

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

**MINUTE EXTRACT OF THE DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH AND ADULT  
CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 IN RELATION TO ITEM 6 ON THE POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**123 Dental access for adults and children in Devon**

The Committee considered the Report of NHS Devon on Dental access for adults and children in Devon. The Report outlined that dental services in Devon were provided in three settings: Primary care (high street), Secondary care (hospitals) and Community services ('special care').

The relationship between NHS dental services and private dental services was discussed. It was highlighted in the Report and wider discussion with the Committee that funding for dental patients on the NHS is only made available for approximately half of the population of Devon, which was national policy. There were therefore challenges to consider around how to prioritise those most in need of such services.

Members also raised concern around dentists prioritising private services above NHS services, and what solutions there may be. Officers advised that dentists providing NHS services would be doing so at a loss, and so providing private services (running a 'mixed practice') was often a necessity to remaining open, especially in light of the Cost-of-Living crisis; and that much of the problem was a national one relating to Government contracts which provide insufficient reimbursement to justify that as the sole source of income for a dental surgery.

Other member discussion with officers included:

- Government targets to increase the number of dentists by 2030;
- concerns around procurement processes for the introduction of new dental services, in particular around North Devon, which had seen a degradation in its dental services following a contract change;
- mobile dental units; and
- the mechanisms of Units of Dental Activity (UDA) contracts including how dentists claimed, and what measures were in place to prevent them spending NHS money on private patients.
- the role of the Housing Commission and key workers.