

Norfolk and Waveney Long-Term Dental Plan 2024 - 2029

Summary

Background

- The ICB took over delegated commissioning responsibility for dentistry (primary, community and secondary dental services) from NHS England in April 2023.
- There are currently 102 primary care dental providers, community dental services / special care dental services, Level 2 (enhanced services) and 3 acute hospitals in Norfolk and Waveney providing NHS secondary care and orthodontic services to the local population. Individuals may also be referred outside Norfolk and Waveney for certain services, such as endodontics and periodontics or to a London hospital.
- Nationally, all primary care services (which includes dentistry) are facing greater challenges than ever in workforce shortages, an increasingly complex workload, and demand for services exceeding capacity. In Norfolk and Waveney, the impact of these challenges is an acute lack of access to NHS dental services – oral health advice, prevention and treatment - for our local population who do not already see an NHS dentist regularly.
- The workforce challenges that are felt across the country are particularly acute in Norfolk and Waveney, where for the last decade the number of dentists has declined compared to the Eastern region and England. This decline has a greater impact here due to higher levels of need, areas of deprivation, and a higher number of residents in later life.
- Challenges with recruiting and retaining the dental workforce impact our ability to ensure that access to services is the same for residents no matter where they live in our area. It also impacts our ability to address health inequalities, and to commission adequate service provision based on the health needs of our people and communities.

What we have achieved so far

- Mobilised an urgent treatment service to improve access for any individual in dental pain through a new pilot scheme that will run for 12-18 months (using £1.05m of funding).
- Uplifted the amount we pay dentists to provide NHS care, to a minimum of £30 per Unit of Dental Activity (UDA), higher than the national recommended value of £28 per UDA.
- Funded local dental providers to undertake children's oral health initiatives (using £600,000 of funding).
- Put in place immediate recruitment and retention plans to support dental practices and completed a Training Needs Analysis (using £600,000 of funding for workforce incentives). Successful recruitment and retention of 14 dentists in 2023/2024
- Secured two Clinical Dental Fellows to support ICB workstreams about children and young people and health inequalities, as well as to provide coaching and mentoring for dental teams and continuous professional development opportunities.
- Put in place quality improvement support for primary and community care dental services and their teams.
- Agreed to extend orthodontic services contracts for a further three years from April 2024, and to extend minor oral surgery services for a further two years from April 2024.
- Started to develop a pathway for oral health stabilisation and treatment for individuals with medical needs, for example for patients with cancer.
- We are also committed to collaborating with ICBs in the region to agree a common commissioning approach where beneficial

Developing our Long-Term Plan

- Following early engagement with local dental teams and their representative bodies, and taking account of patient feedback, the ICB published its [Short-Term Dental Plan](#) in September 2023. It focussed on quick investment decisions that the ICB could take to help stabilise dental services and improve patient access to urgent treatment while we continued to develop our longer-term plans for commissioning dental services.
- We wanted to supplement the feedback we had received so far and give people the opportunity to inform our longer-term planning. We asked for the views of local people about our immediate priorities that we had identified as important to include in our long-term plans. These included **urgent care; developing capacity in our dental teams; improving access for children and young people and with a focus on reducing health inequalities; and promoting good oral health.**
- People shared their views through a short anonymous survey between 24 January - 21 February 2024, which people were able to complete using both non-digital and digital methods. Over 2,000 responses were received – **thank you!** You can read more about the results of the survey via the [Dental Engagement Survey Report](#).
- The majority of respondents thought our early priorities were the right ones – 92.3% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that these were the right priorities.
- Our Long-Term Dental Plan builds on these key priorities, and supports the actions recommended in the national NHS Dental Recovery plan.
- The Long-Term Dental Plan recognises the importance of using evidence-based commissioning, a data-led approach, and system collaboration to develop integrated solutions to improve oral health prevention and access to services for our people and communities.

