



Department
of Health &
Social Care



To:

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown
Chair of Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 9NA

By email: pubaccom@parliament.uk

19 May 2026

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

Re: Public Accounts Committee: Twenty-First report of Session 2024-25, Fixing NHS Dentistry (Recommendations 4b and 6a)

We are writing to update you on recommendations 4b and 6a from the above report. Recommendation 4b concerns commissioning support and oversight of ICBs; and recommendation 6a concerns the publication of a government response to the public consultation on a dental graduate “tie-in” of summer 2024.

Recommendation 4b

4b. PAC recommendation: NHSE and DHSC must in their future plans for NHS dentistry:

- ***explain how they intend to support ICBs to innovate within their commissioning powers, while holding them to account for improving dentistry in their areas;***

The government agrees with the committee’s recommendations and had previously provided a target implementation date of December 2025 respectively.

There is an interdependency between the 2026 Quality and Payment reforms which are currently being implemented and flexible commissioning. On 16 December 2025, NHS England wrote to commissioners confirming that government intended to proceed with implementing the reforms to the dental contract which were consulted on in August 2025. This communication provided updated guidance on the use of flexible commissioning using UDA offset for urgent dental and confirmed that this should end by 31 March 2026 when the requirement for dental contractors to provide minimum levels of urgent care would be introduced.

There are further interdependencies between the reforms due to be introduced in June 2026 and flexible commissioning. NHS England is therefore aiming to fully implement

recommendation 4b by September 2026 when further advice on managing these interdependencies will be provided to ICBs.

Recommendation 6

6. PAC conclusion: Without a workforce sufficiently supported to deliver NHS dental care, there will be no future for NHS dentistry and DHSC and NHSE have not yet done enough to address workforce issues.

6a. PAC recommendation: DHSC must:

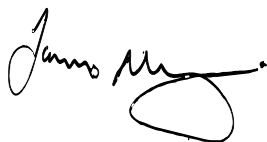
- **publish its response to the consultation on a dental graduate “tie-in”.**

The government agrees with the committee’s recommendation and had previously provided a target implementation date of winter 2025. However, it is now necessary to revise that date to Winter 2026, as explained below.

This consultation was undertaken by the previous government in summer 2024. However, this government agrees with the principle of tie-ins for new dentists, and our 10 Year Health Plan (July 2025) committed to introducing a tie-in to require newly qualified dentists to work in the NHS, intended to be for at least three years post-qualification.

The government plans to publish a response later this year. The delay in publishing has been to allow the government sufficient time to consider its response alongside reforms being made to the dental contract.

Yours sincerely,



Sir James Mackey
Chief Executive Officer
NHS England



Samantha Jones OBE
Permanent Secretary
Department of Health and Social Care