

## Integrated Care Board

<b>Date of meeting</b>	19 March 2026			
<b>Title of paper</b>	Northwest Specialised Commissioning Committee Escalation and Assurance Report – 8 January 2026			
<b>Presented by</b>	Craig Harris, Chief Operating Officer			
<b>Author</b>	Board Secretary and Committee Officers			
<b>Agenda item</b>	20			
<b>Confidential</b>	No			
<b>Executive summary</b>				
This report highlights key matters, issues, and risks discussed at the Northwest Specialised Commissioning Committee held since the last report to the Board.				
<b>Public and Stakeholder Engagement</b>				
N/A				
<b>Recommendations</b>				
The Board is asked to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the Alert, Advise and Assure the committee report and approve any recommendations as listed</li> </ul>				
<b>Which Strategic Objective/s does the report relate to:</b>				<b>Tick</b>
SO1	Improve quality, including safety, clinical outcomes, and patient experience			✓
SO2	To equalise opportunities and clinical outcomes across the area			✓
SO3	Make working in Lancashire and South Cumbria an attractive and desirable option for existing and potential employees			✓
SO4	Meet financial targets and deliver improved productivity			✓
SO5	Meet national and locally determined performance standards and targets			✓
SO6	To develop and implement ambitious, deliverable strategies			✓
<b>Implications</b>				
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Associated risks		✓		
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?			✓	
Financial Implications			✓	
<b>Where paper has been discussed (list other committees/forums that have discussed this paper)</b>				
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>		<b>Outcomes</b>	
Northwest Specialised Commissioning Committee	8 January 2026		To provide the Board of committee business during this period.	
<b>Conflicts of interest associated with this report</b>				
Not applicable.				
<b>Impact assessments</b>				
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Quality impact assessment completed			✓	

Equality impact assessment completed			✓	
Data privacy impact assessment completed			✓	

<b>Report authorised by:</b>	C Harris, Chief Commissioning Officer
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## Integrated Care Board – 19 March 2026

### Northwest Specialised Commissioning Committee Escalation and Assurance Report

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 This report highlights key matters, issues, and risks discussed at Northwest Specialised Commissioning Committee held since the last report to the Board on 22 January 2026 to alert, advise and assure the Board.

1.2 An update is included regarding the Neonatal Service Review.

#### 2. Northwest Specialised Commissioning Committee Highlight Report

Key escalation and discussion points from the Committee meeting	
Date of Meeting: 8 January 2026	Chair: Ruth Hussey
<b>Alert</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Neonatal infection outbreak</b> at Lancashire Teaching Hospital (two deaths) and East Lancashire Teaching Hospital.</li> <li>• <b>Significant workforce risk</b> due to voluntary redundancy applications in contracting and mental health teams.</li> <li>• <b>Capital funding gap</b> (£3–4m) to support ACCTS service procurement.</li> </ul>	
<b>Advise</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OPIC Development:</b> Governance and committee role to be revisited as OPIC structures evolve.</li> <li>• <b>Delegated Services:</b> Risks around commercial sustainability of niche delegated services; mapping exercise required.</li> <li>• <b>Babies &amp; Children Programme:</b> Update of engagement resources to strengthen prevention references, provider quality evidence, and plans for workforce upskilling.</li> </ul>	
<b>Assure</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Finance &amp; Planning:</b> Forecast on track for planned surplus; elective overperformance risk being monitored.</li> <li>• <b>Mental Health Assurance:</b> Quarterly report agreed; rollout planned for March.</li> <li>• <b>Audit Review:</b> MIAA review highlighted need for coherent risk management and improved declarations of interest.</li> </ul>	

#### 3. Neonatal Service Review

NHS England and the three ICBs for the region – NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, NHS Greater Manchester and NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria are continuing to look at how to improve neonatal care for babies and their families across the North West in response to guidelines relating to the minimum numbers of babies that should be seen in a neonatal unit, which were added to the

Neonatal Critical Care Service Specification in 2024. Although neonatal staff are already providing lots of great care, the majority of neonatal units in the North West do not see enough babies to meet minimum activity standards. Currently only 3 neonatal units out of 19 in the region fully meet these activity standards.

This work is still at a very early stage, and no plans or proposals have yet been developed for how services could look in the future, but it is likely that changes will need to be made. To date, a Case for Change has been developed which describes the challenges facing the region's neonatal services, and a staff engagement process was undertaken from 26 January – 6 March 2026 to gain views and feedback on the issues set out in the case for change. The programme will also be holding discussions with parents, carers and family members who have used neonatal services to hear about their experiences of care - including what currently works well, and what could be better for babies and their families.

Feedback gathered from staff, parent and carer discussions will be used to help inform the next phase of planning for improving neonatal services which includes developing potential options for how neonatal services could look in the future. These would be set out in a Pre-Consultation Business Case which is likely to be drafted later in 2026.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The committee has conducted their business in line with their terms of reference and associated business plans.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Board is requested to:

- Note the Alert, Advise and Assure within the committee report and approve any recommendations as listed
- Note the update related to Neonatal Service Review.

**ICB Chief Commissioning Officer**  
**March 2026**