

Oral Health and Dental Strategy 2025-27

Improving oral health in North East and North Cumbria

Our vision:

Reduce oral health inequalities



Prevent dental diseases



Improve access to high-quality NHS dental care



Our priorities:

Increase preventative oral health interventions

Keeping teeth and gums healthy from an early age can prevent dental decay.

We'll help people do this by:

- Supporting and facilitating expansion of community water fluoridation in the North East
- Targeting initiatives to people and places most in need
- Working with partners to embed oral health in wider health programmes
- Using Making Every Contact Count to promote good habits and signpost services
- Enabling NHS dental practices to use preventative treatments like fluoride varnish

Increase access to urgent dental care

Patients with the highest clinical needs require access to reliable urgent and emergency care.

We'll deliver this by:

- Expanding our network of Urgent Dental Access Centres across the region
- Offering online and telephone booking (in addition to NHS 111 referral) so patients can secure appointments at times and locations that suit them

Improve access to routine dental care

Regular access to a dentist can prevent long-term oral health and dental issues.

We'll improve routine access by:

- Targeting support to practices in the 20% most deprived areas and to those in greatest need
- Understanding the true costs of NHS dental services to improve future commissioning
- Working with Managed Clinical Networks to give patients equal access to specialist dental care
- Supporting Community Dental Teams to care for children, young people and vulnerable groups closer to home

Improve dental workforce recruitment and retention

A skilled and valued workforce is needed to deliver high-quality NHS dental care.

We'll build this by:

- Training and supporting professionals in the whole dental workforce
- Rewarding long-term service
- Recruiting and retaining staff in areas with significant workforce challenges
- Using flexible commissioning to deliver service models that are attractive to the dental workforce
- Supporting reforms to the national dental contract