

Plymouth Health and Wellbeing Board

NHS Devon ICB Dental Services Update

National update

“The Government’s ambition remains to fundamentally reform the dental contract. We developed this package of proposals to address some of the real and pressing issues that dentists and dental teams are experiencing.”

- The national consultation regarding NHS dental care was open for 6 weeks and closed on 19 August 2025.
- It is anticipated that they will introduce appropriate changes for April 2026



National update

- Overview of items being consulted on:
 - Mandate a proportion of dental contract capacity to be unscheduled (urgent) care
 - supported by new payment arrangements
 - Improved payments to support care for patients with significant dental decay and/or significant gum disease
 - Create a new course of treatment for the application of fluoride varnish on children, without a full dental check-up and which can be applied by extended duty dental nurses (EDDNs) between full check-ups

National update

- Incentivise greater use of preventative sealants on high-risk children's permanent teeth by increasing payment to band 2 (from band 1)
- Introduce increased payment for denture modifications, relining and repairs, which can prevent most costly treatments for patients
- Options to support reducing clinically unnecessary check-ups
- Introduce funded quality-improvement activities for practices
- Provide practices with funding for annual appraisals
- Develop minimum terms of engagement set out in an NHS model contract for dental associates
- [Consultation document website](#)

Local update

Recovery Plan

25/26 priority	Detail
Urgent dental care provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remains the team's top commissioning priority due to government's commitment to 700k additional urgent dental care appointments• Commissioned review of urgent dental care in Q1• Recently reopened the expression of interest process following additional engagement with Devon Local Dental Committee (LDC) and providers/practitioners• Devon providers currently at 73% of nationally planned achievement, including baseline activity, for year to date• Upcoming procurement of new dental contracts will include a prescribed percentage of urgent dental care, to contribute towards the target.
Commissioning of further stabilisation sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer-term contracts secured for stabilisation sessions, with 34 contracts now being delivered in 2025/26
Commissioning access for vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration with public health to expand access for these cohorts of patients.• Draft proposal is currently being worked on with the aim of procurements taking place in the new year.• Imminent procurement process for new dental contracts across Devon aims to elicit bids with a focus on provision for vulnerable groups through innovative service delivery
Procurement of lost activity (UDA and UOA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imminent lotted procurement of new dental contracts across Devon and Cornwall will include general dental activity• The Plymouth lot is the largest, aiming to contract for an additional 54,000 units of dental activity (UDA)/annum at a contract value of £1.8m - £2.2m• Plymouth is also included in the separate out of hours (OOH) lot, with Barnstaple, Exeter and Torbay aiming to contract for an additional 5,222 OOH appointments• Early indications are that there is provider interest across all Devon lots.
Oral Health improvement initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A suite of oral health initiatives are now available in Devon through collaborative working with local authorities (LAs)• We have attempted to turn the challenge of limited NHS dental capacity into an opportunity by repurposing the associated underspend to commission a programme of initiatives to improve oral health in children.• These offers include First Dental Steps (1-2 yrs), Big Brush Club (3-5 yrs) and Open Wide Step Inside (6-7 yrs)• The team plan to look at oral health promotion into Care Homes which would have a significant impact in Devon.

