

ICB Primary Care Commissioning Committee

Date of meeting	13 February 2025
Title of paper	Planning and Policy Update: NHSE Operational Planning Guidance 2025/26
Presented by	Peter Tinson, Director of Primary and Community Commissioning
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Agenda item	10
Confidential	No

Executive summary

NHSE Operational Planning Guidance was published on 30th January 2025 alongside Neighbourhood Guidelines which aim to help integrated care boards (ICBs), local authorities and health and care providers continue to progress neighbourhood health in 2025/26 in advance of the publication of the 10 Year Health Plan.

The paper provides a summary of the key expectations for primary care. There are two key commissioning priorities:

- General practice access
- Urgent dental care

In addition, all parts of the health and care system are tasked with working closely to progress neighbourhood health, standardising the following six core components:

- Population health management
- Modern general practice
- Standardised community services
- Neighbourhood multi-disciplinary teams
- Integrated intermediate care with a 'Home First' approach
- Urgent neighbourhood services

Advise, Assure or Alert

The purpose of the report is to **Advise** the committee that:

- NHSE Operational Planning Guidance and Neighbourhood Guidelines were published on 30th January 2025
- The key priorities and expectations for primary care are summarised in the paper

Recommendations

Primary Care Commissioning Committee are asked to:

- Note the contents of the paper

Which Strategic Objective/s does the report contribute to

Tick

1	Improve quality, including safety, clinical outcomes, and patient experience	
2	To equalise opportunities and clinical outcomes across the area	
3	Make working in Lancashire and South Cumbria an attractive and desirable option for existing and potential employees	
4	Meet financial targets and deliver improved productivity	
5	Meet national and locally determined performance standards and targets	✓
6	To develop and implement ambitious, deliverable strategies	

Implications

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Associated risks			N/A	
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?			N/A	
Financial Implications			N/A	

Where paper has been discussed (list other committees/forums that have discussed this paper)

Meeting	Date	Outcomes
Not applicable		

Conflicts of interest associated with this report

Not applicable

Impact assessments

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Quality impact assessment completed			N/A	
Equality impact assessment completed			N/A	
Data privacy impact assessment completed			N/A	

Report authorised by:

Craig Harris, Chief Operating Officer & Chief Commissioner

ICB Primary Care Commissioning Committee

13 February 2025

Planning and Policy Update: NHSE Operational Planning Guidance 2025/26

1. Introduction

- 1.1 NHSE Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance¹ was published on 30th January 2025 alongside Neighbourhood Health Guidelines² which aim to help integrated care boards (ICBs), local authorities and health and care providers continue to progress neighbourhood health in 2025/26 in advance of the publication of the 10 Year Health Plan.
- 1.2 In the foreword to the guidance, Amanda Pritchard, Chief Executive of the NHS, sets out a number of challenges for health systems together with high level commitments and expectations which underpin the guidance. The key messages from this are:
- Greater financial flexibilities including increased overall investment in the NHS alongside a clear message that all parts of the NHS must live within their means
 - More autonomy, with fewer priorities and targets but a greater degree of responsibility and accountability with ICBs being expected to make difficult decisions to improve productivity, reduce waste and tackle unwarranted variation.
- 1.3 This remainder of this paper provides a summary of the key expectations for primary care.

2. Primary Care Priorities 2025/26

- 2.1 The operational planning guidance sets out the following priorities for primary care.
- 2.2 General practice:
- Improve patients' access to general practice, improving patient experience
 - Put in place action plans by June 2025 to improve contract oversight, commissioning and transformation for general practice, and tackle unwarranted variation

¹ [NHS England » NHS operational planning and contracting guidance](#)

² [NHS England » Neighbourhood health guidelines 2025/26](#)

- Continue to support the delivery of modern general practice and target support to practices based on their ability to provide access and a good overall experience for patients
- All GP practices have enabled all core NHS App capabilities. These include health record access, online consultations, appointment management, prescriptions management, online registration, and patient messaging

