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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg
University Health Board

Dental Services Strategy & Planning Group: March 2013

In Hour Access Arrangements for Urgent Dental Treatment

Background & Introduction

Currently the three localities have varying methods of contracting additional access sessions as well as rates of remuneration (table below). The Health Board currently commissions 52 hours of access sessions per week with varying levels of uptake at a cost of approximately £178k per annum.

Locality	Number of Hours per week	Cost per session (hour)
Swansea	26	£50
Neath Port Talbot	16	£100*
Bridgend	10	£75

Anecdotally there are concerns that some practices are using their access sessions to pre-book existing patients of the practice who need urgent dental care into their appointment system.

Profile of sessions

Sessions are currently commissioned on a daily basis across Swansea and Bridgend and demonstrate the following availability.

Day	Number of sessions available
Monday	9
Tuesday	7
Wednesday	7
Thursday	6
Friday	7

Currently patients are only advised of the access sessions available within the locality of their residence whilst the move to a centralised ABMU managed model would give patients the flexibility to attend access sessions in other localities. There is clearly some merit in considering the need to increase the number of access sessions available on Mondays and Fridays in the review of dental Out of Hours services.

Standardised Rate of Remuneration

There is a clear disparity in the rates of remuneration being offered across ABMU at present for the delivery of this service. It is therefore proposed that the Neath Port Talbot rate should be removed for the purpose of recalculating the average due to their differing contracting arrangements and that a revised rate of £62.50 be offered to all practices currently providing the service in Swansea and Bridgend.

Neath Port Talbot

The Neath Port Talbot Locality historically built the urgent dental access sessions into their contracted activity when the new contracting arrangements were introduced in 2006. Welsh Government has indicated that this is not an acceptable means of commissioning access sessions and therefore with a revised service being introduced it would be timely to reconsider these contractual arrangements. A letter has been drafted to be sent to the six existing service providers (*Appendix 1*) offering them the opportunity to either give back their current access sessions with the agreement that these will be re-commissioned back on the new arrangements but will be at the revised ABMU reimbursement levels or to maintain their access UDAs within the practice on the proviso that the Health Board will then consider them to be accepting new patients into the practice and will signpost patients to them accordingly.

New Service Model

Advice from Dental Policy colleagues at Welsh Government has indicated that the current agreement with NHS Direct Wales for triage of patients looking for dental access should be extant under the new arrangements. Therefore it is anticipated that the new service model will function as follows:

1. Patient has an urgent dental need and contacts NHSDW
2. NHSDW triage the patient and if appropriate for urgent access sessions (criteria to be confirmed) patient will be given a unique identifier number
3. Patient calls ABMU dental access line and gives the NHSDW identifier number and is advised of the times and locations access slots are available for the same and/or next day
4. The dental access line books the patient to the required slot and takes all necessary contact information
5. The dental access line contacts the dental practices to advise them of the patients who have been booked to the sessions
6. The dental practice providing the access sessions will be asked to make a return to the Health Board to feedback on attendance/non-attendance rates

The Health Board will review the uptake of the access sessions on a month by month basis for the first six months to ensure that sessions are being maximised and on days when demand is at its highest.

Recommendation

DSSPG are asked to support the implementation of the revised access arrangements from 1 April 2013.