Chairs report / correspondence NWLDC 11/03/2024

Last OHSG meeting was 15/02/2023

Last LDC/PC Forum meeting was 18/02/2024

Other meetings attended

Welsh Dental Committee 15/01/2024

Cluster meeting Conwy West

Primary Care Panel

GDS

* The LHB have indicated there have been 5 GDS hand backs in 2023 and 1 orthodontic DwSi contract. These predominantly affect the Central and West areas where provision is lower than in the East.
* There are on-going discussions with a number of practices to agree “substantial” recurrent reductions in 2024/25 due to prolonged and ongoing recruitment difficulties.
* The BUPA practice scheduled for closure are all under new ownership including the two orthodontic specialist practices in Wrexham and Colwyn Bay.
* The tendering process is complete with Pete Greensmith advising that £6.4 million has been recommissioned. This remains to be signed off by finance, so no details are yet available. PG advised 50:50 new practices : expansion of existing practices.
* The LHB advise that access is increasing. There is a 1.9% increase in patient numbers this year when compared with last year. Over 23000 were classified as NP. Whilst improving, 24-month adult and 12-month children data remains below pre pandemic levels.
* The LHB view on management of the contracts for 23/24 at year end is that guidance from WG will come and the LHB will then take a view on whether local mitigation is needed.
* When asked about centralised waiting lists WG have advised LHB’s that there needs to be a local solution. There is no funding available, and PG advised at our meeting that the LHB will not be doing anything about this until a logical solution to the issue is found. WG are firmly wedded to the idea of centralised waiting lists so the LHB will have to move on this.
* On-going discussion around the desire for a Dental School in North Wales. I was away so Mike and Mostafa attended and can update/fill in the detail.
* No progress on cluster and collaboratives. Karen Higgins (above Pete) was keen to meet with the LDC and try to put together a funding package for attendance but has been off since making the offer, so we have not yet met.

Restorative update

* Gareth Brock, the only Restorative Consultant for North Wales has resigned as we all hopefully know.
* To date there has been no success in replacing him.
* Gareth had highlighted, as had others, that patient need was overwhelming, resource was inadequate, and the personal toll was too heavy.
* The LHB advises that it has made attempts to provide a locum consultant throughout this period but with no success. Our understanding was discussions with Karun Dewan have failed the achieve anything.
* Practitioners remain without an effective restorative service as has been the case for as many years as I can remember.
* There is little needs data available as the acceptance criteria had been very restricted by Gareth so practitioners were not referring patients.
* The restorative MCN idea has been shelved for obvious reasons.
* There have long been discussions around the focus of restorative specialist care being moved from secondary care to primary care and the Interim Chief Exec in BCU is apparently of that view. However, there has been no progress.
* SCD dentists continue to cover the cancer patients.

Oral Surgery update

* The DES accreditation programme is in place and running.
* DES’ will be recognised with an accreditation tick on their performer list entry.
* I mentioned last time that Tier 2 contracts needed to be put in place to secure the services of these new DES. There are still none in place.
* In North Wales we have already lost one accredited practitioner who could not find a position in North Wales on completion so moved to Northwest England.
* Max fax are proposing an emergency Tier 2 service for failed extractions. This is to allow the return of referrals where it is felt the dentist should be attempting the extraction themselves. The aim is that if the extraction fails a Tier 2 dentist will provide an appointment on the same day or the following day to complete the treatment. This would be a valuable resource in North Wales. It will start in the East with an aim to roll it out across Central and West.

Other issues from various meetings

* There is a Therapy course starting in Bangor in September 2025. It’s a one-year course for already qualified hygienists and will have 12 places with bursary included.
* There is ambition for a Dental School in Bangor with the Head of Medical School being very keen. Aberystwyth are apparently no longer interested in having one.
* Paul Brocklehurst has left his role at Bangor University.
* Adrian Thorp is leaving North Wales so will stand down from his various roles as DPA, TPD Foundation training, his role with HEIW and from this committee. By now the TPD role will have been advertised.
* Discussions are progressing over placement of dental students from Liverpool in North Wales. Mostafa can hopefully update at the meeting.
* There is concern from the DPA’s in North Wales over the workload with no plan at this stage to recruit a further DPA. There had been talk by PG of increasing the DPA resource in the past.
* There are other concerns expressed around Primary Care Governance in dental and QAVP visits. Doug, Klevin or I can talk more about this at the meeting but briefly we have lost one of the three primary care governance staff, and she was the one with dental knowledge. The feeling is that there is now no meaningful governance.
* QAVP visits have yet to start in North Wales and we are a clear outlier compared to the rest of Wales. Importantly there seems to be no effort to make these happen.
* WDC has a new Chair in Adam Porter. So far, we have only had a preliminary meeting.
* JW attended the first Primary Care Panel meeting which last 10-15 minutes. It was of limited value but its early days and we agreed to attend the first few meetings to decide if they were worthwhile.
* Finally, negotiations are on-going with WG over the new contract. I will update as much as I am able to at the meeting.

Correspondence direct to Chair

1. Ivor Chestnut questionnaire we are all involved with on future delivery of GDS. Please do complete when it arrives in your in box.
2. Advert for DFT programme director and application forms. I was asked to circulate this with LDC members and their networks.
3. Dental Epidemiology Programme report previously shared by Mike to members.

Jeremy Williams

Chair North Wales LDC