North East and North Cumbria

Welcome

Annual General Meeting

29 July 2026

Better health
and wellbeing
for all...

NHS
North East and
North Cumbria

Chair's reflections

Professor Sir Liam Donaldson
Chair

Chair's reflections...

A year of change and opportunity

- 2025/26 has been a year of change for the ICB
- We've navigated significant organisational change while continuing to focus on improving health and care for the 3.2 million people we serve
- Our role is becoming clearer – as a strategic commissioner, using insight, evidence and partnership to improve outcomes for our communities
- Throughout this change, our commitment to patients has remained constant

Our thanks to everyone in health, care and partner organisations for our shared achievements during a year of change

Chair's reflections…

Working together to improve lives

- Strengthened partnerships across NHS, local government and voluntary sector to tackle wider causes of poor health
- Programmes like WorkWell and Housing, Health and Care partnership helping people live healthier, more independent lives
- Continued investment in prevention, mental health and urgent care
- Progress is possible because organisations are working together with a shared purpose

Chair's reflections…

Learning, improving and maintaining public trust

- We have had some challenges, including concerns about the quality and safety of care in some services
- When standards fall short, we have a responsibility to act quickly, openly and transparently
- We will continue to strengthen oversight of quality and safety, ensuring learning is shared and improvements are sustained
- Maintaining public confidence depends on openness, accountability and continual improvement

Our response to challenge is every bit as important as our successes

Chair's reflections...

Looking to the future

- We will continue to strengthen our role as strategic commissioner, focusing on better outcomes and reducing health inequalities
- Care will increasingly be shaped through neighbourhood, place and system partnerships
- Our greatest strength remains our ICB team and our partners, whose dedication continues to make a difference everyday

Together, we are building healthier, longer lives for our communities

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Chief executive's reflections

Samantha Allen
Chief executive

Chief executive's reflections...

2025/26 challenged us to transform while continuing to deliver

- Maintained performance through another major organisational change
- Reduced running costs by £32 million and reshaped staff structures
- Kept patients and communities at the centre of our decision-making

Highlights of our year...

Fit for the Future...

Our five-year commissioning plan

We want people to live longer, healthier lives. But people in our region don't live as long as they should, and spend too many years in poor health.

We want to change that. We're working to move more care from hospitals into communities, prevent ill health, and make better use of digital technology.

Our five-year commissioning plan sets out how we will plan and improve care between now and 2031: creating a health and care system that's fit for the future.

Better urgent dental care...

23 urgent dental access centres opened

109,000 additional appointments a year

Protecting **young teeth**

WorkWell...

For many people, health problems can make it hard to stay in work. We have:

- **Secured £30m** to help with health and work
- Provided **health and work coaches across** the region
- **New digital innovations** to help
- Increased **mental health and musculoskeletal** support
- Added extra **gynaecological services**

Tackling tobacco harm...

Tobacco dependency teams in every trust

82,890 people referred for treatment

Region's Smoking rate down to 10% - from 29% in 2005

Waiting lists for elective care at their lowest since the pandemic

Our GP practices provided 85,000 appointments every day

Highlights of the year...

Winter planning...

A detailed winter masterplan helped staff improve services while caring for record numbers of patients:

Category Two ambulance response times down by almost five minutes

Handover times down by 18%

7,000 fewer ambulances waited 45+ minutes at A&E

Winter planning included targeted support for people with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

Doctors reviewed patients at greatest risk, with steps to prevent flare-ups during cold weather.

Of 1,936 patients supported, urgent and emergency care use fell by 65% - with fewer 999 calls, emergency admissions and A&E attendances.

NHS Excellence Award for North East and North Cumbria staff mental health and wellbeing hub

63,845 lung health checks completed => 427 cancers diagnosed earlier

Alcohol teams now caring for patients in every trust with 10,939 patients supported

Sunderland and Stockton among the first to pioneer neighbourhood health teams

Mental health...