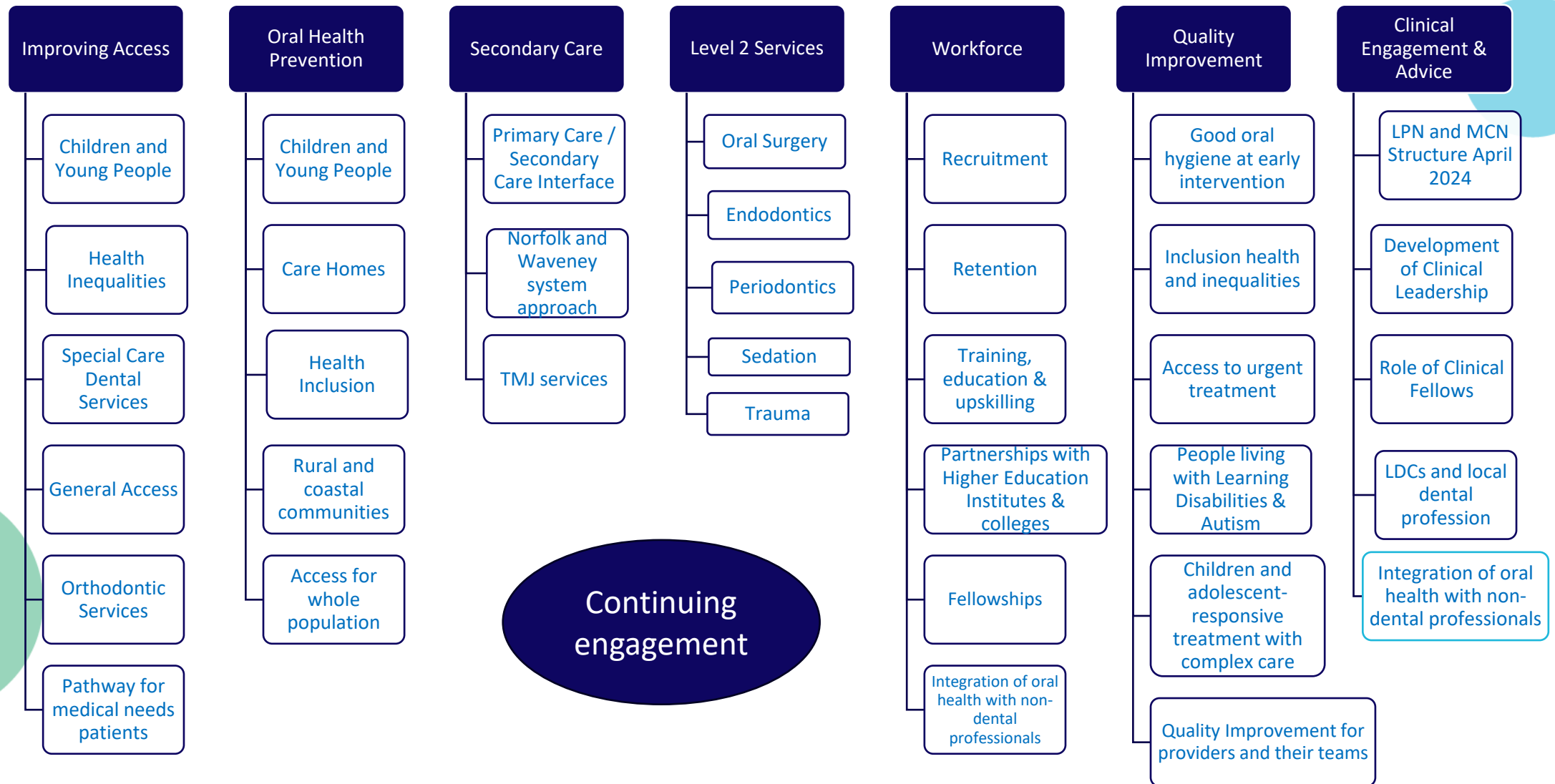
Our vision – what do we want to achieve in 5 years?

