

Brighton & Hove City Council

Scrutiny Report Template

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 24

Subject: Dentistry

Date of meeting: 11 February 2026

Report of: NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board

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Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report presents information from NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB), the local NHS commissioners of NHS dental services. Appendix 1 to the report is a submission from the ICB which includes information on access to NHS urgent and routine dental services, on plans to improve access, and on the programme offering better preventative dental care to children.
- 1.2 The HOSC last considered the issue of dentistry in 2024. A link to the January 2024 committee report is included for information in the background papers to this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 NHS dental services have experienced considerable pressures in recent years, particularly in terms of people struggling to access either routine or

urgent services. Members of the public also frequently report concerns about other aspects of NHS dentistry, including uncertainty about what dental services are available on the NHS, worries that NHS patients may be improperly encouraged by dentists to purchase private services, and confusion about dental lists. These are national issues which are also experienced locally: Healthwatch Brighton & Hove receives a consistently high volume of enquiries and complaints about dental services and has published advice and information to help local residents navigate the system [Dentistry – A Healthwatch guide to your rights and accessing the treatment you need | Healthwatch Brightonandhove.](#)

- 3.2 The government acknowledges that there are significant problems with NHS dentistry and recent national NHS Guidance includes objectives to increase NHS dental activity, focusing particularly on ensuring that people can access urgent NHS services. The government is also committed to reforming the dental contract over time – the current contract is widely viewed, both by NHS commissioners and by dentists, as an impediment to improving services. Substantial changes to the ways in which the NHS contract operates will be introduced in April 2026, with further changes to follow.
- 3.3 The HOSC last scrutinised this issue on January 2024. A link to this report is included for information as a background document.
- 3.4 Appendix 1 to the current report consists of a paper provided by the ICB. The paper briefly explains how NHS dentistry functions. It also provides more detailed information about the local programme to increase NHS dental capacity in Brighton & Hove, the communications plan that will ensure local residents are aware of the increased availability of NHS dentistry, and the programme of preventative work focusing on children living in the more deprived areas of the city.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 Not applicable to this report for information.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 No engagement has been undertaken for this information report.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There are no financial implications to this report information.

Name of finance officer consulted: _____ Date consulted (dd/mm/yy): _____

7. Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report, which is for noting.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 29.01.26

8. Equalities implications

8.1 None directly for this information report. Members may wish to note that it is particularly crucial that children and young people learn the habits of good dental hygiene as this forms the basis for life-long good oral health. Appendix 1 to this report includes details of work in the city to encourage good dental hygiene across the most deprived communities. Also, where there is little or no access to free at the point of care NHS dental services, or where people struggle to understand how they can access these services, the communities most impacted will be those least able to pay for private dentistry. This may include a range of communities with protected characteristics, including older people, people for whom English is not their first language, and people with disabilities.

9. Sustainability implications

9.1 None identified.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

10.1 Health and wellbeing issues are explored in Appendix 1 to this report.

Other Implications

11. Procurement implications

11.1 None identified for this information report.

12. Crime & disorder implications:

12.1 None identified for this information report.

13. Conclusion

13.1 Committee is asked to note the steps being taken locally to increase access to NHS dentistry, to communicate the additional availability of NHS dental services, and to encourage good oral hygiene for children in the city's more deprived areas.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Information provided by NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB)

2. Background documents

1. HOSC dentistry report January 2024: [Brighton & Hove City Council - Agenda for Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 31st January, 2024, 4.00pm](#)