

**L & SC Integrated Care Board
Primary Care Contracts Sub-committee**

Date of meeting	14 August 2025
Title of paper	Dental Recruitment Incentive Scheme
Presented by	Paul Juson, Head of Delivery Assurance
Author	David Armstrong - Senior Delivery Assurance Manager
Agenda Item	8
Confidential	Yes

Purpose of the paper

The purpose of the report is to request approval for the ICB to continue to offer support to the remaining 11 approved practices under the national Dental Recruitment and Retention Scheme (DRIS) until 31 March 2026.

Executive Summary

The DRIS was introduced as part of the NHS England (NHSE) Dental Contract Reform Programme in February 2024 alongside other measures. The DRIS reform measure was introduced for the 2024/25 financial year. The programme provides a financial incentive as part of the recruitment package for new dentists within primary care and contains certain clauses regarding activity requirements and longevity of employment.

In Lancashire and South Cumbria the scheme was offered to 14 practices, all of which have been actively recruiting using the incentive scheme. The scheme was successful in 2024/25 and managed to attract three new dentists.

Due to the delays in implementing the scheme, NHSE requested that ICBs extend the scheme to 31 March 2026 to allow providers within the scheme to continue to offer the incentive in their recruitment adverts.

NHSE is closely monitoring the scheme on a monthly basis, through their regional teams.

The Primary Dental Services Group has reviewed the request from NHSE, and having confirmed that funding is available within the ring fenced dental allocations, supported the recommendation that the ICB continues to offer the incentive until 31 March 2026 for the 11 practices who have yet to successfully recruit.

The ICB's expectation of success is reducing as time passes, and it is not therefore expected to result in 11 more dentists being recruited.

The continued support may however result in further recruitment and demonstrates the ICBs commitment of support primary care providers.

Recommendations

The Sub-committee is requested to:-

1. Note the contents of the report
2. Approve the continued support for the DRIS to 31 March 2026

Governance and reporting* (list other forums that have discussed this paper and any other engagement that has taken place)

Meeting	Date	Outcomes
Primary Care Dental Services Group	27.03.2025	Recommendations supported.
Primary Care Dental Services Group	26.06.25	Confirmation of budgets provided and recommendations supported.

Conflicts of interest identified

None

Implications

<i>If yes, please provide a brief risk description and reference number</i>	YES	NO	N/A	Comments
Quality impact assessment completed			X	
Equality impact assessment completed			X	
Privacy impact assessment completed			X	
Financial impact assessment completed	X			See Section 4
Associated risks	X			See Section 5
Are associated risks detailed on the ICS Risk Register?	X			Recruitment and retention is a control measure on the Oral Health Access Risk 007

Report authorised by

Jane Cass, Director of Partnerships & Collaboration

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National Dental Recruitment Incentive Scheme (DRIS) Update

1. Introduction

- 1.1 NHSE introduced the DRIS as part of the National Dental Contract Reform programme.
- 1.2 The scheme was established as a short term measure in 2024/25, however, NHSE has requested the scheme be extended to 31 March 2026 to allow for those providers within the scheme to continue to offer the incentive to prospective new employees.

2. Update – ICB DRIS Program

- 2.1 In 2024/25 the ICB's programme approved 14 posts to be offered under DRIS, of the 14 posts available under the program within the ICB, to date there have been three appointments.
- 2.2 The location of appointments is Darwen, Blackpool and Tarleton in Preston.
- 2.3 The ICB's expectation of success is reducing as time passes, and it is not therefore expected to result in 11 more dentists being recruited.
- 2.4 The continued support may however result in further recruitment and demonstrates the ICB commitment of support primary care providers.
- 2.5 The scheme has been positively received within the primary care dental system, with feedback from the Local Dental Committee emphasising their support for the scheme based on the feedback from their members.

3. Update – National DRIS Program

- 3.1 On 28 February 2025, the ICB received notification from the NHSE North West Team, that *"Given the scheme had a delayed start it is unlikely that all practices approved to participate in the scheme will have completed their recruitment by end of March. As such, and as this remains to be an area of national priority, regions/ICBs yet to deliver on their allocation of posts are encouraged to continue to make use of this scheme into 2025/26, where it is deemed affordable to do so within ICB budgets, to keep momentum and to not halt the progress which has already been made."*
- 3.2 The primary dental services statement of financial entitlements (SFE) directions has been updated to include the DRIS.
- 3.3 NHSE has encouraged ICBs to continue to offer the schemes and is closely monitoring the scheme on a monthly basis, through their regional teams.

4. Resources

- 4.1 The 2025/26 Dental ringfenced budgets have been assessed in detail to ensure the proposal to extend the DRIS is affordable and has no impact upon the Dental Commissioning Plan investments.
- 4.2 The table below confirms the maximum financial implications: -

Table 1

Number of DRIS Employees	2025/26 Cost	2026/27 Cost	2027/28 Cost	Total
11	£110,000	£55,000	£55,000	£220,000

*The ICB can account for the costs in full in year 1 of the agreement

5. Risks

- 5.1 Failure to continue to support the DRIS until 31 March 2026 puts the ICB at risk of being under further scrutiny by NHSE.
- 5.2 Financial risk can be fully mitigated utilising the existing ring fenced allocations.
- 5.3 Loss of opportunity to recruit new dentists to Lancashire and South Cumbria system.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Within the ICB, there are currently 11 approved posts that have not yet been filled.
- 6.2 The resources required to fund the extension have been identified and the outstanding posts can be funded from resources within the existing dental budget.
- 6.3 The extension has been requested by NHSE and is being closely monitored on a monthly basis.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Sub Committee is requested to:
- Note the contents of the report
 - Approve the continued support for the DRIS to 31 March 2026

David Armstrong
Senior Delivery Assurance Manager

02 July 2025

Commented [JC1]: I would think that a key risk of not supporting the DRIS extension would be reducing the opportunity to recruit additional dentist to the LSC system?