Local update

2025/26 Progress, successes and achievements

2025/26 workstream	Detail
UDA uplift	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum rate for a unit of dental activity (UDA) uplifted to £34.66 (incl. 2025/26 Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) uplift) from £28• This is above the nationally mandated rate
Urgent Dental Care (UDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved rate of pay for UDC - top-up to £105/appointment to stimulate the market and drive uptake. Five providers signed up in Plymouth offering an additional 1750 UDC appointments.• Improved national ranking from 41 – 30 since April 25.• A percentage of the activity procured in new contracts for dental provision across Devon (see below) will be mandated as UDC
Contract management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procurement of additional 9514 units orthodontic activity (UOA) across Devon, 1235 of which are in Plymouth• £2.6m of activity has been released from rebased contracts in Plymouth, ensuring that delivery levels are achievable. This has created capacity to procure new activity (see below).
Lotted procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint lotted approach being worked up with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (CIOS) ICB for procurement of new dental contracts around the counties.• Prior Information Notice (PIN) advertised to the market 1 August 2025. Invitation to Tender (ITT) now imminent.• Plymouth lot is the largest of 8 – 54,000 UDAs valued at £2.2k• Plymouth included in the Out of Hours (OOH) provision lot – 5,222 OOH appointments valued at £658k• These new contracts potentially key across multiple priorities including urgent dental care, provision to vulnerable populations and improvement of general access to dental services in Devon.

Local update

2025/26 Progress, successes and achievements

2025/26 workstream	Detail
Vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NHS Devon ICB currently has two services focussing on provision of dental services to people experiencing homelessness, one in both Plymouth and Exeter.• Discussions on-going with public health regarding Devon-wide provision, which may include expansion of existing services and procurement of new services. This would include widening scope of provision to a wider array of groups.• NHS Devon contracts three providers for provision of dental services to Children Looked After across Devon, 1 of which is in Plymouth• Invitation to tender (ITT) for new dental contracts in Devon includes a focus on vulnerable populations, encouraging innovation in service delivery to these cohorts of patients.• Work ongoing to provide support to other vulnerable groups, with proposals currently under consideration for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cancer Action Support Practice – whereby participating practices would offer a temporary dental home for patients who have undergone treatment for head and neck cancer• Bone strengthening medication service pathway proposal for treatment of osteoporosis, cancer and respiratory conditions.
Paediatric dental services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Started work to review paediatric dental services and agree strategic priorities going forward
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NHS Devon ICB agreed £327,400 for 22 ‘Golden Hello’ applications. Four appointments have been made, with one pending final approval. NHS Devon continues to support this scheme.• Identified six initial areas of focus: Recruitment, retention, roles and models of care, wellbeing of staff, training and university places and education support and foundation training• Next meeting on 23 October – looking at activity against those six key themes and how to support the workforce in Devon.

