

At the last AGM on 11 March 2020 we perhaps thought that we had an idea of what impact Covid would have on our lives but in reality I don't think we ever thought that for 10 weeks there would be almost no F2F dentistry and how we would still be working 14 months on. I don't expect that I am alone in admitting that I didn't know the difference between an FFP2 and a FFP3 mask, no idea of what being fit tested was, new terms AGP, AAA and fallow time now roll off the tongue and never did I think I would be so interested in ventilation.

On 1 March I was contacted by NHS England in my role As Chair of Wilts LDC to ask if I was prepared to be part of the dental steering group that was being set up to plan how to manage the delivery of urgent dental care in the South west. All 7 LDC Chairs in the SW became part of this group along with which was chaired by Tess Fielding and Jo Lawton and had colleagues from the Salaried service, secondary care, the MCNs, Public health and NHSE staff.

From the March to the end of April there were daily meetings via Teams and I sat on two subgroups PPE led by Alastair Morton and under the lead of Matt Jereatt working on the triage and referral to UDCs and then working on the SOPs for treating patients and then in the afternoon reporting back to the Main Steering Group.

The team work was amazing and some definite positives have come out of cover:

The 7 SW LDC Chairs have got to know each other and have shared ideas and instead of all working alone in our own areas have worked together.

The value of LDCs has been recognised by NHSE as we were able to communicate with colleagues who worked in NHS and private practices. Indeed this was really important as otherwise there was no way that private practices would otherwise have known how to refer patients to UDCs.

There has developed an open and more trusting relationship between NHSE Commissioners and LDC chairs and I would like to thank Jo Lawton for all the work that she did in setting up the UDCs. Likewise Alison Pink and her staff who were treating patients from the middle of April.

Triaging our own patients was fairly straight forward but it became clear that there were many unregistered patients in pain and the dental helpline/111 was overwhelmed. Jo Lawton approached me to see if Wiltshire dentists would be prepared to help - I put out the request to Wiltshire dentists and the response was amazing and we provided support to 111 throughout May and subsequently Christmas and New Year - there are a number of you here tonight who did a number of sessions and I thank you for volunteering and doing a really important job.

The key thing was to have a website which had the information that dentists needed and my thanks go to Pratik Patel for the work he did on keeping the website current.

Judith Denning and I worked hard to keep everyone updated writing regular updates and so a big thank you to you Judith for collecting contact emails and updating our data base, hoping write the updates and being the point of contact for Wiltshire dentists.

As a Committee we have met via Zoom and it has been really helpful to have everyone's input and we were regularly updated by Alison Pink and Jo Lawton, we have also invited representatives from Heathwatch to give reports as they are the patient voice and we do need to know what patients are saying

One decision we took in the first lockdown was to make a donation of £20000 to the BDA benevolent fund as it became apparent there were many dentists who were in financial difficulties - we had the funds and felt this was appropriate. This is a good opportunity to thank Nish Patel for his work as treasurer.

Moving forward there are big changes ahead for dentistry and the prospect of a new NHS contract, the dental reform strategy with Local dental Networks and managed Clinical networks being instrumental in the dentistry we deliver in primary care. Matt Jereatt is the new LDN Chair and LDC chairs will be part of this. There are already MCNs in orthodontics, restorative and oral surgery with additional ones in special care, urgent care and paediatrics planned - there is the opportunity for those working in primary care to get involved - thank you to Keith George who is our rep on the restorative MCN and also Matt Clover who is on the orthodontics MCN so we are already represented on them. I would encourage everyone to get involved and details of workshops are on the Wiltshire LDC website.