

**To: All GDS Dentists
CDS Clinical Directors**

GDS.Correspondence@hscni.net

BY EMAIL

23 November 2020

Dear Colleague,

Out of Hours Arrangements for Emergency Dental Care

We are writing to advise you of the out of hours (OOH) arrangements for emergency dental care over the Christmas/New Year holidays and plans for a review of future OOH emergency dental care arrangements.

As previously advised, the legacy Emergency Dental Care Centres have had to be stood down due to the pandemic and that remains the case for the foreseeable future. Since these centres were closed, the model for the delivery of urgent dental care, including OOH care, has been based on practices providing emergency care for both registered and unregistered patients coupled with appropriate referral of dental emergency cases to the Urgent Dental Care Centres (UDCCs) through the established arrangements. These arrangements are fully detailed in the HSCB letter of 21 August 2020 and will continue to operate until 31 March 2021; this letter is available at:

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Letter%20Re%20Urgent%20Dental%20Care%20arrangements.pdf>

We would ask the profession to continue to operate these arrangements until the end of March 2021.

Opening Dates of UDCC over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

The UDCCs will operate on the following dates:

- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- Sunday 27th December
- Monday 28th December
- New Year's Day
- Saturday 2nd January
- Sunday 3rd January

Please note that these clinics will operate a morning only clinic on these days. The Dalriada Urgent Care triage will operate from 9:30am until 12:30 pm each day, with the on- site triage dentist available from 10am until 1pm. The treating dentists in the UDCCs will be available from 11am until 2pm. **Please note that on these days there will be no afternoon session.**

On these dates the **referral criteria and access arrangements which are currently in place on weekends will apply.**

In addition Dalriada Urgent Care UDCC will operate as normal over the holiday period on Tuesday & Thursday evenings to accommodate those patients who are COVID positive or potentially COVID positive.

On all other days over the holiday period practices are required to continue to provide reasonable arrangements for urgent care for patients during the day.

Future of OOH Emergency Dental Care

We are very aware that, after nine months of the pandemic restrictions, the profession are feeling beleaguered and stressed and would like alternative OOH emergency dental arrangements to be in place. To that end we have commissioned a rapid review of OOH emergency dental care; this review is now ready to commence. The review will be led by Hall Graham and it is hoped to complete this important work in early 2021. Once this project is completed we will share the proposed arrangements with all GDPs and the BDA with a view to implementation during 2021.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all GDPs and Community Dental Service teams for their continued hard work in providing urgent dental care services during this pandemic and a special thank you to those who have agreed to work in the UDCC's over the holiday season.

Yours sincerely



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Acting Chief Dental Officer



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