Our vision:

- To build stability and resilience across our NHS dental services
- To improve access to oral health care for Norfolk and Waveney's population
- To reduce health inequalities

Long term opportunities 2024 - 2029

Resilience and Stability of NHS dental services in Norfolk and Waveney



Three key areas of the Long-Term Dental Plan

Change will take time, there are difficult challenges ahead

The ICB aims to support recovery of access to NHS dental services by focusing on three key areas:

1. Build capacity through working with system partners to improve recruitment and retention of the dental workforce.
2. Begin to improve access for our Children and Young People, and those living in deprivation
3. Empower and support our population to manage their own oral health, working with local Public Health teams and system partners



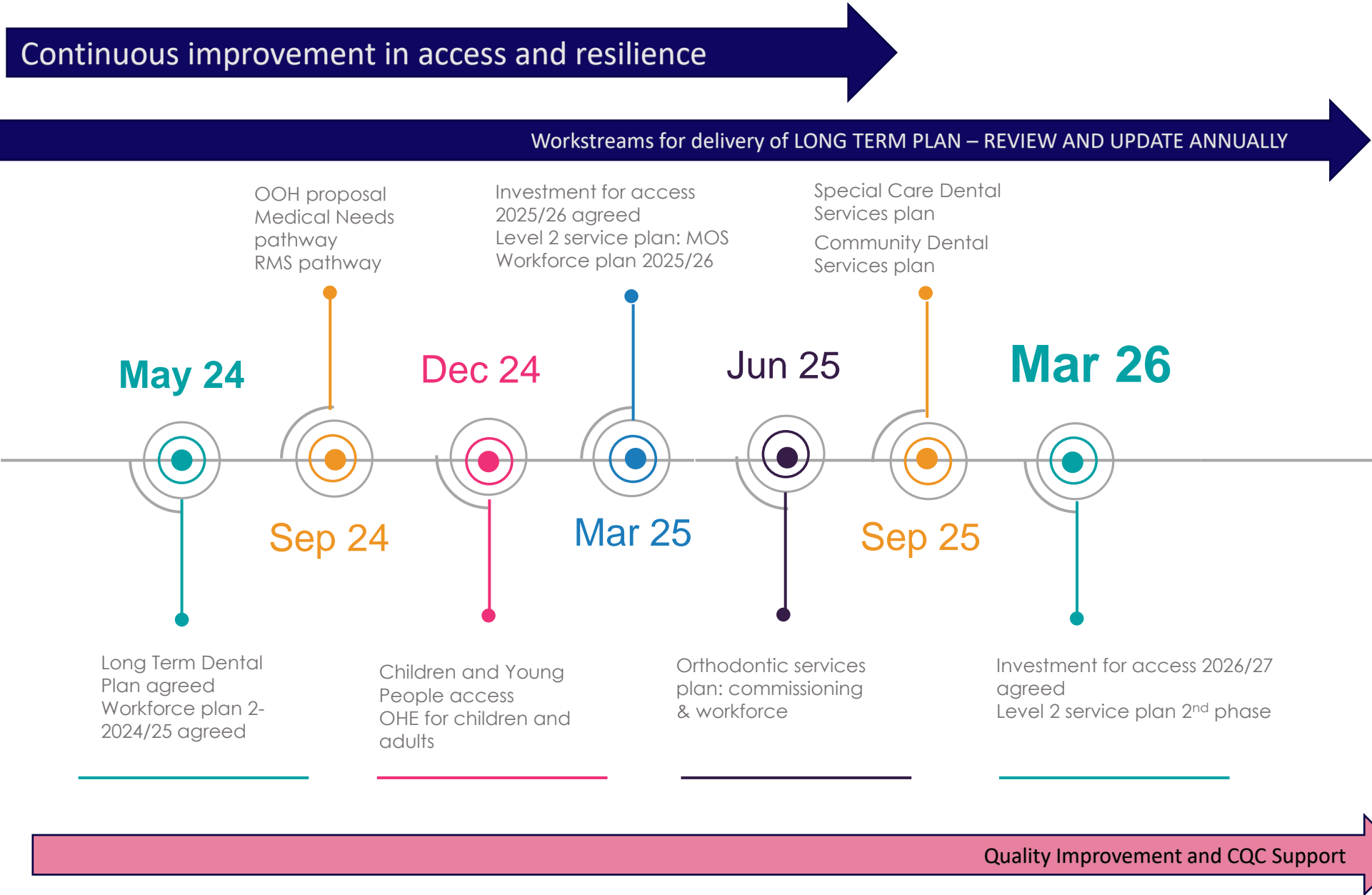
The pace of change

- The purpose of this Long-Term Dental Plan is to set out the priority areas that the ICB and system partners will focus on over the next 2-5 years.
- We know that access to NHS dental services is very challenging right now. We are committed to improving local access to oral health prevention and treatment services.
- There's a lot of work to do and many challenges to overcome, so we need to tackle them step by step – this Long-Term Dental Plan maps out the steps that we will start to take first.
- Change will not happen overnight.
- Wide-spread improvements in general access to NHS dental services for our whole population will take longer than the lifetime of this Plan.
- By investing our effort and resources into the priority areas outlined in this Plan now, we are laying the foundations to make real and lasting improvements in access to NHS dental services for the people and communities of Norfolk and Waveney.

