

Report to: East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

Date of meeting: 3 October 2024

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Access to NHS Dentistry Services

Purpose: To provide an outline of progress being made to improve access to NHS Dentistry services in East Sussex

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note the report; and
 - 2) consider whether to further scrutinise any of the areas covered in the report.
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1. Background

1.1 The Committee has previously been made aware and has considered the difficulties in accessing NHS dentistry services in East Sussex. There has been widespread reporting in the media that people are finding it hard to get NHS dental treatment and this has been raised as an issue in East Sussex by Healthwatch as part of their ongoing work.

1.2 NHS Sussex were one of the first Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to take on commissioning responsibility for community dental services. At its meeting on 15 December 2022 HOSC considered a report that gave an overview of dental commissioning and access to dentistry, as part of a more general update on primary care services from NHS Sussex.

1.3 This report sets out the actions NHS Sussex have taken to make full use of available resources to enhance routine and urgent dental care access for people across Sussex, and the resultant additional capacity created in East Sussex. The report also outlines how NHS Sussex intends to progress activity within 2024/25.

2. Supporting information

2.1. Enhancing access to dental services is a national and local priority. The NHS Planning and Operating Guidance 2024/25 includes a national objective to increase dental activity by implementing the national plan to recover and reform NHS dentistry, improving units of dental activity (UDA) towards pre-pandemic levels. Ensuring adequate primary care dentistry provision both universally, as well as for the groups with the highest level of oral health need, is one of the greatest immediate challenges for Sussex. Patient demand for NHS dental services currently exceeds the available capacity dental service providers are willing or able to provide.

2.2. NHS Sussex has produced a report for the HOSC attached as **Appendix 1**. The report covers:

- How NHS dental services are delivered
- Current provision and access to NHS dental services in East Sussex
- How patients can access NHS dentistry in East Sussex
- Sussex Dental Recovery & Transformation Plan

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The HOSC is recommended to consider the report and decide whether it wishes to further scrutinise any of the areas covered in the report.

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