



North East and
North Cumbria

Primary Care Dental Access Recovery: First steps

David Gallagher, Executive Area Director

July 2023

There are significant challenges to people accessing dentistry in North East & North Cumbria

- Dental services have struggled to recover from the impact of covid
- There are significant challenges with recruitment and retention of dentists
- There is widespread recognition that the national dental contract requires reform
- The number of contracts handed back in NENC has increased from 3 in all of 2020 to 12 in the first 5 months of 2023
- 20% of the 318 contracts in NENC are performing below 59%
- This means local people are experiencing significant problems accessing NHS dentists
- This is worse for people in:
 - North and West Cumbria
 - North Northumberland
 - Darlington
 - Parts of Co Durham

The ICB in North East & North Cumbria now has responsibility for commissioning dental services

- NHS England have delegated responsibility to NENC ICB for commissioning dental services from 1 April 2023
- From 1 July 2023 we have transferred people with the knowledge, expertise and experience of dental commissioning into our team from NHS England

We will tackle the challenges in three phases

Improving access to dentistry will not be a quick fix

We are tackling this in three streams:



Immediate actions to stabilise services



A more strategic approach to workforce and service delivery



Developing an oral health strategy to improve oral health and reduce the pressure on dentistry

We are implementing some immediate actions

c£3m non-recurrent investment to:

- Increase NHS 111 dental clinical assessment capacity
- Increase out of hours treatment services
- Extend access arrangements to provide an additional 27.5k patient treatments for the rest of 2023/4

Implementing a local commissioning process to reprovide activity when contracts are handed back