

Sarah Hurley

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Dear Ms Hurley,

The current Covid19 crisis has seen all routine dentistry work discontinued, apart from advice on self-treatment and in some cases the prescription of antibiotics and pain control. Patients suffering dental emergencies are directed to 111 and it is claimed that urgent care hubs have been provided, e.g. in several London boroughs, but the location of these hubs is not disclosed on the NHS.UK website. No information about the Dental Hubs is available on line to the public. The only information we have from NHSE is that:

“All urgent dental care must be accessed through NHS 111 if the patient’s usual GDP cannot resolve the problem with advice, analgesia or antimicrobials”.

We understand that NHS England, as the commissioner of national dental services, is still in the process of creating local Urgent Dental Care hubs (UDCs) across the country, but until yesterday we could not find any description of the services they provide or will provide in the future and the information provided is not aimed at patients, many of whom are desperate to know how to access dentistry when they are suffering a dental crisis.

On 8th April, NHS England stated that 50 UDCs are currently open, a further seven are expected to open this week and the remaining 103 will be able to treat patients from next week.

The BDA says only a tiny number of these sites had so far been established and describes their own professional membership as being: “simply frightened and angry” and called for “urgent leadership and clarification”.

Imagine how patients feel when suffering a dental emergency if their dentists are frightened and angry.

Furthermore, as CDO you state that the creation of local UDCs systems should meet the needs of *all* in need of urgent care [as defined] and that each system should provide *provision at a number* *of different sites* to allow for appropriate separation and treatment.

Urgent care needs in dentistry are in danger of becoming clinical emergencies due to lack of established UDCs and lack of signposting for patients. The NHS COVID19 website simply directs patients to 111. Dentistry is a risk of being destroyed for the future if steps are not taken urgently to support local dentists and plan for the growth of dentistry during and after the pandemic.

We note the publication on April 15th of COVID-19 Guidance and the Standard Operating Procedure for Urgent Dental Care systems, in the context of coronavirus on April 15th. However, NHSE/I needs to communicate with patients directly as well as staff. The April 15th Guidance says:

**• Clear information about UDC access and local arrangements should be made available to patients and the public.**

**• Clear information about UDC access and local arrangements should be made available to directory of services (DOS) teams and NHS 111 systems.**

But where is this information and how will it be widely distributed so that patients suffering a dental crisis can quickly know how to get the care they urgently need?

Ruth Marsden, Vice Chair

HAPIA

**[Martin Woodrow, Chief Executive, BDA,](https://bda.org/about-the-bda/officers-and-contacts/Pages/BDA-London.aspx)**  [Chief Executive](https://bda.org/about-the-bda/officers-and-contacts/Pages/BDA-London.aspx)

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