Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Integrated Care Board

Date of meeting	5 November 2026
Title of paper	Thirlwall Inquiry – Board consideration
Presented by	Jane Scattergood, Interim Chief Nurse
Author	Margaret Williams, Interim Deputy Chief Nurse
Agenda item	9
Confidential	No

Executive summary

As we set out the ICB Board consideration of the Thirlwall inquiry our thoughts remain with the families affected, who have experienced unimaginable loss and pain, and an NHS that repeatedly failed them. The care, safety, and safeguarding of all patients is the principal duty of all of us, and this is why we must all act with the urgency, curiosity, and openness to ensure that the learning from this Inquiry is translated into clear action.

The Thirlwall Inquiry published 15th September 2026 has significant implications for NHS leadership, safeguarding and governance beyond neonatal services. Upon publication the Chief Nursing Officer for England and Chief Operating Officer for NHSE have asked every NHS Trust and ICB Board to consider the Inquiry findings.

The central question posed is “Can the Board be assured that, if similar warning signs arose within ICB-commissioned services, they would be recognised, connected, escalated and acted upon early enough to prevent harm?”

The primary ICB Board requirement is to consider whether the wider failures in safeguarding, professional curiosity, speaking up, escalation, leadership and governance could occur elsewhere within the system, and whether current ICB assurance arrangements would identify and respond to warning signs early enough.

This sits alongside specific Inquiry recommendations and actions requiring delivery by relevant Providers. Assurance will be sought by the ICB’s quality assurance architecture for commissioned Providers and reported through the ICB Quality Outcomes Committee.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Work is underway to redesign the Maternity and Neonatal Voice Partnership model working with People First with the aim to improve how we hear experiences from women and families across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Recommendations

The ICB Board is asked to:

1. Note the findings and recommendations arising from the Thirlwall Inquiry and recognise the relevance of the wider learning beyond maternity and neonatal services.
2. Endorse the proposed Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB and system assurance oversight framework, recognising that the approach will continue to develop and mature.
3. Support the ICB, in its role as strategic commissioner, in obtaining proportionate provider assurance in relation to:
    a. organisational culture and speaking up;
    b. safeguarding governance and escalation;
    c. application of the Insightful Provider Board framework;
    d. implementation of the National Bereavement Care Pathway;
    e. compliance with the Getting it right first time (GIRFT) Neonatology Guide to Safe Insulin Use; and
    f. Sudden unexpected death in childhood (SUDIC) arrangements.
4. Endorse the application of the wider learning across ICB governance and assurance arrangements, including Board and committee development, safeguarding assurance and quality surveillance, with particular consideration given to services caring for children and vulnerable people.

Which Strategic Objective/s does the report relate to:		Tick
SO1	To improve population health and reduce inequalities through effective strategic commissioning.	✓
SO2	Commission high quality, safe and accessible services that deliver better and more equitable outcomes and patient experience.	✓
SO3	To develop and sustain the workforce, leadership and organisational capability required to operate as an effective strategic commissioner.	✓
SO4	Improved financial sustainability through directing available resources to deliver the greatest possible value.	✓
SO5	To deliver agreed national and local outcomes through a balanced focus on performance, improvement and long-term system resilience.	✓

Implications

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Associated risks	✓			
Are associated risks detailed on the ICB Risk Register?		✓		
Financial Implications	✓			Potentially for providers which may require ICB commissioning consideration

Where paper has been discussed (list other committees/forums that have discussed this paper)

Meeting	Date	Outcomes
ICB Quality and Outcomes Committee	28 October 2026	Received, discussed, endorsed approach to Quality Governance and Assurance.

		Paper to be presented to (dates to be confirmed): - Child Death overview panels - All Children Safeguarding Partnership Boards - Medicines Optimisation System Group.

Conflicts of interest associated with this report
Nil to note at time of writing.

Impact assessments				
	Yes	**No**	**N/A**	**Comments**
Quality impact assessment completed		✓		
Equality impact assessment completed		✓		
Data privacy impact assessment completed		✓		

Report authorised by:	Jane Scattergood, Interim Chief Nurse