

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

Date of meeting	11 September 2025
Title of paper	5 Year Dental Commissioning Plan - Update
Presented by	Amy Lepiorz, Associate Director Primary Care
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Agenda item	5
Confidential	No

Purpose of the paper		
This paper has been written to update the Sub-committee on progress on the 5 year dental commissioning plan. The plan was supported by the Primary Care Commissioning Committee in February 2025 and aims to improve dental access and oral health for targeted groups.		
Executive summary		
<p>The programme is a collection of dental access and oral health initiatives which aim to help improve access and the oral health of priority groups across Lancashire and South Cumbria.</p> <p>While most of the schemes have now commenced, mobilising them has not been without its challenges, most of which have been outside of the control of the ICB's Primary and Community Care (PaCC) team and Local Dental Network.</p> <p>The paper provides a summary of progress for each of the projects that make up the programme as well as detailing some of the achievements and the challenges that have led to some of the delays in mobilisation.</p>		
Recommendations		
<p>The Primary Care Contracting Sub-committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report; • Receive a further report at its meeting in March 2026 		
Governance and reporting		
Meeting	Date	Outcomes
None		
Conflicts of interest identified		
None		
Implications		

(If yes, please provide a brief risk description and reference number)	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Quality impact assessment completed			X	
Equality impact assessment completed			X	
Data privacy impact assessment completed			X	
Financial impact assessment completed			X	
Associated risks			X	
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?			X	

Report authorised by:	Craig Harris, Chief Operating Officer
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Primary Care Contracting Sub-committee

5 Year Dental Commissioning Plan - Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Primary Care Contracting Sub-committee on progress with the delivery of the ICB's 5 Year Dental Commissioning Plan.
- 1.2 This report will
 - Update on delivery of the programme's projects
 - Highlight achievements to date and any challenges to delivery of the programme
 - Provide a funding and delivery summary for each of the investments

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The projects that make up the plan are key to ensuring that patients who are at most risk of adverse impact due to their oral health are able access to services. The plan also supports working with wider stakeholders to implement upstream prevention measures at a population level.
- 2.2 The current dental budget remains ring fenced, and while the budget is fully allocated, the plan's funding makes use of the non-recurrent and recurrent resources that become available due to the nature of how the NHS commissions and contracts with providers.
- 2.3 The funding for the plan was drawn from two sources within the dental budget:
 - Uncommitted recurrent resources from contract hand backs that have yet to be committed long term and are utilised non-recurrently.
 - Uncommitted recurrent resources because of updated contracting arrangements with secondary care providers that can be invested in primary care initiatives to avoid secondary care referrals.
- 2.4 The projects within the plan put into place the activities necessary to achieve the primary care vision for dental services. They also align with the three big shifts as articulated in the NHS 10 year plan.
- 2.5 Where possible and appropriate, the plan makes use of collaborative and integrated approaches to delivery of outcomes.

3. Progress to date

- 3.1 All the projects are now mobilised, with patients being referred and treated in a variety of targeted services, in summary:

- The ICB is currently achieving its target for urgent/unscheduled non-urgent care.
- Care pathways in place for priority patients eg follow up care after an urgent intervention, patients on a surgical/medical care pathway where oral health is a priority and children in care.
- Over 3,500 children from the most deprived neighbourhoods have been referred into the child access pathway.
- There are now 68 care homes being supported by dental practice teams to improve the oral health of the residents.
- The oral health improvement investment will mean an additional 47,600 children across Lancashire and South Cumbria will have access to supervised tooth brushing.
- Clinical networks have been convened to support the delivery and oversight of care pathways, enabling providers to engage with the clinical leadership and commissioners.

3.2 However there have been delays in mobilising a number of projects meaning that some of the initiatives are slightly behind from their planned position.

