

North West London Local Dental Committee

Annual Report

To the Annual General Meeting

November 2023

*Creating an environment in which dentists are proud
to work*

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Introduction

The first year of the new North West London LDC has been busy. We have been establishing ourselves with new plans, building on the engagement of the previous LDCs, and making new relationships to take forward our vision.

One of the main reasons for changing the structure of the LDCs and merging was to help bring new focus and enthusiasm for our profession.

We wanted to address the twin questions of why LDCs exist and how to get people involved. Without strong local representation to make the case for maintaining and growing investment in NHS dentistry it makes it harder for the big national problems to be addressed. We spent time developing our Vision: "For NHS dentistry to be valued as an integral part of the local health economy, creating an environment in which dentists are proud to work." This is important as it is only by demonstrating our value to other groups which can advocate for our services, that our services will be protected. By making sure that people see our value at the local level our credibility increases and our voice is more likely to be listened to. We aim to achieve our Vision through our Mission: "To embed dental services and oral health into local health and wellbeing plans, ensuring that our role is understood and valued, improving the working lives of dentists to deliver the care their patients need." The more that people understand about dentistry and oral health, the role of the dental team and the impact we can have on reducing health inequalities and improving health outcomes the greater the support they will provide.

This is why so much of our first year has been taken up with making new contacts, outlining the role of the LDC and the impact of dentistry. Below we outline our engagement so far with the North West London Integrated Care Board which now has responsibility for dental commissioning, and with stakeholders at the borough level who are setting out local plans. We also outline our plans for engagement over the next year and how you can be involved.

Who's Who

The Board



VACANCY
Director for Brent



Dr. Noor Sacoor
Director for Ealing



VACANCY
Director for Hammersmith
and Fulham



Dr. Rita Bagga
Director for Harrow



Dr. Jeff Sherer
Director for Hillingdon



Dr. Davinderpal Kooner
Director for Hounslow



Dr. Zahraa Zarruk
Director for Kensington
and Chelsea



Dr. Emilie Szasz-Frank
Director for Westminster

Summary of activities since November 2022

Who do we engage with?	What will our engagement achieve?
Integrated Care Board (ICB)	<p>Engagement at the Board level will ensure that when whole system approaches are considered in the ICS area that dentistry is factored in. As the body with ultimate responsibility for commissioning dental services in the area, on the advice from the LCP, it will be important that they consider the impact on delivery of services when considering budgets and distribution of effort.</p> <p>Ultimately, they will also be in a position to decide on local flexibility, variability and will be involved in discussions about contractual delivery and obligations. It is vital that the Board has dental input.</p> <p>Our engagement with the ICB will ensure that dental resources are protected at the highest level.</p> <p>ICBs will also be able to influence the national level and our engagement with them and demonstration of value to them will help them advocate for improvements to dentistry at the national level.</p>
Local Council	<p>The local council is a key local stakeholder. They will liaise with the ICB and form a central part of the LCP. They are elected and hold scrutiny of activities and outcomes in the local area.</p>
Local Care Partnership (LCP)	<p>As the LCP is the main body assessing the health needs of the local population and developing a plan to address these with local partners they are one of the LDC's main stakeholders. We intend to be active and valued members of the local board. We will input to local strategies to reduce health inequalities and improve health outcomes making it clear how dental services and oral health can fit into the strategies. By presenting solutions and demonstrating the value of the dental profession at the local level we will ensure that local partners support us and advocate at the ICB for investment in dental services sufficient to meet local demands and strategies.</p>
Local Healthwatch	<p>As the voice of local patients the local Healthwatch is a key partner for the LDC. They can provide a valuable insight into how local services are viewed, accessed and valued. They are also key partners to help get more information out to the public. We will engage with them to assist with reports into dental services and on comments about how other services can be improved. We will speak at events and provide impartial support to troubleshoot any issues that they have identified in the local area.</p>
Local Training Hub (LTH)	<p>The LTH will be the training and workforce planning arm supporting the local strategy delivering reductions in health inequalities and improving health outcomes. The LTH represents another avenue for the LDC to influence how other clinical areas think of and engage with dentistry. We will present at their meetings, and provide training where appropriate to encourage greater links between services and management of conditions. The LTH provides non-clinical training which the LDC will promote to members to access.</p>

Since incorporating and forming the Board through elections in 2022 the LDC has:

- **Developed a clear Vision and Mission statement**

Our vision:

For NHS dentistry to be valued as an integral part of the local health economy, creating an environment in which dentists are proud to work.

Our mission:

To embed dental services and oral health into local health and wellbeing plans, ensuring that our role is understood and valued, improving the working lives of dentists to deliver the care their patients need.