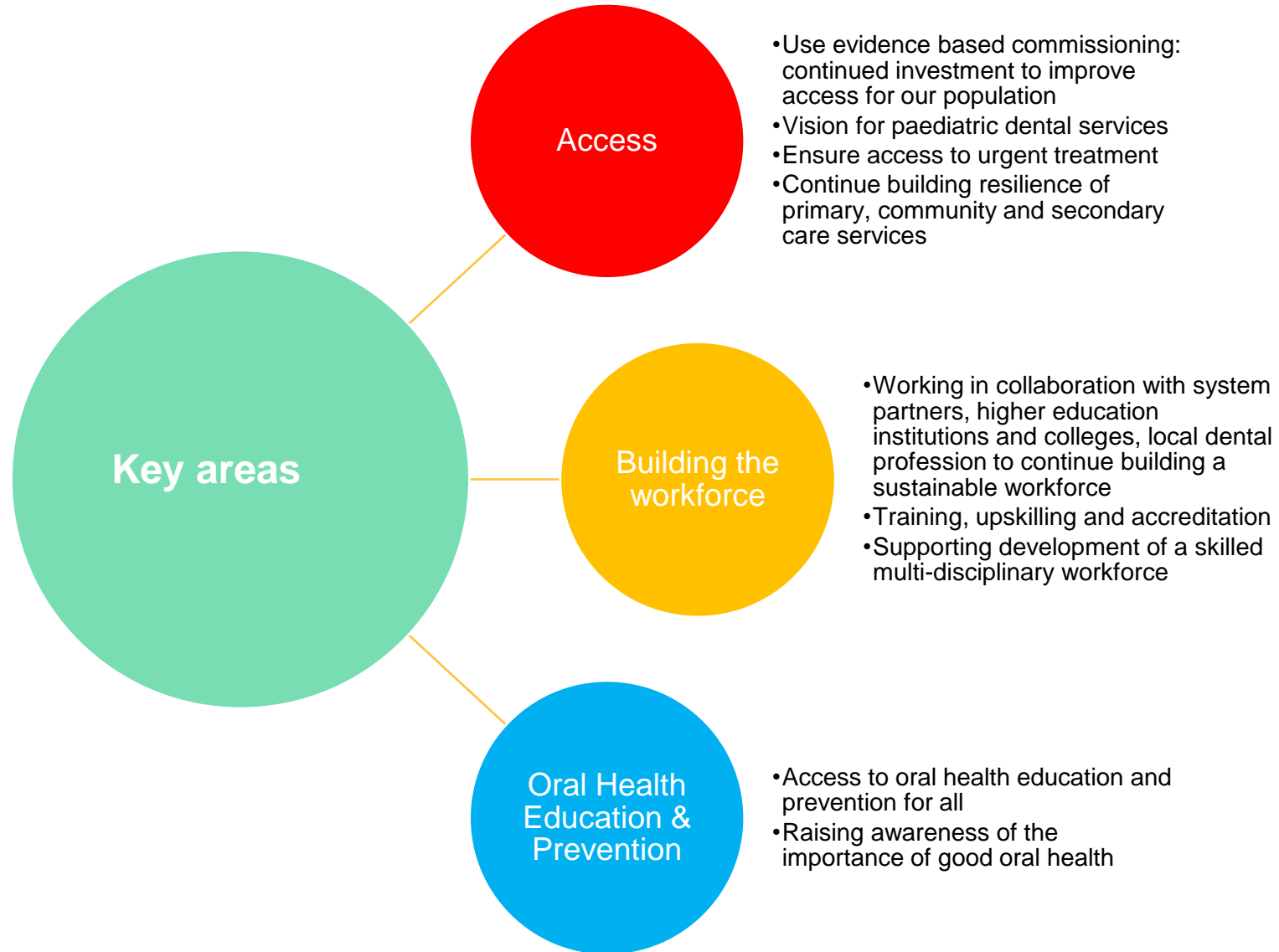
Our focus for the next two years

Area	By When?	What/How – Summary Overview
Children and Young People	March 2025	Implementing the East of England vision for Paediatric Dentistry. Improve access to oral health care: prevention, education and treatment in collaboration with system partners. Establish a network of Child Focused Dental Practices working with Community Dental Services during 2024/2025
Build the Dental Workforce	March 2024 – 2026	Invest in training, education, recruitment and retention plans and initiatives to build capacity year on year building on successful schemes in 2023/2024.
Begin to improve access	During 2024/2025 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those living in areas of deprivation, rural and coastal communities with limited access, vulnerable and inclusion health groups, children and young people, and pregnant mothers. Continue to invest to improve access beyond March 2025 for wider population to reduce health inequalities. • Secure arrangements for urgent treatment services from April 2025.
Improving access for vulnerable patients	September 2024 - September 2025	Undertake needs assessment, develop workforce plans and agree commissioning intentions by Sept 2025 to provide oral healthcare for our most vulnerable patients, including individuals with Learning Disabilities and Autism, mental and physical disabilities.
Securing access to out of hours services	December 2024	Agree and mobilise new Out of Hours arrangements across Norfolk and Waveney.
Oral health education and prevention for adults	April 2024 – March 2026	Undertake needs assessment and develop Programmes over next two years for vulnerable adults, those living in deprivation, and those with additional needs.
Level 2 enhanced dental services	April 2024 – March 2026	Laying the groundwork for future development of all Level 2 services starting with oral surgery. Commissioning and mobilising a Referral Management Service, evaluating trauma pathways, and agreeing long-term commissioning intentions and workforce plans.