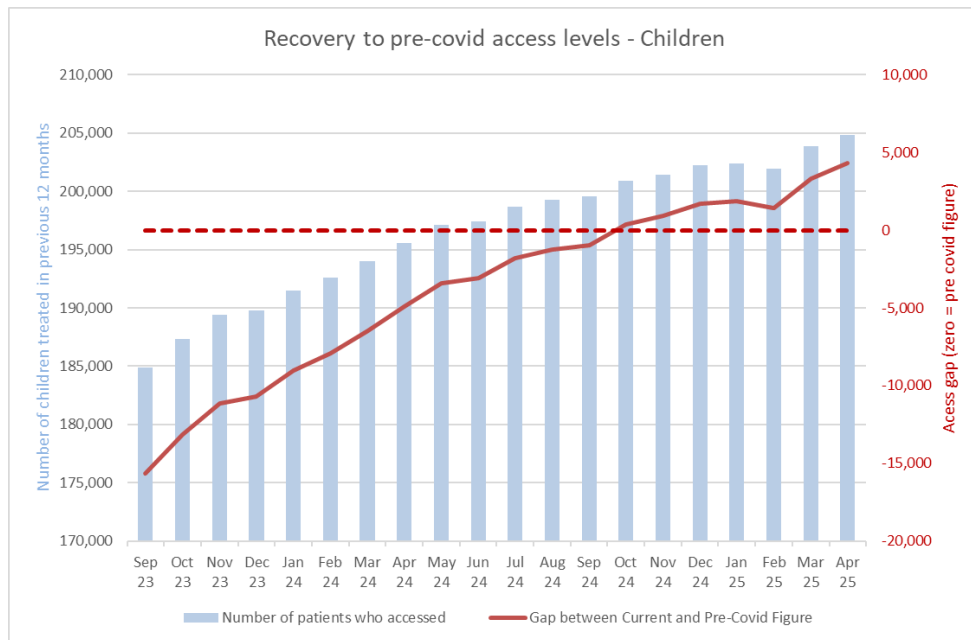
3.3 These delays are due to the following contributing factors:

- Final internal sign off and allocation of funding into the dental budget.
- NHS England's national request for an additional 700K urgent/unscheduled non-urgent appointments.
- Inability to retain clinical leads/loss of clinical leadership capacity to support the implementation of the plan.
- NHS England Workforce Transformation changing the delivery of training support for the dental teams delivering the plan.

3.4 A project-by-project summary is included in Appendix 1, the overall investment recorded to date is £7,925k or 90.1% of the total plan.

3.5 To date ~ 7,300 patients have been referred into care pathways developed and commissioned under this plan. This contributes to an overall improving dental access rate. Since April 2023 access has increased for children by 31,096 patients (from 175,917 to 207,013) and for adults by 46,309 patients (from 500,696 to 547,005). The dental access support delivered by the plan is prioritising clinical need while addressing access inequalities that continue to exist across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

3.6 Focussing on child access has meant that as an ICB overall, child dental access has fully recovered to pre-covid levels - as seen in the table below. Compared to other ICBs, Lancashire and South Cumbria is one of the few that is currently achieving their NHS England urgent/unscheduled non-urgent care trajectory.



4. Conclusion

- 4.1 In summary the plan is enabling thousands of patients to access dental care, through targeted care pathways, aimed at addressing access inequalities and prioritising clinical need.
- 4.2 With 90% of the funding committed, the plan is operating within its financial allocation.
- 4.3 As with all projects, there have been challenges and issues that have had to be managed, however the team including the clinicians supporting delivery, have worked to ensure that the schemes have commenced as quickly as possible.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Primary Care Contracting Sub-committee is requested to:

- Note the contents of the report;
- Receive a further report at its meeting in March 2026

Nick Barkworth, Senior Delivery Manager

David Armstrong, Senior Delivery Assurance Manager

September 2025

Appendix 1 – Project Updates

Scheme/Pathway	Description	Intended Outcomes	Commencement Date	On/Off Track	Achievements/Activity To Date
Urgent and Unscheduled Non-Urgent Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplement urgent care provision using general dental services providers Achievement of the additional urgent care mandate from NHS England (700K appointments nationally). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patient with an urgent dental need are able to access care. NHS England – Initially an 1500 patients per month, revised to 2313 per month from July 25 to meet national target 	April 2025	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned investment utilised £1,345,397 Contribution of an additional 3,000 patients treated (Apr-June)* to support achievement of target. Clinical leadership from provider network established to implement new clinical criteria Additional capacity at call handling commissioned to manage increase. Achievement of NHS England target. <p>* lag in claims data</p>
Integrated Dental Access Pathway (IDAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority access for patient groups based on the risk of adverse impact due to their oral health and offer care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients who are deemed a clinical priority can access a course of dental treatment. 400 patients per £100K invested 	<p>June 2025</p> <p>Patients requiring oral health support prior to medical/surgical care – not fully implemented due to delays in securing clinical lead for triage.</p>	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned investment utilised £1,772,160 Referrals into the pathway to date (mid-August 25) 813 patients (demand is marginally ahead of capacity): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up care 440 Medical/Surgical 70 Children in care 167 Other priority groups 136 Clinical leadership from provider network established

