthodontics Managed Clinical Network (Kent and Medway)
- Special Care/Paediatrics Managed Clinical Network (Kent Surrey Sussex )
- Oral Health Promotion Managed Clinical Network (Kent and Medway)
- Unscheduled Dental Care Managed Clinical Network

We share the feedback we have had from patients across the county at those meetings to ensure:

- Patient experience is incorporated in the needs assessment and strategy for planning future services
- How dental services work with older people, care homes and people with disabilities
- Supporting clear and concise information to the public
- That treatment charges and methods for getting financial help are clearly displayed in dental practices

## **NHS England**

We shared our report with NHS England and developed a new patient leaflet in conjunction with the NHS England team to help patients understand dental charges and how to access an NHS dentist both in an emergency and normal appointment. We have recently updated that leaflet to reflect the latest information.

## **Dentists**

Our report, its findings, our recommendations and our new patient leaflets were shared with every NHS general dental practice in Kent.

## **GP Practices**

Our report, its findings, our recommendations and our new patient leaflets were shared with every GP practice in Kent. We asked all GPs to display our free patient leaflet in their surgeries.

## Politicians

Healthwatch Kent presented our report to the Chief Dental Officer for England and discussed how our findings could influence national service change and delivery.

We worked with our national umbrella body, Healthwatch England to raise our concerns directly with politicians and UK policy makers. Our findings are part of a national report on dental services.

## What happened?

**The decision makers responded and some commitments have been made BUT this is a complex area and many outcomes are not quick to achieve. We need to be realistic that some changes will take time.**

## **Information & support to patients**

Over 1,017 of our leaflets have been distributed to people informing them how to access a dentist and giving up to date information about dental charges.

Feedback about the leaflets has been fantastic.

Seldom heard communities such as Gypsy & Travellers have particularly found it useful.

The number of calls to our Helpline with dental enquiries has increased by 33% this year.

# Dentists: What next?

## What else needs to be done

**Your views:** Establish the extent to which you feel that your voice has been listened to and acted upon

**Commitments:** Ensure commitments are followed through and that these address the issues you have raised with us

**Review:** Conduct a review of your views and experiences of Dental appointments to assess whether initiatives are working

### *Making your voice count*

Sign up for our newsletter to receive regular updates

Make your voice heard ; share your experience

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