

Residents bare teeth over dentist closure

8:40am Friday 30th January 2009

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Copied from: http://www.thisislocallondon.co.uk/news/4087027.Residents_bare_teeth_over_dentist_closure/

RESIDENTS living in Enfield Island Village who discovered their dentist is to be closed and not immediately replaced say they have been left in the dark.

The Dental Access Centre in Enfield Island Village, which has appointments in Barnet, Haringey and Enfield, has been open since 2001 and gives only NHS treatment.

The PCT says it was established for urgent treatment by people who were unable to register with an NHS dentist and will be replaced at some unknown point in 2009 with another centre.

This means residents could be left for months without care.

Tony Thake, chairman of Enfield Island Village Residents' Association, said many people used the centre for routine care.

"Pretty much everyone in the village uses it," he said. "There was no consultation, just like with Chase Farm. We knew nothing at all about this. Their staff there don't know what is happening beyond February. "My problem with it is the uncertainty and even if the PCT keep it going they are not going to have as many patients because people will go and get treatment elsewhere."

A PCT spokesman said: "The service people will get there will be better because at the moment it is just an urgent treatment centre but in the future there will be more appointments and general dentistry.

"All dentists are now contracted to provide slots for patients requiring urgent treatment. As a result the number of patients being seen in the Dental Access Centres has fallen considerably and as a result the PCT, in line other PCTs, has taken the decision to disinvest in them, with the agreement of the service, and the PCT will re-invest the funds into a new centre.

"The PCT has already received some expressions of interest from dentists willing to provide this service."

She added: "We haven't written to all the residents yet because we are not providing any less of a service but we will be happy to go out to the residents' association meeting."