Mental health safe havens now open in Ashington, Wallsend, Newcastle, Gateshead, Redcar and Whitehaven – plus young people's safe haven in Newcastle

Strategy now in place to tackle obesity

18% increase in Covid-19 vaccine uptake

28,888 people have joined Boost, our learning community. Almost 16,000 took courses this year!

Thank you

Together we have achieved a lot. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this – from GP practices, pharmacies and dental teams to trusts, collaboratives, councils, patients and voluntary organisations.

Chief executive's reflections…

Changing the way we work for better outcomes

- Strategic commissioning - focus on outcomes, value and impact
- Stronger partnerships - NHS, councils and the voluntary sector working as one system
- Evidence-led decisions - using insight and population health intelligence to target investment
- Listening to communities and patients to shape services
- Supporting our people - investing in staff wellbeing, leadership and development

- Play staff health and wellbeing video
- https://youtube.com/shorts/YYf67gZ-DJ0?feature=share

Looking ahead...

- Delivering our five-year strategic commissioning plan and three-year balanced financial plan
- Building the capability to be an outstanding strategic commissioner
- Expanding neighbourhood health and prevention
- Working with partners to ensure investment delivers greatest impact on population health, service pressures and long-term sustainability

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Performance and improvement 2025-26

Performance and improvement...

- **We work closely** with our providers offering support, constructive challenge and collaborative working to mitigate key issues such as capacity, workforce challenges, and surges in demand

- **Best performing region** on 18-week referral to treatment standards (though still below 92% standard). Consistently ranked first or second out of 42 ICBs throughout the year

- **Below national targets** for 62-day and 28-day faster diagnosis standards for cancer – improvement plans in place

Performance and improvement…

Urgent and emergency care

- A&E performance improved despite increased activity and winter pressures
- 80.6% of patients seen within 4 hours in March ‘26 – best for 12 months and better than national ambition of 78% and England position of 77.1%
- North East Ambulance Service frequently ranked first for category one and two response times

Planned elective care

- Significant progress on elective recovery - waiting lists lowest since pandemic
- 12-month best in March ‘26, 72.3% of patients waiting less than 18 weeks from referral, better than national benchmark of 65.3%

Cancer

- A challenging year for cancer standards against our ambitious plans
- 69.4% treated within 62 days – below where we want to be (national benchmark 72.8%)

Performance and improvement…

Primary care and community care

- Primary care access recovery plan in place plus framework setting out expectations of all new GP contract changes
- Our GP practices provided **85,000 appointments** every day
- Urgent Community Response teams consistently **above 70%** threshold for seeing referrals within two hours
- **79%** of people on GP learning disability register had an annual health check

Performance and improvement...

Dental care

- Strong progress in three years since taking on dentistry responsibility
- Network of urgent dental access centres: 109,000 additional appointments/year
- Changed payment rates and support for dental staff
- Focus on prevention: fluoride varnishing and supervised toothbrushing in schools and nurseries

Pharmacy

- Community pharmacies now provide 60,000 Pharmacy First consultations and 8,000 for contraception every month

Performance and improvement...

Mental health

- Worked to improve access to mental health support and psychological therapies
- Less than five out-of-area placements
- Expanded crisis support services and safe havens now available in six areas
- Crisis text support service now available
- Our reliable recovery rate for mental health is 48.1%, with reliable improvement at 68%
- Approximately 60,000 children and young people accessing mental health services each month

North East and North Cumbria

Review of financial performance 2025/26

David Chandler

Chief Finance Officer

Key messages…

- For the year ended 31 March 2026, the ICB delivered all of its statutory financial duties
- The wider North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) also delivered a slight surplus financial position overall
- Unqualified Opinion was received from external auditors

2025/26 financial delivery…

Achievement against statutory duties:

Target	Target Met?
Revenue resource use does not exceed the amount specified in Directions ICBs are required to manage overall revenue expenditure within the revenue resource limit (the 'break-even duty'). For 2025/26, the ICB delivered an overall surplus of £34.86m.	✓
Revenue administration resource use does not exceed the amount specific in Directions A separate running cost allowance is provided to all ICBs to cover the administrative costs of running the ICB. There is a requirement to manage administrative costs within this allowance. Total running costs for the year amounted to £51.10m, which was within the running cost allowance of £58.99m.	✓
Capital resource use does not exceed the amount specified in Directions The ICB is required to manage capital spending within the capital resource limit. For 2025/26, the ICB incurred £957k of direct capital expenditure which was in line with capital resource received	✓

2025/26 financial delivery...
(continued)

Other financial targets:

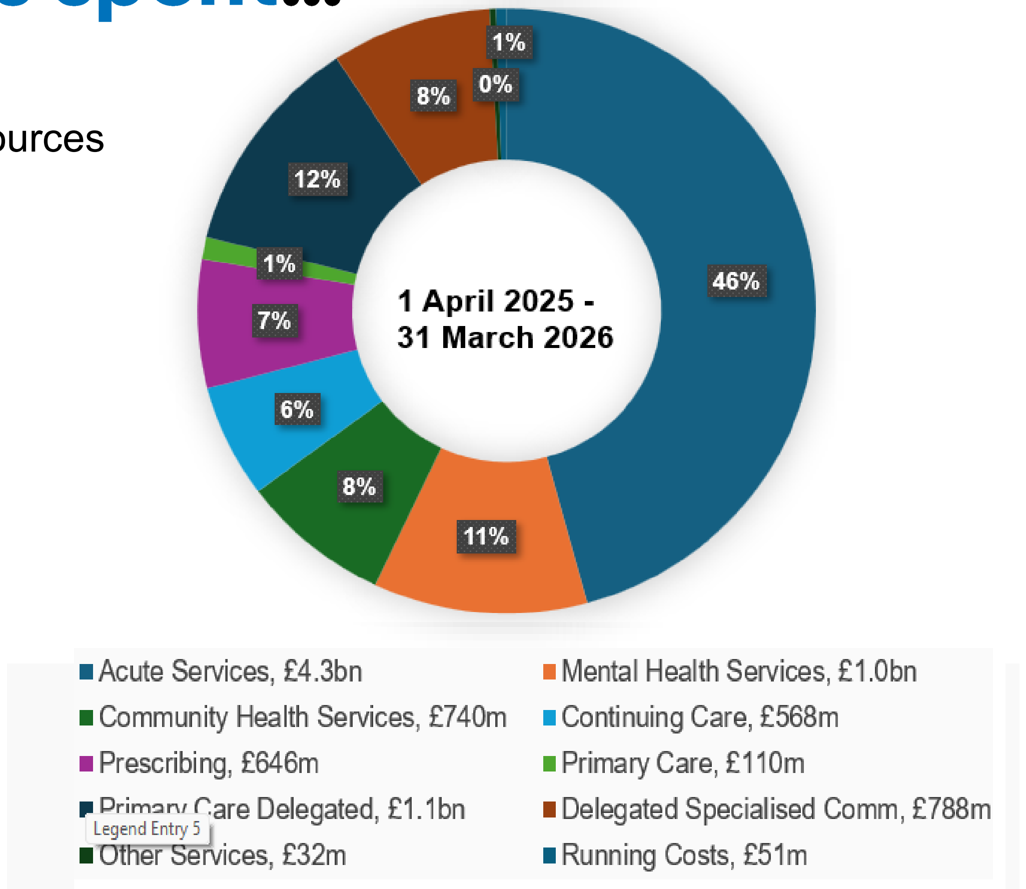
Target	Target Met?
Delivery of financial position at ICS level The ICB also had a shared responsibility for achievement of financial balance at an ICS level in 2025/26. A balanced financial plan overall for the ICS was agreed with NHS England at the start of the year. A deterioration in the financial position of one provider trust during the year was mitigated by improvements elsewhere within the ICS, including the ICB position. The final outturn position for the ICS overall was a surplus of £1.1m in total (subject to audit), excluding additional non-recurrent deficit support funding received in March 2026.	✓
Management of capital resource within ICS capital allocation The ICB agreed a joint capital resource use plan for the year along with partner NHS Foundation Trusts. The overall capital expenditure across the ICS for 2025/26 was managed within the agreed ICS capital allocation.	✓

How the money was spent…

The ICB allocated over 99% of its total resources on commissioning healthcare in 2025/26.