As noted in our introduction this was one of our first tasks. We felt that it was important to provide as much clarity and focus as possible for the work of the LDC as possible. By clearly stating what we want to see: a valued and happy profession, we can judge what we should focus on. We know that many of the factors which affect the profession are not within the remit or ability of one LDC to address. This is why we are part of the LDC Confederation, to join our voice with those of colleagues who share our aspirations. It is also why we focus on building relationships with non-dental stakeholders. Doing this lends their strength to ours, helps us refine our arguments and ultimately present a united local front to drive national change.

- **Formed relationships with the new North West London Integrated Care Board**

The LDC has enjoyed very positive engagement with the Integrated Care Board from the start. The Board has held meetings with the Directors of Health Inequalities and of Primary Care, enjoys regular meetings with the Senior Responsible Officer for Dentistry, Optometry and Pharmacy and with the Senior Responsible Officer for Primary Care. The LDC is a member of the North West London ICB Primary Care Programme Board, which brings together all relevant stakeholders from across the ICB. This Board has been focussed on General Medical Practice but we recently secured a commitment that equal weight and priority will be given to all four pillars of primary care. As the NHS reforms continue to develop and roles and budgets become more stable these relationships will become more important. While the impetus for immediate change is lacking the desire to understand more about the potential for dental services, to understand where issues of access have developed and why is clearly there. We will be continuing to build these relationships, explain the role of dentistry and oral health and work to ensure that local plans factor in our services. In this way, when the time is right change will occur which will bring investment to our service.

- **Managed Clinical Networks**

Our engagement with the Managed Clinical Networks has been sporadic and based on their agenda. We understand that the paediatric and special care dentistry MCNs are beginning to

start their engagement again and we look forward to working with them as they develop their plans for engagement.

- **Training Hub**

We have had some meetings with the Training Hub, looking to make their resources available for members of the dental team. Funding and confusion over remits has, however, delayed any significant implementation. As the Training Hub represents an opportunity for engagement with colleagues and making clear the role of oral health in a holistic approach to care we will continue with this engagement.

- **Communications**

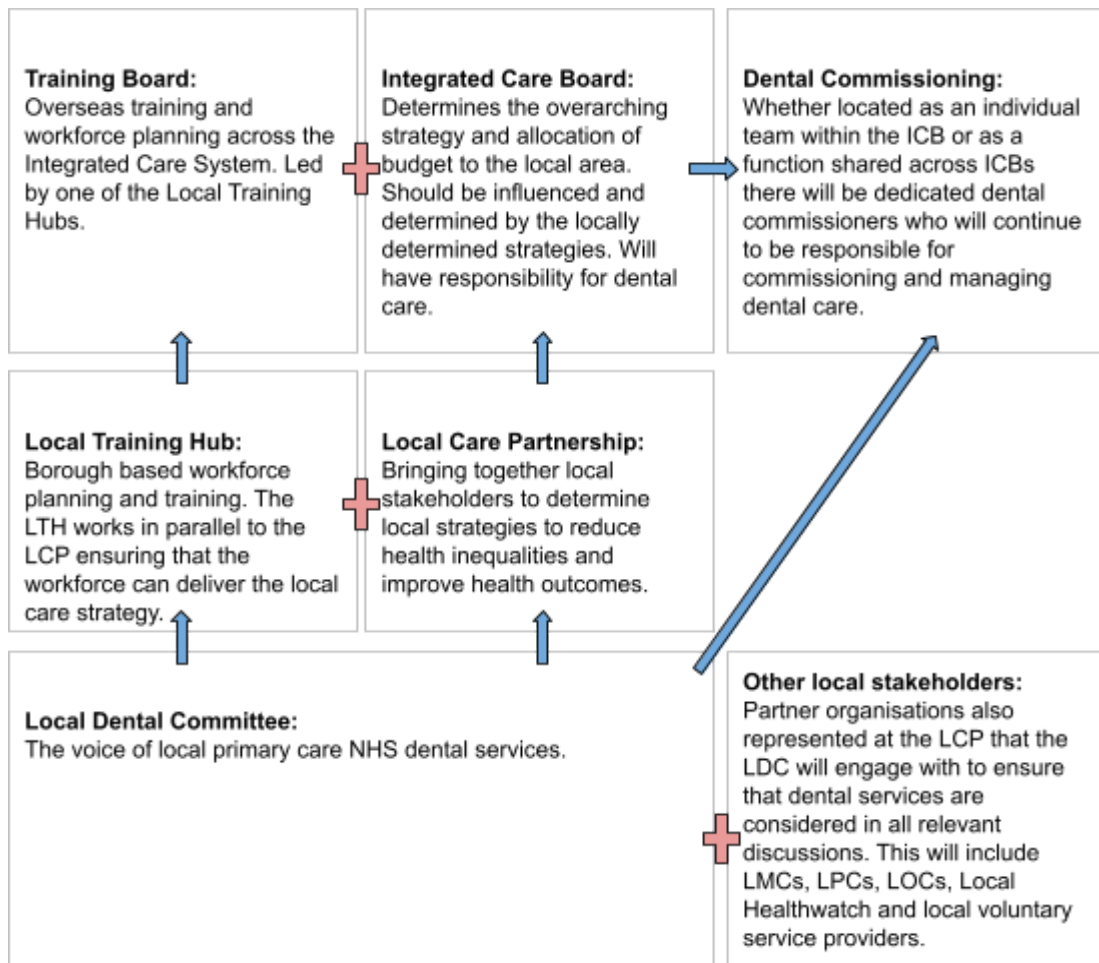
Our communication has not been as strong in our first year as we would have liked and we aim to improve this with monthly updates drawn from articles we will produce for the website. We have managed to secure pieces from key NWL stakeholders which shows that they are interested and engaged with dentistry and also that they recognise the importance of the LDC. We plan to build on this by having many more pieces from NWL stakeholders.