Local update

Dental access

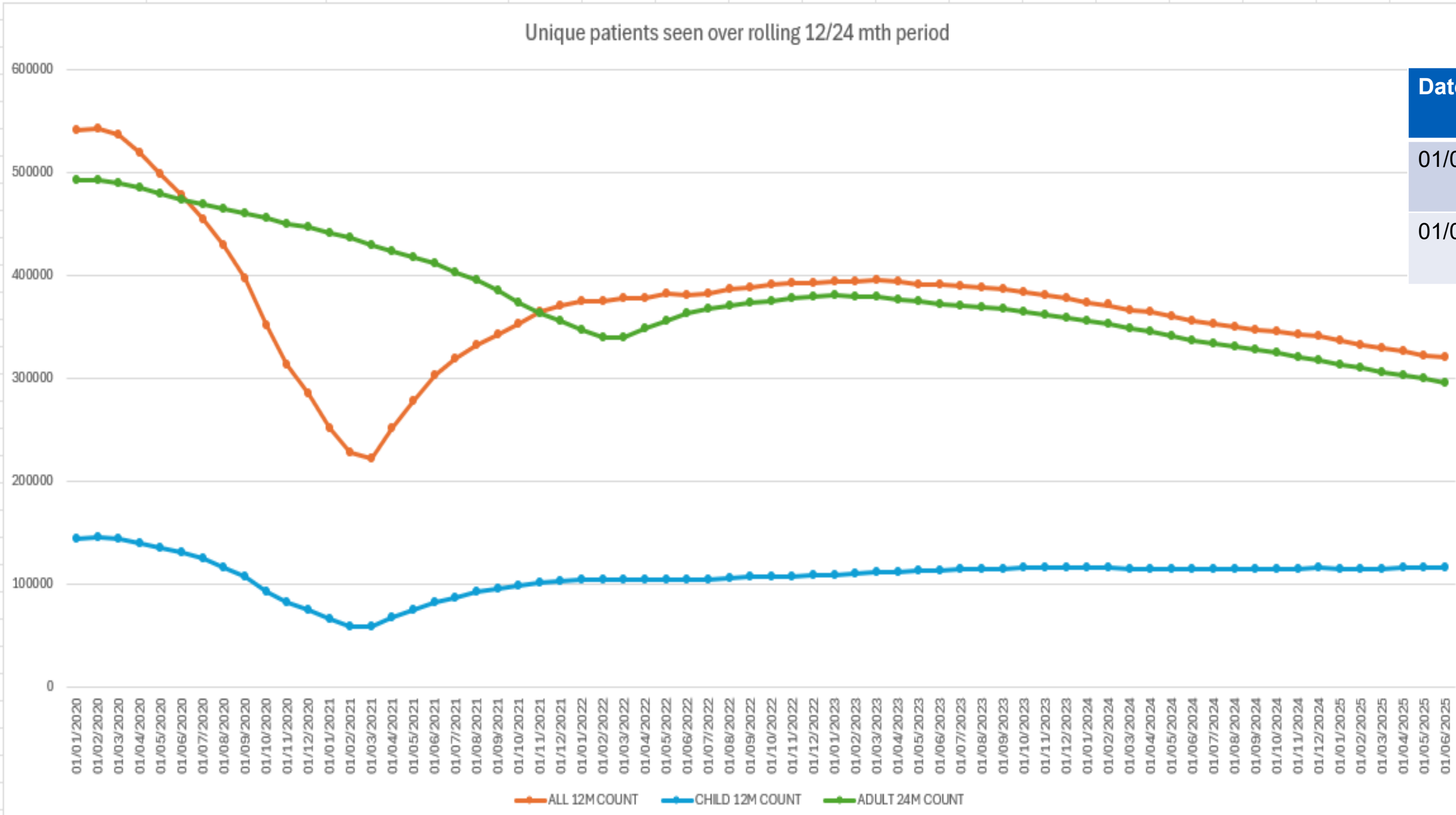
- Devon currently hold **150 NHS dentistry contracts** and **13 orthodontic contracts**.
- The ICB target in the 2025/26 planning indicators for Q1 was 241,819 appointments. NHS Devon dental contracts **delivered 211,977 in Q1 (87.7% of target)**.
- The ICB target in the 2025/26 planning indicators for Q2 is 246,962 appointments, or 82,320 per month. Actual delivered for **July was 75,391 (91.6% of target)**
- **NOTE:** June and July data is yet to be finalised due to the claim window still being open and may increase.
- NHS Devon is currently working with NHS England business intelligence colleagues to breakdown dental data by local authorities (LAs)



Local update

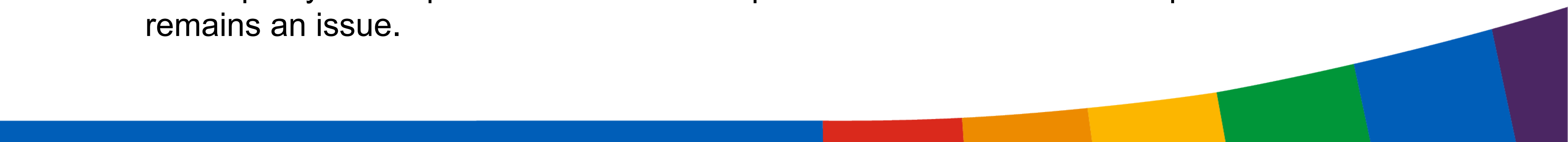
Dental access

- Most up to date data indicating unique patients seen by a dentist over 12/24 months rolling period is shown below:



