
To: Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board

Date: 22 January 2026

Subject: Dental Services - Overview, Performance and Strategic Plan

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 This note provides an update to the Coventry Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the current state, performance, and strategic direction of dental services in Coventry and Warwickshire. It outlines the types and distribution of dental services, highlights strong contract performance and recovery to pre-pandemic activity levels, and details recent initiatives such as increased urgent care appointments, incentive schemes for urgent dental care, targeted investments to address inequalities, and workforce support measures.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- a) Note the findings of the reports in Appendix 1 and 2
 - b) Identify any further recommendations

3 Information and Background

- 3.1 Outline information is provided in the appended reports (Appendix 1 and 2) and the Board will receive a presentation from Officers at the meeting which will contain more detail and context on these topics.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 is a Briefing note summarising dental health services in Coventry and Warwickshire by the Coventry & Warwickshire Integrated Care Board.
- 3.3 Appendix 2 summarises the main findings of the Adult Oral Health Survey 2023 based from data across England which was published in December 2025.

4 Adult Oral Health Survey 2023

- 4.1 A Summary of this report based on findings from across England can be found in Appendix 2, and the full report can be found on the following link: [Adult oral health survey 2023 - GOV.UK](#).

- 4.2 Dental Health Surveys have been carried out in the UK since 1968. Every 2 years an Adult Oral Health Survey is carried out in England. The latest survey was carried out in 2023 and was published in December 2025.
- 4.3 This survey is carried out in addition to the Child Dental Health Survey and ad hoc surveys such as oral health in care homes.
- 4.4 The survey uses a representative sample of adults in England aged 16 and over and uses a questionnaire and oral examination in the participant's own home to evaluate their oral health.
- 4.5 The examination includes condition of teeth, condition of root surfaces, erosion of teeth, signs of decay, enamel defects, signs of gum disease and type and condition of any dentures.
- 4.6 Over one fifth (21%) of adults had a least one tooth with obvious decay.
- 4.7 A total of 93% of dentate adults had one of more signs of gum disease.
- 4.8 Seven per cent of dentate adults were experience current dental problems, including pain. This was more likely in people that last visited the dentist more than 5 years ago. Nearly a fifth of adults had one or more potentially urgent conditions.
- 4.9 Fifty-one per cent of the respondents reported that the usual reason for dentist attendance was for a check-up and almost two thirds of adults (65%) reported going to the dentist at least once in a 2-year period.
- 4.10 One third (35%) of adults reported going to the dentist less frequently or only when they had problems with teeth or dentures. This has increased in recent years.
- 4.11 The most common reasons for infrequent attendance were:
- being unable to find a dentist (40%)
 - unable to afford the charges (31%)
 - not perceiving a need to do so (27%)

5 Health Inequalities Impact

- 5.1 Dental access in Coventry is uneven, with areas like Central and East facing the greatest deprivation and highest rates of dental disease. Targeted investments and programs are being directed to these priority areas to improve access and reduce oral health inequalities.
- 5.2 The planned reforms to the NHS dental contract are expected to further reduce barriers to care, improve workforce retention, and ultimately help decrease oral health inequalities. Despite strong overall performance, the C&W ICB acknowledges that further work is needed to address and reduce inequalities in access to dental services.
- 5.3 From the Adult Oral Health Survey, the number of people with 21 or more natural teeth was lower among those who were older, had lower household incomes and lived in more deprived areas.
- 5.4 The proportion of adults in England reporting no natural teeth was 2.5% and this was more likely in older people, people with lower household income and those living in a more deprived area.

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