Key points:

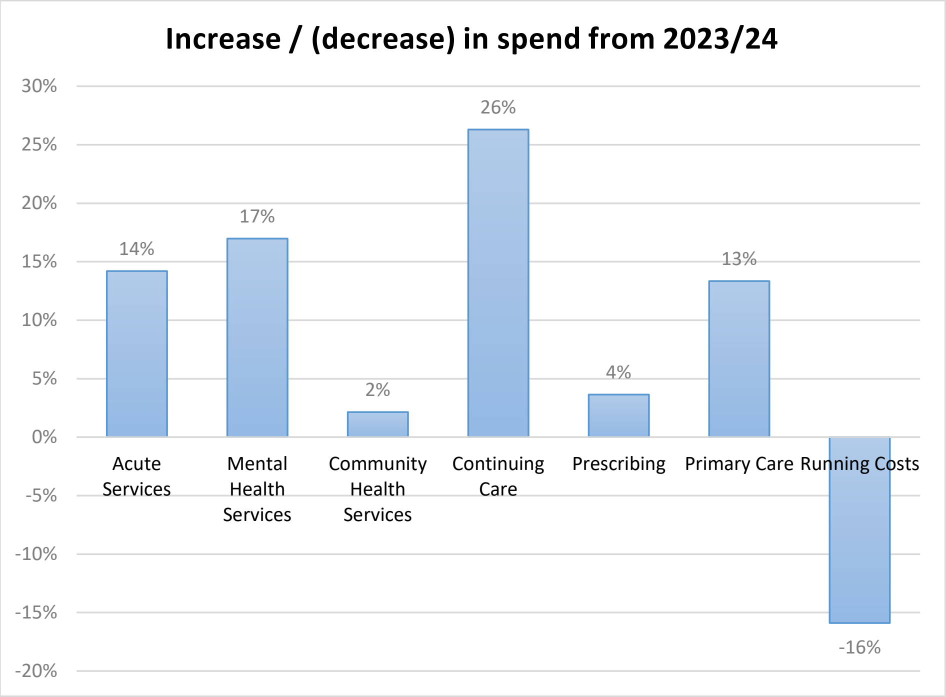
- Expenditure did not exceed income
- Surplus of £34.9m delivered (on budget of £9.4bn)
- Less than 1% of resources spent on ICB running costs



How spending has changed…

Excluding specialised commissioning budgets which were delegated to the ICB from 1 April 2025, total comparable spend has increased by £977m (13%) from 2023/24 to 2025/26.

- **Acute** – **14% growth** includes impact of net tariff uplift (7%) inc. pay award and elective recovery funding (3%)
- **Mental health services** – **17% growth** includes net tariff uplift (7%), growth in s117 packages and ADHD/autism assessments (7% combined) and increase in service development funding
- **Continuing care – 26% growth** due to increase in fees and package numbers
- **Primary care – 13% growth** overall, largely in GP medical core contract
- **Running costs – 16% reduction** with further reductions agreed for 26/27, allowing increased spend on healthcare services



External audit opinions…

ICB accounts audited by **Forvis Mazars**.

Unqualified audit opinions received for the ICB for 2025/26:

- Financial Statement Opinion – unqualified
- Regularity Opinion – unqualified
- No matters to report on annual report
- Value for money arrangements – no significant weaknesses identified

Want to know more?

If you would like to view our annual report and accounts in full, please go to:

northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/about-us/corporate-information

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