Local update

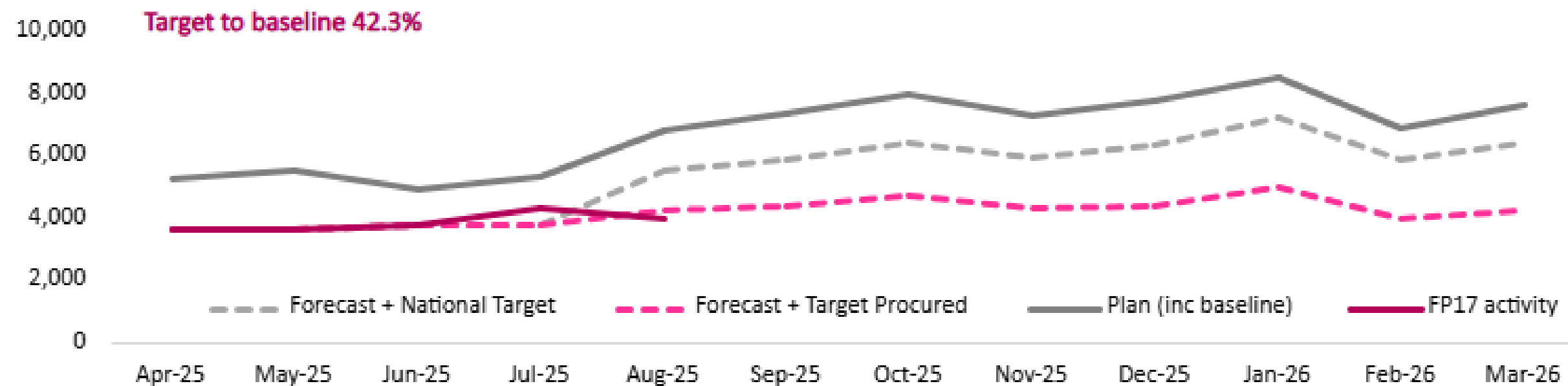
Urgent Dental Care (UDC) – Government mandate

- Main team priority is delivery of 81,705 UDC appointments in 2025/26, representing a **42.3% increase** above when baseline data was collected.
 - There had been **continued decline in UDC** delivery over the last five years.
 - Since 2019/20 UDC activity has dropped by c.5% per annum on the previous year, until 23/24 which was a 17% drop, followed by a further **decline of c.24%** for 24/25.
 - Reversing this trend is top priority and team continue to explore additional commissioning options to run in parallel with its current UDC offer.
 - NHS Devon's UDC offer to providers is one of the most attractive in the country. However, the disparity in compensation available to providers between NHS and private treatment remains an issue.
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Local update

Urgent Dental Care – Government mandate

- We have received **6 expressions of interest from Plymouth** providers (of 19), with two more currently pending clarification questions.
- Imminent lotted procurement of new dental practices across Devon will mandate a percentage of the contracts to be delivered as urgent dental care
- NHS Devon ICB providers have achieved 73% of their combined target (year to date) for urgent dental care. We are working on breaking this data down to LA level.



- Note that claim window for July and August remain open and claim figures are likely to increase, though may be impacted by the holiday season.
- NHS Devon shows consistent improvement in national rankings each month year to date (YtD), rising from 41 to 31 nationally.

Requested action

- NHS Devon ICB requests that the Board:
 - Note the contents of this update
 - Agree to receive quarterly a quarterly briefing on NHS Devon's dental workplan and progress against the indicators included in this update



Recap

- In summary:
 - National consultation response period closed – South West had higher than average submissions compared to rest of country
 - Commissioned review of Urgent Dental Care in Q1
 - NHS Devon commitment to national urgent dental care (UDC) mandate – main team priority
 - Devon providing one of the most attractive UDC offers in the country – drives uptake and activity
 - Devon were the first movers for enhanced urgent care expressions of interest in the South West
 - Upcoming procurement of additional dental activity across Devon – general dental activity, UDC and vulnerable groups are key focusses
 - Positive role of Plymouth Dental Taskforce

