



# Student Engagement 2024

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Between September and November 2024, Healthwatch East Sussex attended three student events across the county, engaged with over 365 young people and received more than 140 pieces of feedback from students about their experiences of health and social care services.



## We attended:

**East Sussex College**  
Station Plaza Campus, Hastings

**University of Sussex**  
AMEX Stadium, Falmer

**University of Brighton**  
Falmer Campus, Falmer

## Our aims were to:

- Hear from young people about their experiences of health and social care.
- Raise young people's awareness of Healthwatch across the county
- Share information about our volunteering opportunities



The feedback from our engagement has been gathered and is summarised on the following pages.

# What We Heard

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**Some students found services easy to access and use, while others had more negative experiences.**

“  
It was easy to register  
at a new GP [as an  
international student]  
”

“  
I don't know anyone who isn't  
being impacted by the cost of  
living  
”

“  
Doctors have told me I'm  
exaggerating my  
symptoms  
”

“  
*I did the application, [to register  
at a new GP] but I don't know if  
I'm registered, I didn't get any  
confirmation*  
”

**Students also shared different ways healthcare services could better support them.**

“  
Be more available – waitlists  
are too long and typically  
unhelpful  
”

“  
Listen to us when we say  
there is something wrong  
”

“  
By making services more  
accessible at weekends  
”

“  
Listen – don't dismiss  
us  
”

“  
By providing anonymous  
forums and helplines for  
mental health  
”

“  
By making more mental health  
services available and letting  
us know about them  
”

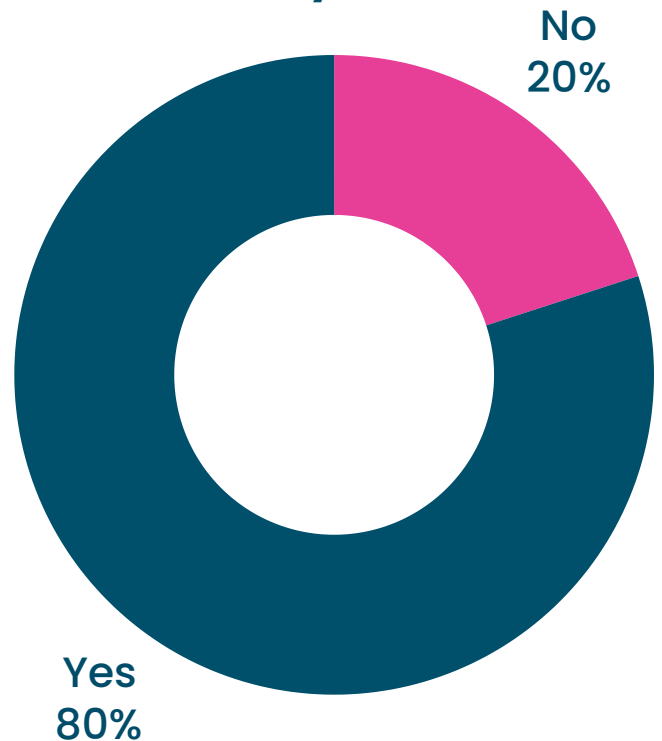
# Student Access to Healthcare Services

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## Have you been able to visit the dentist in the last year?

At East Sussex College we asked 50 students whether they had been able to visit the dentist in the last year.

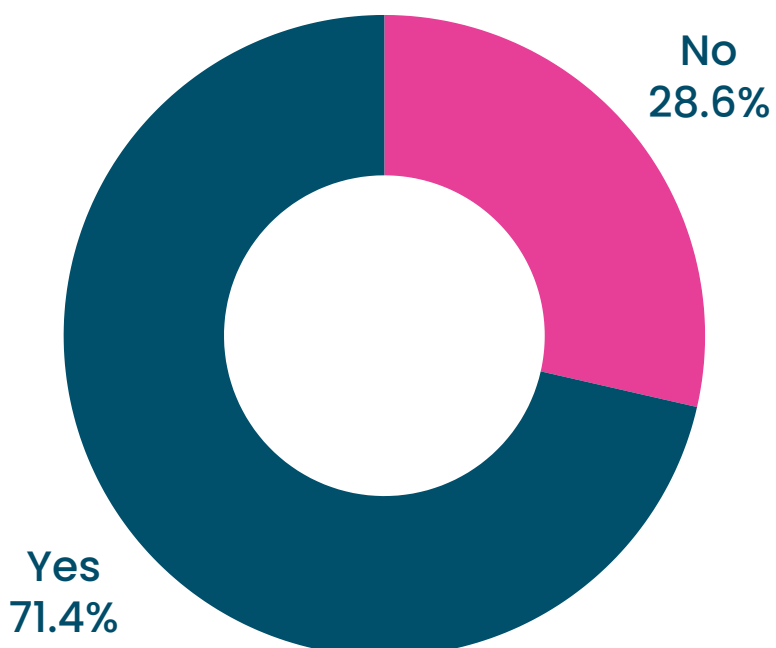
80% of students had accessed dentistry in the past year and gave positive feedback of the experience. However, some students reported having to pay privately to access dental care.



