



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Title:	Use of the ring-fenced Public Health grant 2025/6 and grant assurance process
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Executive Summary

This paper describes the ringfenced public health grant, national grant conditions, and the breakdown of spend on commissioned public health services, delivery and council services in 2025/6.

Aim of paper: to describe the ringfenced public health grant in Brighton & Hove, what the grant can be spent on (national guidelines), and current spend on public health commissioned services, direct delivery, and council services which deliver public health work. The paper also describes how using new underspend (from vacant posts) is supporting additional council public health programmes in 2026/7.

1 USE OF THE RING-FENCED PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT (NATIONAL GUIDELINES)

The Local Government Association (LGA's) guidance on the public health grant notes:

'Councils have, since 1 April 2013, been responsible for improving the health of their local population and for public health services including some services that support children and young people's health, most sexual health services and services aimed at reducing problem drug and alcohol use. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care continues to have overall responsibility for improving health and addressing health inequalities.

Councils receive an annual ringfenced public health grant from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) plus supplementary public health funding for substance use and stop smoking services. The core condition of this grant is that it

*should be used only for the purposes of the public health functions of local authorities*¹.

Local authority public health spend is classified as:

1.1 PRESCRIBED FUNCTIONS

- Sexual health services - STI testing and treatment
- Sexual health services - contraception
- NHS Health Check programme
- Local authority role in health protection
- Public health advice to NHS Commissioners
- National Child Measurement programme
- Prescribed children's 0 to 5 services

1.2 NON-PRESCRIBED FUNCTIONS

- Sexual health services - advice, prevention and promotion
- Obesity - adults
- Obesity - children
- Physical activity - adults
- Physical activity - children
- Treatment for drug misuse in adults
- Treatment for alcohol misuse in adults
- Preventing and reducing harm from drug misuse in adults
- Preventing and reducing harm from alcohol misuse in adults
- Specialist drugs and alcohol misuse services for children and young people
- Stop smoking services and interventions
- Wider tobacco control
- Children 5 to 19 public health programmes

¹ [Councillors' guide to local authority public health responsibilities | Local Government Association](#)

- Other Children's 0 to 5 services non-prescribed
- Health at work
- Public mental health
- Miscellaneous²³

2 USE OF THE RING-FENCED PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT IN BRIGHTON & HOVE 2025/6

The table below shows the way that the Brighton and Hove public health grant was spent in 2025/6.

Budget Allocation Summary Position					
Service	25/26 PH Grant	25/26 Reserve	25/26 Ext Inc	Total	%
PH Ringfence Grant	£ 24,405,920	£ 1,459,000	£ 5,719,661	£ 31,584,581	
Public health grant allocated to wider Council services	£ 2,759,750	£ 601,000	£ 12,500	£ 3,373,250	10.7%
Commissioned Services (Contracts) and Programme / Grant Funded Services	£ 17,523,614	£ 361,144	£ 5,113,907	£ 22,998,665	72.8%
Staffing Costs	£ 3,833,866	£ 17,010	£ 593,254	£ 4,444,130	14.1%
Supplies and Service Costs	£ 288,690	£ 39,846	£ -	£ 328,536	1.0%
Public Health Reserve	£ -	£ 440,000	£ -	£ 440,000	1.4%
Total	£ 24,405,920	£ 1,459,000	£ 5,719,661	£ 31,584,581	100%

Outlined below is the breakdown of the allocation to other areas in the Council 2025/26.