Scheme/Pathway	Description	Intended Outcomes	Commencement Date	On/Off Track	Achievements/Activity To Date
Children's Access and Oral Health Improvement Pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted investment is areas of greatest deprivation. Provides dental access for children and prevention focussed 'behaviour change' for parents/carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing children's health and wellbeing free from pain and suffering. Promotion of positive lifelong habits and engagement with dentistry. Improve attendance and performance at school. Reduction of use of antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance. 	October 2024	<p>Off Track – Plans In Place</p> <p>Initially low volume of referrals, changes implemented in July include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change of age range to 0-16. Practices can accept patients without referral. Increased engagement with wider stakeholders to promote the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned investment utilised £3,189,948 3,500 referrals from October 2024 to July 2025 Clinical leadership from provider network established Training delivered to all providers including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advanced management of children in primary care behaviour change dental nurse leadership 42 providers presently delivering the scheme signed
Oral Health Support in Care Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project provides care homes with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for their team in implementing NICE Guidance 48 Clinical treatment for residents in the care homes. Dental support Primary Care Networks with their virtual ward rounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access and oral health for older adults in care homes. Improved adherence to NICE Guidance 48 within care homes. Better integration of primary care services. Originally 27 providers engaged in the programme 	<p>June 2025</p> <p>Delayed start</p>	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned investment utilised £517,918 Clinical leadership from provider network established Training programme developed to support providers with delivery. 14 providers engaged in the programme supporting 68 care homes across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Scheme/Pathway	Description	Intended Outcomes	Commencement Date	On/Off Track	Achievements/Activity To Date
Community Dental Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment to support implementation of Special Care/Paediatric Oral Health Needs Assessment for Lancashire and South Cumbria. This workstream also includes the unpicking disaggregation of the existing contracts, reviewing activity presently delivered under a secondary care agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of a new service for the whole of Lancashire and South Cumbria. Implementation of recommendations from Special Care and Paediatric Oral Health Needs Assessments. A consistent and equitable service model delivered across Lancashire and South Cumbria 	New service due to commence in April 2028.	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No financial impact at this stage. Arrangements to extend the current term of the contract for a further 24 months are subject to ICB governance. Recommendations from the Special Care Oral Health Needs Assessment are presently being reviewed and prioritised. Paediatric Oral Health Needs nearing completion. This workstream also links directly with the ICB's children and young persons elective care recovery programme and the reconfiguration of children's dental care under general anaesthesia.
Minor Oral Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding will be used to enhance the current service model to include treatment under sedation (reducing hospital attendances), and support for wider workforce transformation to reduce inappropriate referrals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients have equitable access to a Tier 2 oral surgery across Lancashire and South Cumbria. Reduction of secondary care activity. Increased number of training opportunities in Primary Care. 	New service due to commence in September 2028	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No financial impact at this stage. Arrangements to extend the current term of the contract for a further 24 months are subject to ICB governance. This workstream also links directly with the elective care reform programmes currently being delivered across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Scheme/Pathway	Description	Intended Outcomes	Commencement Date	On/Off Track	Achievements/Activity To Date
Secondary Care Orthodontics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary Care Orthodontics is recognised as a fragile service. Part of a proposed case for change has been developed with colleagues from the provider collaborative. This funding is part of a proof of concept for early discharge pathway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More resilient service. Patient wait times in line with national expectations. 	March 2025	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned investment utilised £55,553* 7 Patients have been discharged early from secondary care. Ongoing developments to improve efficiency of the referral process from hospital to primary care This workstream directly links with the Lancashire and South Cumbria orthodontic collaborative board. <p>*includes support for the management referral service</p>
Oral Health Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in supervised toothbrushing schemes delivered by Local Authorities. This will include, supporting community-based programmes as well as maximising prevention in clinical settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased coverage of evidence-based programmes across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The current modelling of the investment means that for the first time ever there will be universal coverage of across Lancashire and South Cumbria for all 3 to 5 year olds. 	September 2025	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned investment utilised £1,000,000 Agreement reached with the four local authorities on the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> types of interventions, the performance metrics the targeted populations. An additional 47,600 children will receive the intervention, and local authorities may also include additional child groups or extend the age range in areas of higher deprivation. This workstream also links directly with the ICB's children and young person's elective care recovery programme and contributes to the ICB's monthly progress update to NHS England via that group.

Scheme/Pathway	Description	Intended Outcomes	Commencement Date	On/Off Track	Achievements/Activity To Date
Developing a local quality improvement scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in a local quality improvement incentive scheme to improve adherence to national standards, clinical guidelines, and best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased adherence to national guidance and clinical standards. Peer review and clinical audit processes established Provider collaborative developed. 	September 2025	Off Track – Plans in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned investment utilised £30,000 Engagement with the Local Dental Committee and the chairs of the managed clinical networks has supported the development of a series of activities to better support care for patients in a primary care setting and reduce the number of inappropriate referrals into specialist care pathways.