

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – NEW URGENT DENTAL CARE SERVICES FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS**

People in need of the most urgent dental care can now access one of the 30 new urgent dental centres which are open in the East Midlands.

Since social distancing measures for Covid-19 and restrictions on daily activity were introduced, all non-urgent “face to face” dental activity at dental practices in the East Midlands has stopped.

**People seeking help with dental problems should not visit a local NHS dental practice in person but instead phone, between the hours of 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, for advice on alternative arrangements in place. Or contact NHS 111 evenings after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays. The few patients in need of urgent treatment will be referred on to an urgent treatment centre and given instructions on how to access this.**

Following these telephone or video consultations, urgent cases will be referred to one of the new Urgent Dental Care (UDC) systems which have been established to meet the needs of people who are possible or confirmed Covid-19 patients, those who are shielded, those who are vulnerable or those who do not fit into these categories.

The UDCs will operate by appointment only following telephone or video triage – there are no walk-in or drop-in appointments in order to ensure the safety of all patients and staff members.

In addition, people seeking help should **not** visit A&E departments or GP surgeries for dental care - they will not be seen and will be directed back to their own dental practice or to NHS 111.

Trish Thompson, director of Primary Care with NHS England and NHS Improvement in the Midlands said: “We now have a system in place to ensure that those people who have an urgent dental care need during the Covid-19 pandemic have access to treatment. It has been a collective team effort which we hope will help those with the most urgent dental problems.

“Every member of dental staff will wear full PPE to protect patients and also themselves. Each surgery will be ventilated and cleaned after each patient to prevent the transmission of the virus ensuring that the services we offer are safe. My thanks go to each and every member of dental staff for the role that they play in providing this care.

“These arrangements have been made at pace, and NHS England and NHS Improvement will monitor closely to ensure these meet the needs of the local population and will also take any learning from the Covid-19 incident to help inform the future design, access, resilience and sustainability of dental services.”