Orthodontics for children and young people under 18 years	October 2024 - June 2025	Undertake a needs assessment, develop long-term commissioning intentions and workforce plans to secure sustainable service model for orthodontic care in Norfolk and Waveney.
Secondary Care services (Oral Surgery and Maxillo Facial Services)	Ongoing	Implement the recommendations from NHS England East of England and work in collaboration with other ICBs and with local trusts to secure sustainable secondary care services.

Timeline in summary



What will we be working on from March 2026?



What does success look like?

Increase in:



- New patient access
- Patient and public satisfaction
- Individuals in pain can access urgent treatment within 48 hours of initial contact
- Workforce morale improving
- Number of dentists and dental care professionals coming to work, and remaining, in Norfolk and Waveney
- Sustainable Out of Hours service model to meet population need
- Access to enhanced Level 2 services locally within Norfolk and Waveney and hospital care when needed
- Improving oral health in children and adults

Decrease in:



- Shift to private dental practice
- Number of dentists and dental care professionals leaving
- Reduced referrals to secondary care for extractions in children
- Urgent treatment activity down as a result of improved access
- Waiting lists for treatment
- Oral cancer rates

The challenges to achieving success

Challenges we face include:

- Ability to build a sustainable workforce of dentists and dental care professionals
- Access to high quality data to inform commissioning intentions
- Resources and capacity within the ICB
- Continuing commitment from local dental providers to the NHS
- Affordability of NHS dental services
- Ability to expand NHS dental services provision unless workforce in place
- Ability to reduce health inequalities through affordable NHS dental services

There are some challenges outside of our control:

- Dental contract reform
- Dental treatment costs
- National workforce plans to expand training places for dentists and dental care professionals

Key stakeholders: **engage, involve and inform**

