

South West London Local Dental Committee

Annual Report

To the Annual General Meeting

October 2023

*Empowering dentists to provide the care their
patients require*

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Introduction

In 2022 the three Local Dental Committees previously operating in south west London (Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth LDC, Kingston and Richmond LDC, and Croydon LDC) merged to form the single South West London LDC. As part of this merger the LDCs also incorporated as full legal membership companies, rather than remain as an unincorporated association.

The new legal status of the LDC provides greater assurance and transparency, as well as protection, to the Directors and members of the LDC.

Forming a legal membership company also brings a level of professionalism to the operation of the LDC.

Most importantly, however, we feel that the new structure represents a significant break with the old and the start of a new stage for the profession at the local level. By signing up for membership of the LDC you are the LDC. There is no longer a separate committee structure with privileged access to information and opportunities. Instead we hope that the new structure will encourage all members of the local profession, whatever your experience, to be an active member. .

It is through a strong local alliance that we believe meaningful change will be achieved. Top down reform of dentistry, considered in isolation from the frontline and from local plans has failed. If we are to have a profession fit for the future then the local must direct the national changes we need.

This will take time. Change is slow. But, because change is slow we must start now.

In this report the Board of the South West London LDC will outline some of our key activities over the last year and what we plan for the next year.

Who's Who

The Board



Ritesh Gajree
Director for Croydon



Kunal Patel
Director for Kingston



Tariq Ashraf
Director for Merton



Harmit Kalsi
Director for Richmond



Dharmen Patel
Director for Sutton



VACANCY
Director for Wandsworth

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 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>
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 local dentists to be empowered to provide the care their patients require with a supportive local network and NHS contract.

Our mission:

To provide an open and transparent environment for dentists to be able to provide the best care for their patients under their NHS contract by building effective local relationships and a supportive network of peers.

It was important to the new Board of the new LDC to articulate exactly what we want to see and to set this out in language which was clear and would resonate with those we want to influence. The Vision incorporates all the aspects which affect our day to day life in the profession, from contract issues, practice issues, regulation, CPD etc.

The Mission explains our approach to seeing our Vision made reality. We want the profession at the local level, active practitioners, to lead the influence on local stakeholders to effect decisions which impact us and our patients. By building a groundswell at this level, with an evidence base of how effective our services can be we will ensure that there are strong local voices advocating on behalf of our services. These local voices in unison at the south west London level will protect and grow services.

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

The NHS reforms have moved responsibility for primary care dental services in our area to the South West London Integrated Care Board (SWL ICB). The LDC has met several times with the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Primary Care at the SWL ICB. This has resulted in the formation of South West London Oral Health Group which the LDC Board attends. To support the transition from NHS England to the SWL ICB the Integrated Care Boards in London work together and continue to work with the previous commissioning managers. Their relationship is managed through the Dentistry, Optometry and Pharmacy Commissioning Oversight Group (DOP COG). We receive feedback on these meetings from the SRO and in time anticipate an LDC representative attending to ensure our interests are represented. The LDC has also been involved in the SWL ICB Digital Strategy, where we provided input on where dental data can be accessed to support their ambition of a more developed picture of local health, as well as barriers to digital integration that practices face. In addition we have been involved in other projects such as frailty in older adults, inputting from an oral health perspective.

- **Formed a South West London Primary Care Representative Group**

The LDC was the driving force bringing together the Local Pharmacy Committee, Local Optical Committee and Local Medical Committee to share intelligence on the NHS reforms. To ensure that the professions were not split, but supporting each other to make sure that

appropriate representation is available within the ICB meetings. These meetings also allow for information sharing about what is occurring in each borough in south west London, and for us to double check interpretations and priorities of local stakeholders.

● Managed Clinical Networks

The Managed Clinical Networks for paediatrics and special care dentistry have been somewhat slow to get started. Piotr Zukowski (Croydon) has been continuing his relationship with the Paediatric MCN from before our incorporation, but we are awaiting a clear plan from the MCNs before building on our engagement.

