

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB_93_23

You asked:

In your reply (CTMUHB_33_23), which was in relation to the situation involving patients at the Broadlands Dental Practice in Bridgend, you stated that the health board has set up a clinic at Gilfach Goch to provide urgent care while patients wait to be allocated to a dental practice in Bridgend.

I would be most grateful if you could please answer the following questions:

1. When was the clinic at Gilfach Goch set up?

Gilfach Clinic was already operating as part time community dental clinic and has been open for many years. From October 2022, the Health Board started running additional clinics to support delivery of general dental services in Bridgend, focussing on provision of urgent care to patients.

2. Does it serve the whole CTM area? If not, which area does it cover?

In the main patients from the Bridgend area are treated in Gilfach Clinic. If there are empty slots that cannot be filled by Bridgend patients, any patient in CTM UHB will be signposted there for treatment so the appointments do not go unused and ensures the clinic use is maximised.

3. You state in your response that Gilfach Goch is within Bridgend but it is outside of the BCBC boundaries and lies within RCT. Has the board done any research into how patients, without their own transport, from Porthcawl and Bridgend, who were patients of the Broadlands clinic, will be able to travel by bus to Gilfach Goch? It is my understanding that with the present bus network it could be either very difficult or even impossible.

Gilfach Goch now forms part of a network of 10 practices in the Bridgend area that provide an urgent care service to patients. Patients are asked if they have access to transport to travel to Gilfach, those that have are offered treatment in Gilfach. Patients who cannot travel to Gilfach are offered appointments in the other practices within the Bridgend area providing the service on the day the patient calls.

4. Did the health board liaise with local bus companies to check what services exist between Bridgend and Gilfach Goch? I would be grateful if you could supply me with details of these services so that I can pass this information onto constituents who need to travel to the clinic for urgent dental care.

For example, someone living in Porthcawl would have to catch a bus into Bridgend and then catch a bus either to Tonyrefail or Porth assuming they run via Blackmill and Glynogwr. Whether such buses then travel up the Ogwr Fach valley to Gilfach Goch and then return to travel onto Tonyrefail and the Rhondda is unknown. Or people may have to catch an Ogmores Valley bus heading for Nantymoel and then alight at Blackmill to try and catch a connecting bus.

Such a journey could entail catching three separate buses to get to Gilfach Goch. If people are unable to travel there, are any alternative arrangements in place for people to access urgent care nearer their homes in the Bridgend area?

Please see response to question 3, there are other practices providing urgent access in Bridgend, Gilfach is not the only clinic providing this service. Patients who cannot travel to Gilfach can access urgent care from a different Bridgend practice providing urgent access.

5. In your most recent FOI response, you state that there are 35 contract reform dental practices but presumably, that is within the whole of CTM as a previous FOI response stated that there were 12 of these in Bridgend. You state that you send 1,100 patients per quarter to these practices but again that would be presumably for the whole of CTM. As Bridgend has a third of the contract practices it is reasonable to assume that a third of these patients, approx. 360 patients, are being re-allocated each quarter. Is this correct? This would mean that you can re-allocate approx. 1400 former Broadlands patients a year to other practices. As there are 3345 patients on the waiting list to be re-assigned, it would take about two and a half years to re-allocate them all at the current rate.

Every quarter, on average 319 of Bridgend patients are allocated to practices in Bridgend

Additional Funding, to 4 x Bridgend Practices, has provided 590 patients from the waiting list in Bridgend with a new practice, between October 2022 – March 2023.

To note, Broadland patients have been allocated to practices in a number of ways [not just through the waiting list]:

- Some will have been taken on in other practices via accessing urgent care from the practice (as per the 2022/23 dental contract measures)
- Some Broadlands patients have chosen to remain at the practice to be treated on a private basis
- Some Broadlands patients have already been allocated to practices that took additional funding when Broadlands closed [point 5]
- The remaining Broadland patients are on the Health Board waiting list to be allocated.

When the new practice opens in Bridgend in October- December 2023, Broadland's patients will also be allocated to this new practice.

6. Can I check that the waiting list figures given in the response relate only to former Broadlands patients or does that figure include other people who are trying to access an NHS dentist? If that figure is only for Broadlands patients, can you give me the total figure waiting for a dentist within the BCBC area. Can you also confirm if other patients apart from Broadlands patients are being given some of the 1,100 places a quarter available. If that is the case, the time to allocate all Broadlands patients to a new practice could be much longer than the two and a half years which it would take otherwise.

There are currently 3972 Bridgend patients waiting on the Health Board waiting list, with 2556 being Broadland's patients.

The Health Board endeavours to find all Bridgend patients looking for an NHS dentist with a practice to attend, therefore patients from Broadlands and other Bridgend patients are sent to practices every quarter which ensures a fair system to all.

Again, with the opening of a new practice in Bridgend later in the year, the practice will be provided with a list of Bridgend patients from our waiting list, which will also include Broadland's patients.

7. You say that a new dental practice is due to open in central Bridgend later this year. Presumably, the remaining Broadlands patients would be allocated en bloc to that practice. Is that correct? Is this practice being set up as part of the Wellness health village being provided at Sunnyside Road?

The new practice will be given a proportion of Bridgend names from the HB waiting list and those that have come from Broadlands to ensure fair access to all Bridgend patients.

This does not form part of the Wellness Health Village.

8. As further delays are likely in the allocation of the remaining Broadlands practice to new surgeries, are any steps being taken to provide these patients with access to routine day to day care including check-ups or is there only provision of urgent care at Gilfach?

Patients on the waiting list will continually be allocated to practices when they have capacity to see new patients and this will enable them to access both urgent and ongoing care.

We have also increased the provision in Gilfach to include ongoing care in addition to urgent care and the service now runs 5 days a week.

It should also be noted that not all patients want access to ongoing care and it is currently being reported by practices that there has been a high DNA rate in practices accepting new patients under the new contract system (we do not have figures on this yet). Therefore, whilst the provision of ongoing dental care is important, there is cohort of patients that choose to only access urgent dental care when they need it and therefore the Health Board also needs to ensure there is access to manage the urgent care demand as well.

Patients need to be aware that 6 monthly check ups should not be expected routinely from a practice. Checks up's/recall will be based on NICE guidance and the dentist/dental team will set this based on an individual's clinical need.