Public health grant allocated to wider Council services					
Service	Description	25/26 PH Grant	25/26 Reserve	25/26 Ext Inc	Total
Service Charges	Corporate Overhead Charges - Various Services	£ 329,445	£ -	£ -	£ 329,445
HR	Council Flu Vaccination Programme	£ 15,000	£ -	£ -	£ 15,000
Corporate Leadership Team	Emergency Planning	£ 12,000	£ -	£ -	£ 12,000
Comms	Comms - Consultation Portal	£ 6,000	£ -	£ -	£ 6,000
City Operations	Active Transport & Road Safety	£ 51,750	£ -	£ -	£ 51,750
	Seafront team: Accident & suicide prevention / health improvement	£ 220,000	£ -	£ -	£ 220,000
	Environmental Health (Nutrition)	£ 50,912	£ -	£ -	£ 50,912
	Notional Botox and Fillers Grant	£ 9,290	£ -	£ -	£ 9,290
FCW	Healthy Neighbourhood Fund	£ 50,000	£ -	£ -	£ 50,000
	Early Help	£ 900,000	£ 400,000	£ -	£ 1,300,000
	RUOK	£ 527,597	£ -	£ -	£ 527,597
	County Lines	£ 80,000	£ -	£ -	£ 80,000
	Sch MH service	£ 67,379	£ 100,000	£ 12,500	£ 179,879
	Data analyst	£ 57,612	£ -	£ -	£ 57,612
	PSHE advisory	£ 44,644	£ -	£ -	£ 44,644
	Emotion coaching	£ 9,567	£ -	£ -	£ 9,567
	FH rental for HV	£ 28,400	£ -	£ -	£ 28,400
	MH Counselling Pilot	£ -	£ 201,000	£ -	£ 201,000
	IDVAs	£ -	£ 120,000	£ -	£ 120,000
HASC	Specialist Drugs and Alcohol Social Care	£ 196,153	£ -	£ -	£ 196,153
	Rough Sleeper Services	£ 80,000	£ 54,000	£ -	£ 134,000
	Supported Accommodation, Young Parents	£ 24,000	£ -	£ -	£ 24,000
Total		£ 2,759,750	£ 875,000	£ 12,500	£ 3,647,250

3 PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES AND NEW DEMANDS

There are pressing public health priorities in Brighton and Hove which include a high suicide rate, higher than average drug related deaths, and homelessness and rough sleeping (heavily affecting our most disadvantaged residents who have mental health

² [Public health ring-fenced grant 2023 to 2024: local authority circular - GOV.UK](#)

³ can include, but is not exclusive to: nutrition initiatives, accidents prevention, general prevention, community safety, violence prevention and social exclusion, dental public health, infectious disease surveillance and control, environmental hazards protection, seasonal death reduction initiatives, birth defect preventions

and addiction needs), which will need a new approach, working with partners on innovative approaches.

4 ADDED FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH WORK IN THE COUNCIL

In 2025/6, a number of vacant posts were deleted to enable a renewed focus on public health work taking place in other parts of the council. The newly vacant posts deleted are 4.6FTE in total. This has created another £306k in substitutions, which have been allocated to domestic abuse related death reviews (DARDR) and school-based counselling, for 2026/7.

The current underspend in 2025/26 is largely attributable to in-year savings from vacancies and the restructuring of the Public Health team. The full-year savings will be realised in 2026/27 and re-allocated as permanent funding to other council services.

Historical underspends have been driven by pandemic-related service disruptions and uncertainties around NHS Contracts and Integrated Care Board (ICB) funding, which delayed expenditure.

Public Health cannot overspend. Therefore, any underspend is retained as reserves, which are maintained in line with DHSC recommendation at approximately 5% of the grant value.

5 GRANT ASSURANCE PROCESS

Department of health and social care (DHSC) runs a grant assurance process including twice yearly assurance letters co-signed by the Section 151 Officer and the Director of Public Health, to confirm the grant is being spent appropriately. There is also a yearly detailed return (with spend set out against a number of categories) sent to the Office for Health Inequalities and Disparities (OHID, part of Department of Health and Social Care). OHID then quality assure the spend and ensure that it is not higher or lower compared with benchmarked averages in other councils.

BHCC, along with every other council nationally and in the South East, has just completed a 'deep dive' grant audit, with particular focus on the 'miscellaneous spend' category. This return was completed on 30 January 2025 and we await the outcome. This will then be followed by yearly financial deep dives/ audits to closely examine the spend.