● Training Hub

Each borough has its own training hub but each ICB has a lead hub which coordinates activity and provides the overarching workforce summary to the ICB. The LDC has met with the lead Training Hub in SWL and discussed how their resources can be made available to members of the dental team. Harmit Kalsi presented on dental services at a multidisciplinary meeting of the Training Hub. As the Training Hub brings together all professions in the area it represents a great opportunity for the LDC to get the message about the importance of dentistry as well as explaining how it works, to colleagues. This in turn will hopefully support new ways of working.

● Communications

Communicating our activity has not met our ambitions. The LDC now has a page on the LDC Confederation website which will be kept up to date with reports of all our engagement. These will be circulated to members through a regular newsletter, the first of which should have been received.

● Support for members

The LDC has continued to provide support to members on specific, individual matters. The members portal on the LDC Confederation website is expected to go live shortly and through this members have access to FAQs, referral forms and to bespoke support if required.

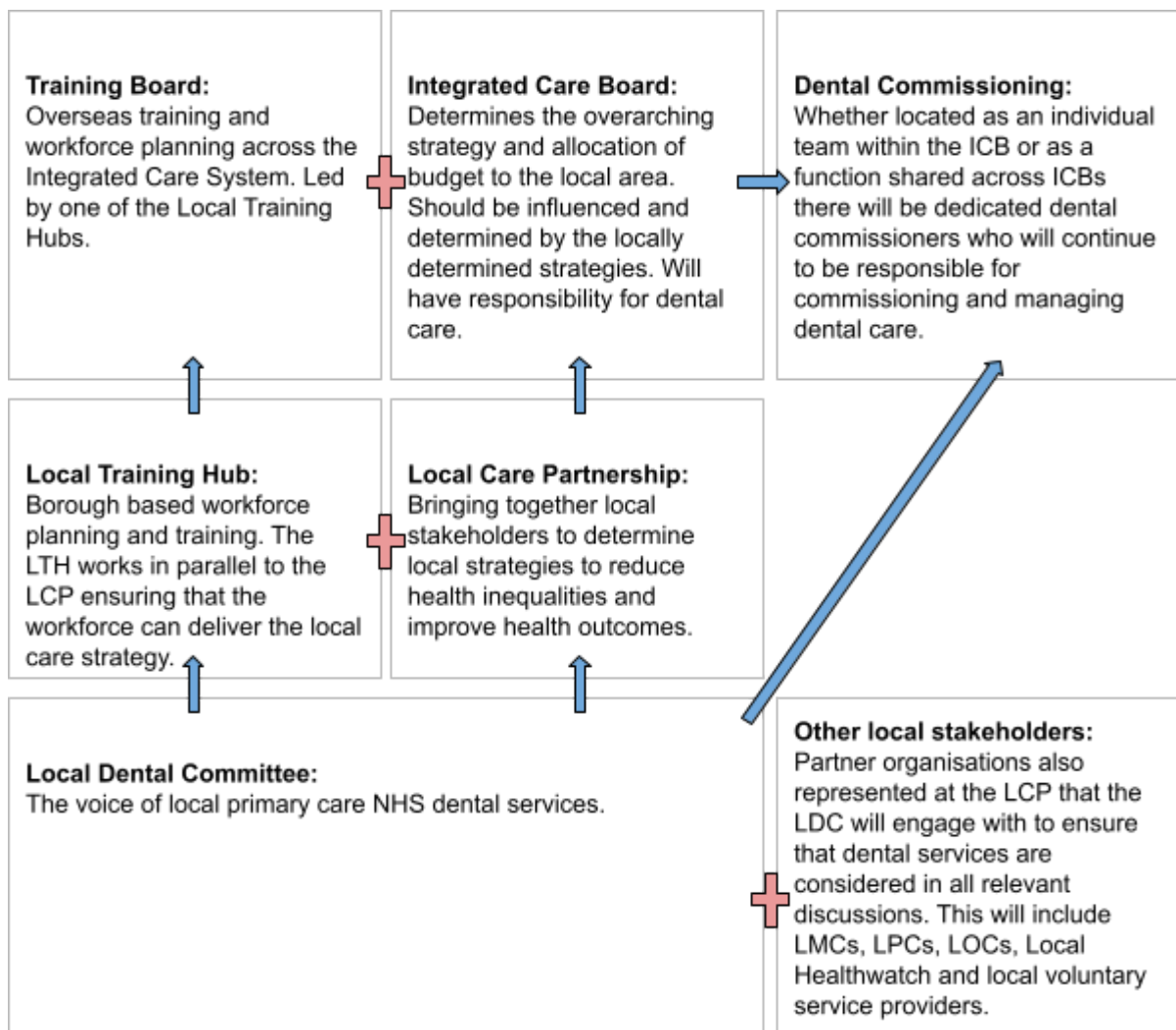
● Members

As mentioned in the introduction, the LDC incorporated as a legal membership body in 2022. With this change it was necessary to establish a proper membership agreement for individual levy payers. Members are eligible to vote and stand in elections, take part in activities for the LDC, attend meetings, receive newsletters and access the members portal on the website.

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 SWL 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 Wandsworth so no activity has taken place in that borough.

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



● Local Authorities

Engagement with the six local authorities we cover has been sporadic. Very positive engagement has taken place in Kingston where Kunal Patel had a very successful meeting with the Council's Director of Primary Care, resulting in the formation of a Kingston Oral Health Group (KOHG) to look in more detail at the data on oral health and what this means for local plans. The first meeting of the KOHG took place in October.

Engagement in Croydon continues to be very strong with the LDC maintaining its presence on the Council's Proactive and Prevent Board thanks to Mish Sachdev. An account of the Board can be found on the LDC Confederation website: [LINK](#)

Ritesh Gajree has had several successful meetings with the Director of Public Health from Croydon Council who has been instrumental in driving the establishment of the South West London Oral Health Group mentioned above. It is anticipated that Croydon Council will engage in a deep dive on dentistry in the next year with the LDC.

Despite initial resistance to formal engagement from Richmond Council a meeting has taken place where Harmit Kalsi was able to explain the relevance of oral health to the Council's overarching plans to reduce health inequalities and improve health outcomes.

