

21 November 2014

Briefing for Joint Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Health Scrutiny Committee

NHS England in Nottinghamshire has been working with Public Health England to investigate alleged breaches of infection control procedures by a single dentist, who was contracted to provide NHS dental services at the former Daybrook Dental Practice, 88 Mansfield Road in Gedling, Nottinghamshire.

In June 2014 NHS England was contacted by a whistleblower who had concerns about the standards of clinical care being provided to patients. The whistleblower provided NHS England with supporting evidence, including covertly-filmed footage of dentist Mr Desmond D'Mello.

Having reviewed the evidence, NHS England immediately ordered an interim suspension of Mr D'Mello and commenced an investigation into clinical practices at the dental surgery. This investigation is ongoing and no findings have been made at this time in relation to Mr D'Mello. NHS England also reported Mr D'Mello to the General Dental Council, and he has been suspended by the GDC pending further investigation.

The investigation team consulted with clinical experts in Public Health England, who undertook a clinical analysis of the potential risk to patients. This identified that patients seen by Mr D'Mello may have been placed at a low risk of infection from blood borne viruses (hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV), due to apparent multiple failures in cross-infection control standards whilst undergoing dental treatment. Based on this clinical advice, Public Health England recommended screening for all patients who may have been treated by Mr D'Mello, and NHS England worked with partners to make the necessary arrangements for this.

Patient notification

It is understood the number of patients who had been seen and treated by Mr D'Mello during his tenure as a dentist is about 22,000, as he had worked at the practice for over 32 years.

Due to the large number of patients who may have been affected by this risk and the age of some of the patient records, it was not possible for NHS England to verify historic patient contact details and write to every individual patient within an acceptable time frame. Therefore a mass media exposure approach, coupled with

awareness raising by key health partners in Nottinghamshire, was used to make the public aware of the need to take action.

NHS England, with support from Public Health England, issued a media briefing on Wednesday 12 November 2014 advising members of the public who were patients of Mr D'Mello of the apparent lapses in infection control standards and the fact they may have been placed at a low risk of infection from blood borne viruses (hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV), whilst undergoing dental treatment.

A confidential advice line on 03330 142479 was set up to provide further help and support, which has been open 8am to 8pm, seven days a week, since 12 November. Patients were advised by the helpline and through the media to visit the dedicated Community Clinic - temporarily set up within Highcroft Medical Centre, High Street, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 7BQ - to seek advice about the next steps which may be required based on their own individual circumstances. This clinic has also been open 8am to 8pm, seven days a week, since 12 November.

Patients contacting the advice line, attending the Community Clinic or visiting White House Dental Practice (formerly Daybrook) have been given a patient information pack which explains what action they should consider taking and provides further information about the three blood borne viruses – please see attached.

Other means of notifying the public have included:

- The contents of the information pack, and a You Tube video of Dr Black's media statement, have been made available on the NHS England website since the time of the media briefing on 12 November. Social media has also been used to promote this patient notification exercise.
- An alert was sent to GPs and dentists in the area with guidance on how to advise patients who might contact them and a poster to display, which advises patients of the advice line number and the NHS England website address.
- The poster is on display at the former Daybrook Dental Practice and the community clinic where testing is taking place, along with the patient information. The poster was also sent to local libraries and other community outlets to display.
- NHS 111 and the NHS Customer Contact Centre were briefed, as was NHS Choices which has placed information on its website. Other NHS organisations, including CCGs and provider organisations, were also notified in order to direct patients to the correct place should they present with concerns.
- GPs and dentists were alerted nationally with details on how to advise patients who might contact them with concerns.
- A briefing was sent in advance of the announcement to a wide range of NHS and non-NHS stakeholder organisations. As well as HOSC, these included Health Watch, MPs, Health and Wellbeing Board, local authorities, local safeguarding boards, and the local medical and dental committees. Some of these organisations have put the information on their own websites.

Further promotion around the Nottinghamshire area is planned via leafleting and media promotion.

NHS England wrote separately to the 166 patients who were covertly filmed to explain what had happened, and offered assurances about the security of the footage obtained.

Advice line and community clinic attendance

Week 1	Calls to advice line	Blood samples taken*
Weds 12 Nov	1,333	341
Thurs 13 Nov	759	680
Fri 14 Nov	233	613
Sat 15 Nov	57	305
Sun 16 Nov	21	319
Mon 17 Nov	100	365
Tues 18 Nov	64	275
Totals for Week 1	2,567	2,898
Weds 19 Nov	36	205
Thur 20 Nov	36	139
Fri 21 Nov	15	136

* does not include those who attended, took an information pack and will return at a future date for testing.

Initial feedback gathered between Wednesday 12 November and Sunday 16 November from the patient experience survey at the Community Clinic, shows good satisfaction levels (a more detailed analysis has not yet been undertaken):

'Overall how would you rate your experience as a patient in this dental recall process'

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
359	149	41	8	3

Patient queries

Queries have received via the NHS England website, NHS Choices, the NHS England Customer Contact Centre, the NHS England Twitter account, and through media websites. These have all been responded to individually. Eight complaints have been received and are being addressed through the NHS England complaints process.

Evaluation Exercise

A lessons learned evaluation exercise is planned for January 2014 and will include staff involved in the patient notification exercise. Public Health England have identified a facilitator for this exercise.

MP Liaison

A meeting between local Nottinghamshire MPs, the Secretary of State and members of the area team took place on Monday 17 November 2014. It was agreed that MPs would be involved in the lessons learned evaluation exercise planned for January.

Dr Doug Black
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NHS England Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire