

## Your experience of NHS Dental service in Brighton and Hove

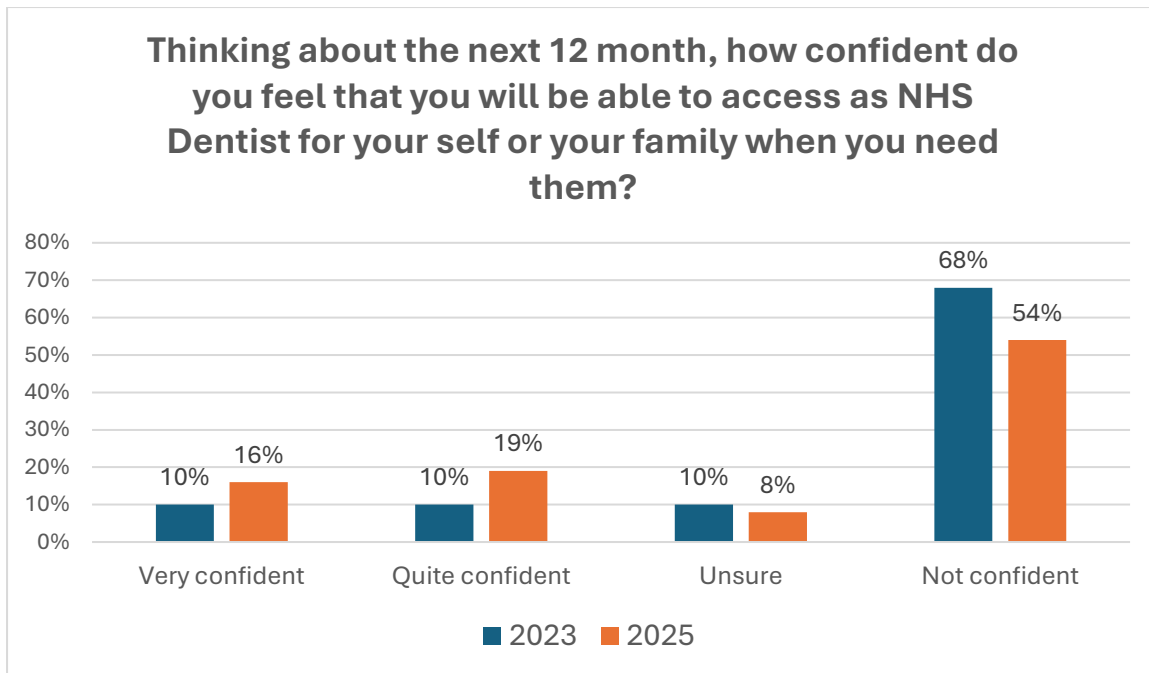
### Report 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025

In January 2025, Healthwatch in Sussex sought people's experiences of NHS Dentistry. We previously asked questions about NHS Dentistry in a poll in January 2023 and wanted to see if there had been any changes over the past two years.

In January 2023, 220 people from across Sussex shared their views with us and in January 2025, 595 people responded to our dentistry poll. Of these 595, 131 lived in Brighton and Hove.

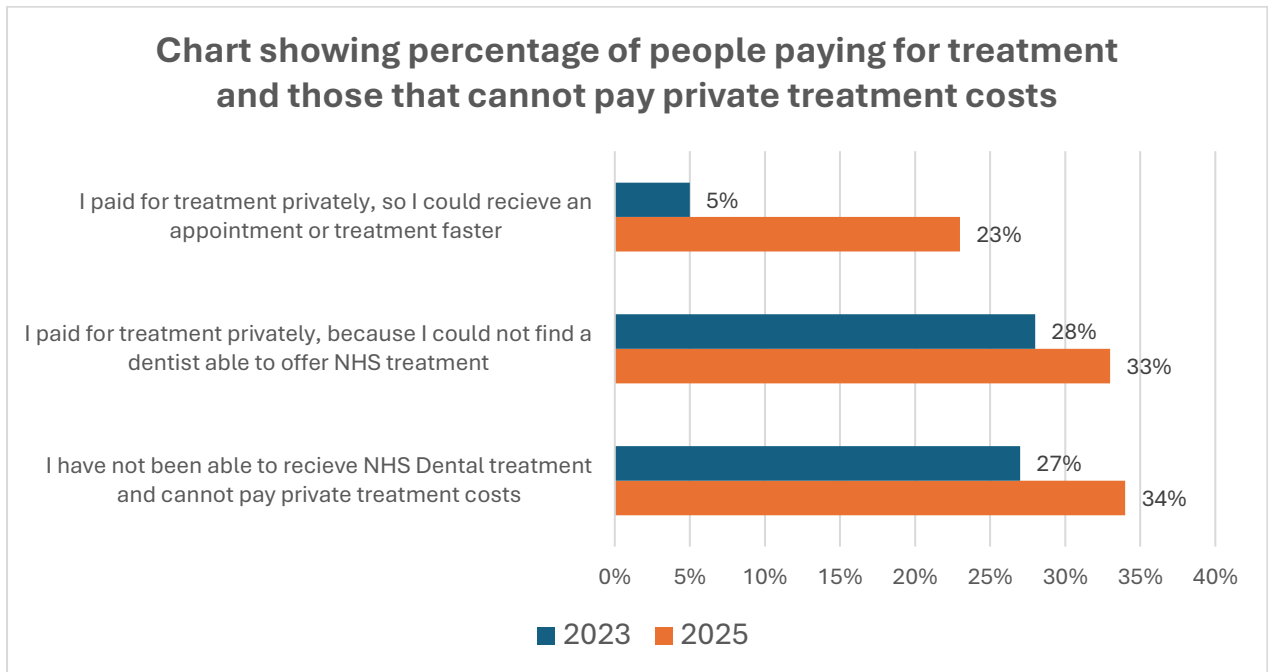
#### We heard:

- People in Brighton and Hove are still struggling to find an NHS dentist – although the struggle is slightly less than in 2023.
- For example, in 2025, 49% of our respondents said they 'have not been able to find a dentist able to offer NHS treatment.' This is slightly down from 52% in 2023.
- In 2025, 53% of respondents are either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the ability to find an NHS dentist in Brighton and Hove. This is also down from 66% in 2023.
- In 2025, 53% of respondents were 'not confident' about accessing NHS dental services for themselves or their family when they need them over the next 12 months, compared to 27% of respondents who felt 'either very confident or quite confident'. In 2023, 68% were 'not confident' in accessing NHS dental services for themselves. Please see bar chart below:



- In terms of treatment, we see quite a mixed picture with some people being quite satisfied and others dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the dental care they have received. For example – In 2025, 49% were either ‘very satisfied or satisfied’ with treatment they received and 35% of respondents were ‘unsatisfied or very dissatisfied’ with the treatment they received. Again, in 2023, 27% were either ‘very satisfied or satisfied’ with treatment and 20% were unsatisfied or very dissatisfied. (Note treatment here included both private and NHS dental care and data could not be spilt to see if there were any difference with satisfaction rates between NHS dental care and private practice dental care)
- In terms of costs of dental treatment – both for NHS charges and charges for private dental treatment – 24% of respondents told us that they need dental treatment but cannot afford to pay NHS charges in 2025 (compared to 11% in 2023). 34% told us that they have not been able to receive NHS dental treatment and cannot afford to pay private treatment costs in 2025 – compared to 27% in 2023).
- 33% of respondents also told us that they are paying for treatment privately as they could not access an NHS dentist in 2025 (compared to 28% in 2023) and 23% told us they were paying for treatment

privately so that they could either receive an appointment or treatment faster (compared to 5% in 2023).



**Respondents to our 2025 poll told us:**

**That many people are still struggling to find NHS dentists in Brighton and Hove:**



*"I've been living in Brighton and Hove for 3 years, and [am] still unable to get an NHS dentist"*

*"There is virtually no dentists who do NHS treatment in Brighton and Hove, at least that I could find. This means that only when I have a dental emergency, I pay a private dentist. Otherwise, I keep away from them and do not seek treatment".*

*"You cannot find an NHS Dentist for love or money."*



**However, those who do have access to an NHS dentist are often very satisfied with the care they receive:**



*"Feel very positive about my current NHS dentist who I have been going to for over 20 years. He is highly skilled, very patient centered and efficient."*

*"I belong to a single dentist practice and it's the best practice I've ever gone to. Excellent, experienced, and kind dentist and dental nurses."*

*'The new surgery in Hove that I registered with was very clean, the treatment was good, and I was able to get an appointment quickly.'*



**A short comparison to Sussex wide results:**

- Brighton and Hove's data shows a similar, if slightly more positive picture in regard to accessing an NHS dentist. For example, in Brighton and Hove, 49% of people agreed with the statement 'I have not been able to find a dentist able to offer NHS treatment' compared to 52% in Brighton and Hove in 2025.
- In terms of expense of dentistry – findings compare in Brighton and Hove are again similar, if slightly more positively than Sussex wide data. For example, In Brighton and Hove the % of respondents who have been able to access NHS dental treatment and cannot pay private costs is 27% compared to 32% Sussex wide.