## Have you registered with a GP in the same area as your university?

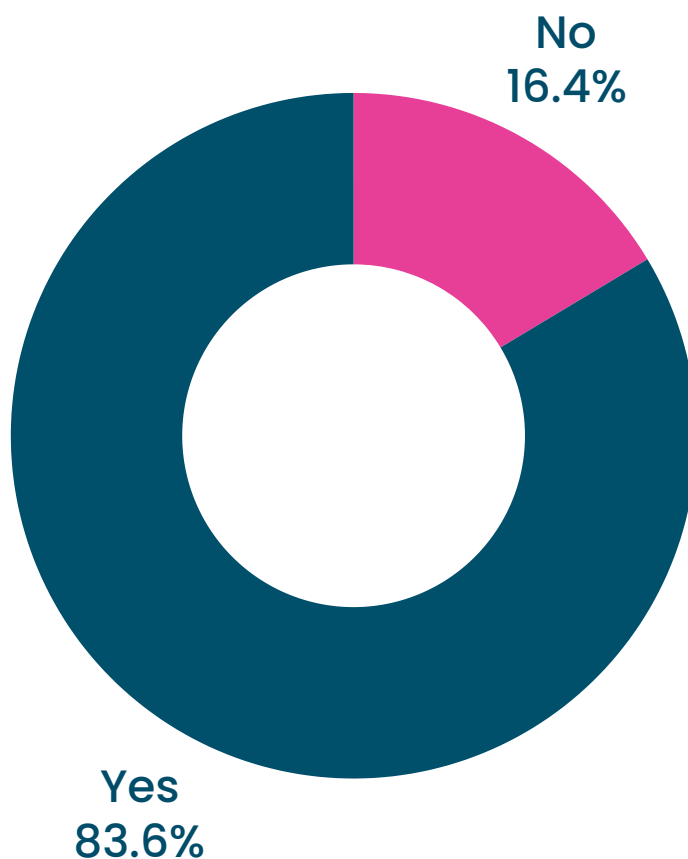
35 Students at the University of Sussex were asked if they are registered with a GP in the same area as their university.

We heard a mix of experiences; some students had successfully registered, some had not registered yet and others were unsure and awaiting confirmation from the GP.



# Cost of Living and Accessing Services

We asked 61 students across East Sussex College and Sussex University if the cost of living affects their mental health



84% of students felt the cost of living was having a negative impact on their mental health. Some students told us how rising costs are causing them stress and financial worries.

**We also asked students how healthcare services could better support them**

Many students felt ignored by healthcare services. Some students found it difficult to book and attend appointments outside of their lessons because of the times that services operate.

# Student Nursing Workshops

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## University of Brighton, Adult Nursing workshops

Over 100 nursing students attended our two workshops, which raised awareness of Healthwatch East Sussex and our role in shaping better local health and care services.

Students reflected on their experiences of accessing health or care services over the past year, identifying what worked well and where improvements could be made. Through group discussions, they explored every stage of the journey – from booking appointments to attending and follow-up – and shared their experiences with the wider group.

## Next Steps

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1. Healthwatch East Sussex will **attend further events and local venues across the county** to hear from as many local people as possible.
2. We will **share what we have heard with key partners and decision makers** to make recommendations for improvements to health and care.
3. We will **use the learning from this activity to inform future engagement activity**.
4. Healthwatch will continue to **engage with young people across East Sussex , to ensure that young people's voices are heard**.



# healthwatch

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