Dharmen Patel has provided evidence to the Sutton Council Health Overview Scrutiny Committee on dental services.

We are in the early stages of discussing a pilot to look at improving oral health in care homes in Merton, being led by the consultant in dental public health.

● Local Healthwatch

Engagement with local healthwatch across the LDC has been very strong. Dentistry is a major issue for local healthwatch and they are keen to work together to highlight both issues and solutions. Engagement has continued to be strong with Healthwatch Croydon, building on their two reports on dentistry. Healthwatch Richmond has continued to actively champion investment in services. Healthwatch Merton has agreed to pursue dentistry with more vigour and we are working with them to provide content for their website to improve patient knowledge.

Plans for 2023/24

As mentioned above the strategic approach of the LDC is to build an alliance of stakeholders at the borough level which influences the ICB to use its powers to achieve short term change to improve dental services. Through the effectiveness of these short term changes and improved pathways we will work with the ICB to achieve longer term national changes required to ensure that dental services can work effectively to meet local plans. This helps dentists by improving our working lives and making NHS dentistry a more fulfilling career option.

We will work through the South West London Oral Health Group to embed dentistry into local plans and pathways. By working through this group, basing initiatives on local intelligence, we hope to be able to use existing funding in innovative ways that reduce financial pressure on practices while improving patient care and meeting local plans.

With the members portal on the LDC Confederation going live we are sure that members will find much practical support for day to day issues, ranging from Compass to referrals, to pensions and clawback. While this portal will continue to be developed please do provide feedback on what you would like to see.

As part of the LDC Confederation we will be pursuing improvements in regulation through engagement with the GDC and CQC. We will also be supporting the development of a Manifesto on dentistry ahead of the London Mayoral elections in May 2024. Part of this manifesto will be based on a survey of the public and their attitude to dental services. This will ensure that the public voice helps shape the service they use. We will use both the public survey findings and Mayoral Manifesto to promote NHS dental services, keeping it in the public consciousness in what will likely be a General Election year. We will be engaging with MPs and candidates ahead of the General Election to gather support for our local work and a commitment from them to hold the government to account for improvements to the dental contract.

On a more practical level we will build our relationship with the local CQC inspection leads to ensure that inspections are improved. If you have any issues, questions or feedback please do contact us.

At the local level each borough Director is committed to continuing their engagement with the local authority, local care partnership and local Healthwatch.