

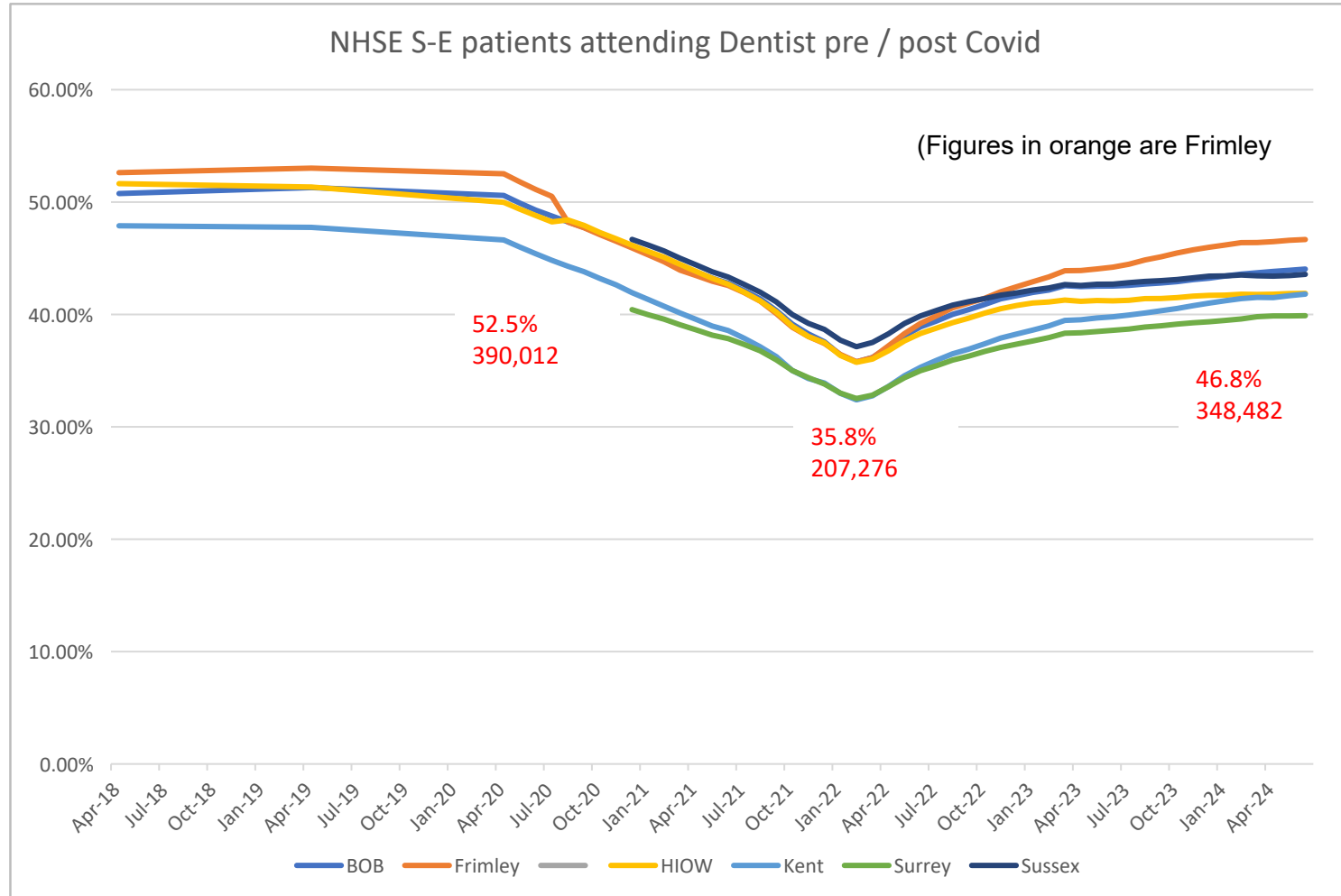
Commissioning dental services Our role as NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB)

An update for the Bracknell Forest Health and
Wellbeing Board

Background

- Since July 2023, Frimley ICB has held delegated responsibility for POD services (pharmacy, optometry and dental) passed from NHS England
- The aim of transferring this responsibility is to provide a more local perspective on the services provided and to achieve integration with general practice
- Frimley is one of six ICBs working together to deliver dental services across the South-East region supported by the South-East Commissioning Hub
- Access to dental services is still recovering from the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic
- To ensure patients receive the treatment they need, it is essential that dental activity returns to pre-pandemic levels at the earliest opportunity. In fact, we need to exceed these levels to address our patient's health needs

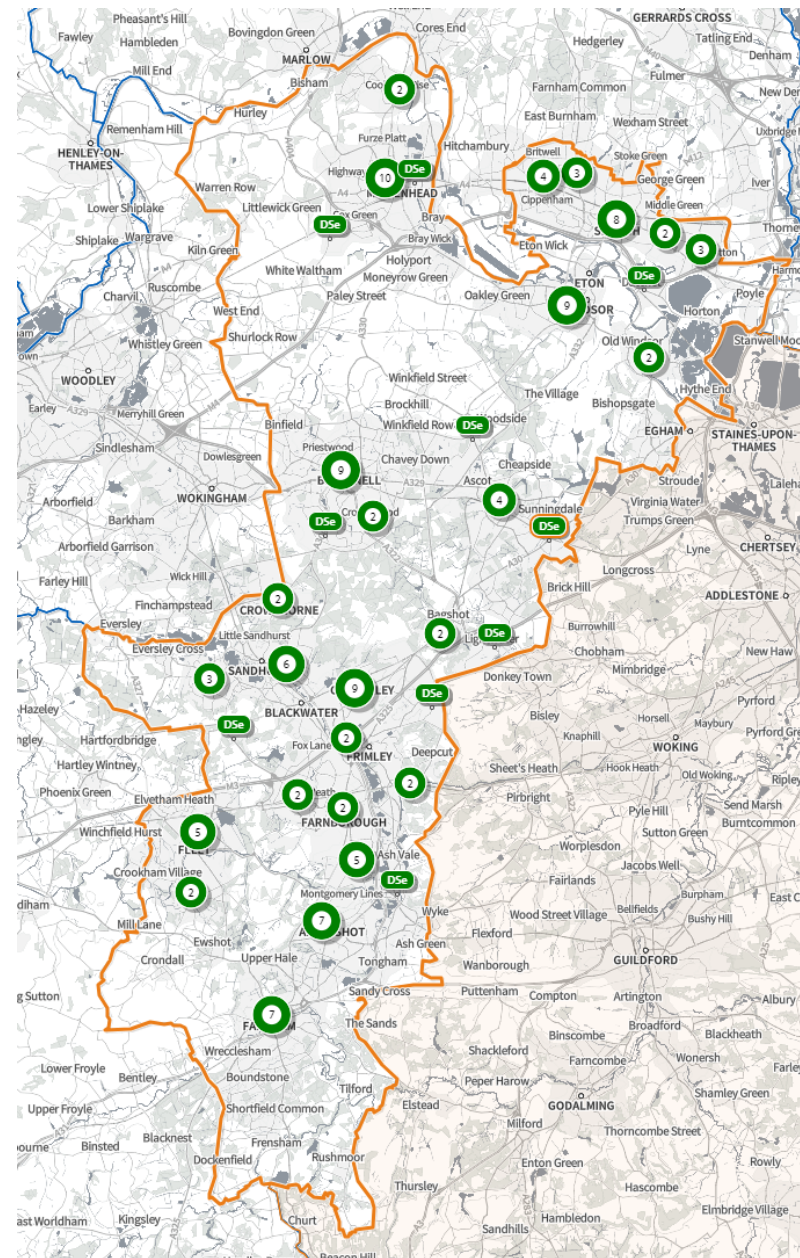
Effects of Covid on attendance



- In Apr 2020 Frimley dentists saw 390,012 patients.
- By Jan 2022 this had dropped by 141,206 to 207,276 patients.
- By Apr 2024 attendances had increased to 348,482- although this is still 41,530 short of the pre-pandemic attendance figure.
- Frimley has achieved the fastest recovery post-Covid with a greater increase in attendance than the other 5 South-East PCN areas.