- **Support for members**

Support for members continues to be provided through the LDC Confederation and we anticipate the new members' portal on the website being a key point of contact.

The Board is made up of a single Director for each borough. This Director has spent the last year engaging with local stakeholders to understand local priorities and build relationships which can be developed in the next year. As the NHS reforms have only occurred recently many local stakeholders are still adjusting to new ways of working, transitioning staff and reassessing priorities. The purpose of the engagement over the past year has simply been to put dentistry on stakeholders' agendas and to make them think about the inclusion of oral health in plans so that when the opportunity is right the LDC has already set the groundwork. The stakeholders we engage with at the local level are statutory members of the ICB and have access to a greater overview of plans at the NWL and borough level. By fostering these relationships and demonstrating our value we aim to encourage these stakeholders to support our involvement in these local plans. Through this involvement we will influence local initiatives to improve access and reduce clawback and pressure on dental practices. This will create an evidence base for how a better integrated dental service, working in coordination with local plans to reduce health inequalities and improve health outcomes can pay dividends back into the community. This in turn will provide the framework for the full scale reform we need, but a reform driven by local intelligence not central planning. There is currently a vacancy for the Director of Brent and for Hammersmith and Fulham so no activity has taken place in those boroughs.

Our approach is based on our understanding of the local structures and points of influence.



● Local Authorities and Local Care Partnerships

As noted in our introduction there are no Directors for Brent and Hammersmith and Fulham so there has been no specific engagement. That said, the LDC itself has continued to have correspondence with Brent Council building on the historic legacy of the Brent and Harrow LDC.

Other boroughs have enjoyed considerable engagement with their local council and Local Care Partnership (the local arm of the Integrated Care Board). Harrow has had regular meetings and is part of the Harrow Oral Health Group led by the Council which is currently working on ensuring that the oral health plans of the Council match into the primary care plans of the Local Care Partnership.

Noor Sacoor has had several successful meetings with the LCP lead in Ealing who is very keen to start developing plans for improving access to dental care and improvements in oral health.

This has been repeated in Hounslow where the Council is actively developing a model of oral health improvement with the LDC Director Davinderpal Kooner.

Council functions are shared across Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster with the result that the LDC Directors, Zahraa Zarruk and Emlie Szasz, have had great meetings with

the lead for the Councils' Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health Inequalities lead, and been invited to meet with the LCP lead to assess which working groups dentistry should be represented on.

Plans for 2023/24

- We will continue to build on our successful engagement with the Integrated Care Board and look to ensure that their future plans contain a distinct vision for dental services and how it will integrate with other services.
- We will work with the ICB on consistent dental data to feed into their existing data set.
- A key focus will be on building the relationship with the Training Hubs at the NWL and borough levels to ensure that the value of dentistry is made clear to colleagues through this medium.
- The Training Hubs may also be hosting a Freedom to Speak up Guardian function and we will work with them to ensure that this function is relevant to dentistry.
- We have started our engagement with the CQC and will continue to build on this to make sure that inspections run as smoothly as possible and that regulation works to deliver improved services and not simply to tick a box.
- We will work with CQC colleagues to identify any areas which they consider to be a consistent weak point so we can work with members to pre-empt issues arising.
- As the new way of working for the CQC develops we will ensure that dentistry is considered when they look at their regulation of the ICB and local authorities.
- We will continue to engage with the MCNs and work with them to ensure that relevant stakeholders are included in relevant meetings and also to improve pathways for dentists.
- Each borough will continue its engagement with the council, LCP and healthwatch, calling on members to lead on specific workstreams.
- Ahead of the Mayoral election in May 2024 we will engage with London Assembly Members to raise the profile of dentistry.
- Building on the Mayoral engagement we will engage with MPs and Parliamentary candidates ahead of the expected General Election.