Subject: Access to NHS dental care
Report Number: 6

Report to: Health and Public Services Committee
Date: 11 July 2007
Report of: Director of Secretariat

1. Recommendations

1.1 That the Committee notes this report and puts questions to the guests

2. Background

2.1 The Health and Public Services Committee agreed at its meeting on 6 February to conduct an investigation into access to NHS dental services.

2.2 The agreed terms of reference for this investigation are: to investigate access to NHS dental services in London, focussing on the following questions:

- Why has uptake of NHS dental care been lower in London than elsewhere?
- Are there any groups of Londoners facing particular barriers to accessing NHS dental care? How can these barriers be overcome?
- What impact has the 2006 NHS contract had on access to, and uptake of dental services?
- How effectively are PCTs fulfilling their role in ensuring services meet the needs of the local population, and reducing oral health inequalities?

2.3 The meeting on 11 July is a crucial part of the investigation into dental services. Other aspects of the investigation include a call for written views and information, a visit to an innovative dental service in Tower Hamlets, and a survey of 1,000 Londoners. The report following this investigation is due to be published in October 2007.

3. Issues for consideration

3.1 There are a number of key issues for discussion at this meeting including:

- How use of NHS services can be increased in areas where uptake is low
- What could be done to tackle issues with the new dental contract
- What PCTs are doing to develop services that better meet local needs
- The relationship between primary dental care and specialist dental care services
4. **Invited guests**

4.1 The following guests have agreed to attend this meeting to discuss the key issues with Committee Members:

- Nick Kendall, Acting Dental Public Health Advisor to NHS London and Consultant in Dental and Public Health, South West London PCTs
- Sara Osborne, Director of Policy and Knowledge, BDA
- Henrik Overgaard-Nielsen, NHS Dentist and Chair of the Federation of London Local Dental Committees
- Jenny Gallagher, Senior Lecturer and Hon. Consultant in Dental Public Health, Kings College London Dental Institute, and London Dental Health and Education Strategic Partnership
- Sophie Chapman, Social Policy, Campaigns and Development Officer, Citizens Advice
- Andrew Ridley, Director of Primary Care Commissioning, Tower Hamlets PCT

5. **Strategy Implications**

5.1 This report relates to the Committee’s programme of meetings and inquiries, some of which may be relevant to the Mayor’s strategies.

6. **Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

7. **Legal Implications**

7.1 Under s59 Greater London Authority Act 1999 the Assembly has the power to keep under review the exercise by the Mayor of his statutory functions. The powers of the Assembly include the power to investigate and prepare reports about:

- any actions and decisions of the Mayor;
- any actions and decisions of any member of staff of the Authority;
- matters relating to the principal purposes of the Authority;
- matters in relation to which statutory functions are exercisable by the Mayor, and
- any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Greater London.

7.2 Section 54 GLA Act enables the Assembly to arrange for any of its functions to be discharged on its behalf by a committee or sub committee of the Assembly or by a single member of the Assembly.

7.3 Under S.30 of the Act, the Mayor in undertaking his statutory role must have regard to the health of Londoners and to the promotion of improvements in the health of Londoners. In determining how or whether to use its power to further its principal purposes, the Authority must have regard to the effect use of the power would have on the health of greater Londoners and must do so in such a way it considers will promote improvements in the health of person in greater London.

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