How dental contracts work

- All dental practices are funded via Units of Dental Activity (UDAs)
- Frimley currently has over 100 contracts in place. These dentists collectively provide 950,000 UDAs on an annual budget of £30m
- We also fund community and secondary care dental services giving us a combined budget of £45m
- Beyond a nationally set minimum price of £28, UDA prices have been agreed through historical negotiations between commissioning organisations and dental practices
- Across the Frimley area, UDAs currently range from £28 - £42.37
- Where practices under-perform against their contracted number of UDAs an annual reconciliation process recovers the relevant funding and over-performance is permitted elsewhere so as not to lose the funding
- Across the South-East region, between 2021-24 a total of 74 contracts were 'handed-back' by their providers
- During the same period Frimley only had 2 contract 'hand-backs' and we currently have 4,500 unallocated UDAs – which we plan to re-issue at the earliest opportunity



Current issues with dental care being experienced nationally

- Failure to treat patients in a timely manner or not at all, increases the risk of patients having to attend A&E or having to be referred into Secondary Care for complex, expensive treatment
- Access to urgent care is poor in many areas
- Recruitment of Dentists is difficult
- The national contract is felt to be inflexible
- In extreme cases dental practices hand back their NHS contract and prioritise private work leaving commissioners to find alternative providers for the work

Dental recovery plan

In Feb 2024, the government set out a plan which would:

1. Expand access so that everyone who needs to see a dentist will be able to offering a significant incentive to dentists and introducing mobile dental vans to take dentists and surgeries to isolated under-served communities
2. 'Smile for Life' - a major new focus on prevention and good oral health in young children, to be delivered via nurseries and other settings providing Start for Life services and promoted by Family Hubs. Introduce dental outreach to primary schools in under-served areas, and take forward a consultation on expanding fluoridation of water to the north-east of England - a highly effective public health measure
3. Supporting and developing the whole dental workforce, increasing workforce capacity as committed to in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan

National schemes to help increase capacity

- **Golden Hello Scheme** – This scheme will enable dental practices to offer payments of up to £20k to encourage dentists to apply for a vacant post at their practice. The candidate will be required to remain in post for a minimum of 3 years. Applications were initially restricted to practices in Rushmoor, Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead who are felt to have the greatest recruitment issues. Applications from 12 practices are currently being considered
- **Resilience support packages** – Similar to arrangements for General Practice, Dental practices will be able to apply for packages of funding to support with recruitment or other issues. Practices can apply for either or both of the following:
 1. Practice support – Funding for ‘one-off’ recruitment costs, premises works or equipment upgrades
 2. UDA flexibility – increase in UDA rate for up to 2 years
- **10% over-performance payments** - To increase their capacity, practices can request to perform up to 110% of their contract. Recent performance figures will be analysed before any approvals are made for 2024/25

Our future plans; our considerations

Access issues continue to improve steadily with the results of the national patient survey (Jan–Mar 2024) showing:

- ✓ 83% of patients who tried to get a dental appointment in last 3 months were successful compared to those who tried in the last 2 years – when only 78% were successful
- ✓ 87% of patients were able to see a dentist that they had been to previously

But ... we know we need to continue to improve access for patients particularly in areas of deprivation and high oral needs:

- We would like to develop better relationships with our local dental practices asking for their help and ideas in resolving the access issues patients report with a primary focus on urgent access
- We would like to take a population health management approach in collaboration with our dental practices to identify gaps in current provision forming the basis of our 25/26 investment plan
- Attention also needs to be given to secondary care dentistry pathways to address the long waiting times being experienced by patients