2.3 Dental care

- Improve access to dental care by commissioning additional urgent appointments to deliver their share of the government's manifesto commitment to an additional 700,000 appointments

3. Metrics

3.1 The following metrics are identified within the guidance for primary care:

Area	Target
Primary care - Access	Improve patient experience of access to general practice as measured by the ONS Health Insights Survey
Dental care	Increase the number of urgent dental appointments in line with the national ambition to provide 700,000 more
Health Inequalities	Increase the % of patients with hypertension treated according to NICE guidance, and the % of patients with GP recorded CVD, who have their cholesterol levels managed to NICE guidance

4. Neighbourhood Health Guidelines

4.1 Alongside the operational planning guidance, guidelines have been published to help integrated care boards, local authorities and health and care providers continue to progress neighbourhood health in 2025/26 in advance of the publication of the 10 Year Health Plan.

4.2 These guidelines state that all parts of the health and care system – primary care, social care, community health, mental health, acute, and wider system partners – will need to work closely together to support people's needs more systematically, building on existing cross-team working, such as primary care networks, provider collaboratives and collaboration with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector.

4.3 Systems are asked to do this by:

- standardising 6 core components of existing practice to achieve greater consistency of approach
- bringing together the different components into an integrated service offer to improve coordination and quality of care, with a focus on people with the most complex needs

- scaling up to enable more widespread adoption
- rigorously evaluating the impact of these actions, ways of working and enablers, in terms of both outcomes for local people and effective use of public money

4.4 The six core components of neighbourhood health care are identified as described below:

4.4.1 Population health management

- Single person-level longitudinal linked dataset across health and social care
- Single, consistent system-wide population health management tool
- System wide intelligence function
- Complimented with wider quantitative and qualitative insights

4.4.2 Modern general practice

- Continued implementation of national model
- Streamlined and equitable access
- Structured information about

4.4.3 Standardising community services

- Using the Standardising community health services publication to
- support demand and capacity assessment and planning with providers
- ensure the best use of funding to meet local needs and priorities

4.4.4 Neighbourhood multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs)

- Coordination of care for population cohorts with complex health and care or social needs who require support from multiple services and organisations
- Delivering proactive, planned and responsive care

4.4.5 Integrated intermediate care with a 'Home First' approach

- Short-term rehabilitation, reablement and recovery services (integrated intermediate care) taking a therapy-led approach (rehab or reablement care overseen by a registered therapist) working in integrated ways across health and social care and other sectors

4.4.6 Urgent neighbourhood services

- Standardise and scale urgent neighbourhood services for people with an escalating or acute health need
- Ensuring urgent community response and hospital at home (virtual ward) services are aligned to local demand and work together (with access increasingly through a single point of access) to deliver a coordinated service. These urgent neighbourhood services should align with services at the front door of the hospital, such as urgent treatment centres and same day emergency care, which are also increasingly accessed through a single point of access.

5 Delivery

5.1 Delivery of the priorities will be progressed via existing transformation arrangements, as set out below:

- General practice priorities will be delivered via the GP Access programme group which reports into the Primary Care Transformation Programme Group (PCTPG)
- Dental priority will be delivered via the Dental Access group which also reports into PCTPG
- Hypertension/CVD priority will be delivered via the Hypertension Oversight Group which forms part of the Population Health Programme
- Neighbourhood health will be delivered via the ICB's Transformation Roadmap 2030

6 Conclusion

6.1 The NHSE Operational Planning guidance and neighbourhood guidelines for 2025/26 set out clear priorities and expectations for primary care for the year ahead. These priorities are entirely aligned with our Primary Care Vision previously presented to the committee and will support the continued and key role of primary care in supporting the ICB vision of creating a community centric health care system, notwithstanding the challenges presented by the financial context.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 The committee is requested to:
- Note the contents of the report.

Dawn Haworth

31.01.25