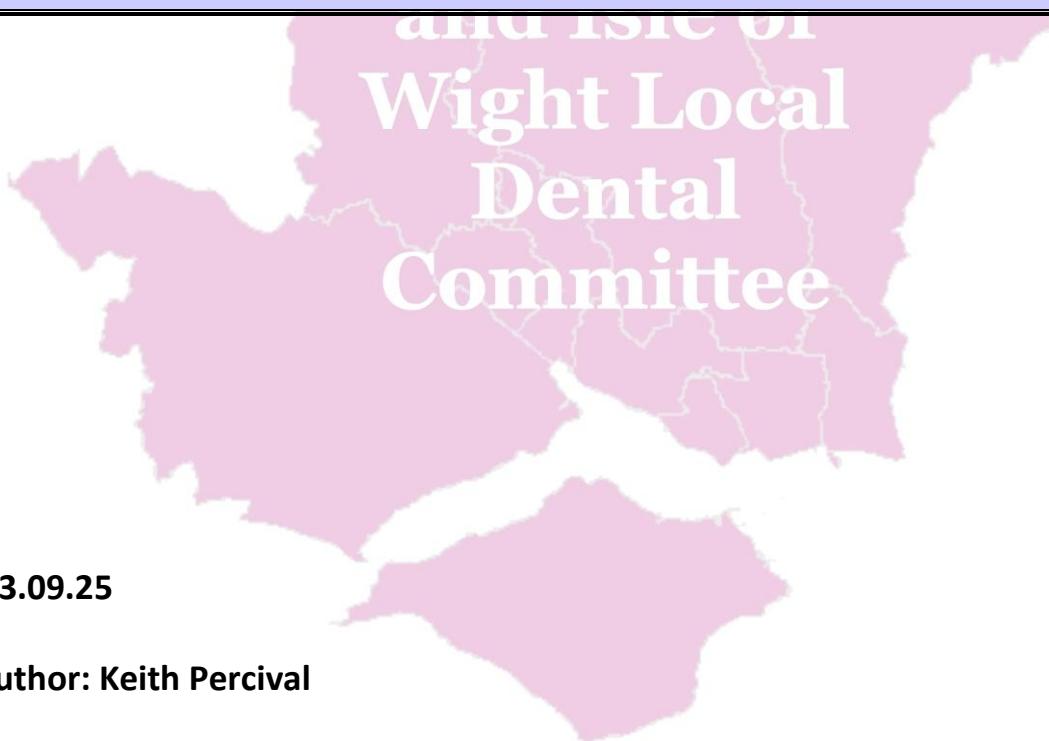


# **Practitioner Advice and Support Scheme**

**Hampshire and Isle of Wight LDC**

**Final Version**



**Wight Local  
Dental  
Committee**

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## **1. Introduction**

PASS has been developed by the Local Dental Committees of Hampshire and Isle of Wight (H&IOW), Oxford and Health Education England (Thames Valley and Wessex) over a number of years built on the original 1999 version of the GDC approved scheme.

## **2. The Practitioner Advice and Support Scheme (PASS)**

### **2.1 Aim**

The aim of the H&IOW LDC Practitioner Advice and Support Scheme (PASS) is to support dentists whose performance is recognised by them or by other parties as potentially causing concern and thereby protecting patients and practitioners from possible harm.

### **2.2 Objectives**

- To provide a point of referral for anyone concerned about a dentist in the H&IOW LDC constituent area
- To provide a point of self-referral
- To identify the appropriate level of intervention
- To provide optimum support for dentists in difficulty through intervention at an appropriate stage
- To support dentists where necessary
- To provide appropriately skilled members who are able to assist the dentist
- To audit the activity

## 2.3 PASS membership

The H&IOW PASS Group comprises the following people:

- 4 LDC GDP representatives nominated by the H&IOW LDC (including the Vice Chairman)
- The LDC Chairman
- The LDC (PASS) Secretary (PASS Coordinator)
- The LDC (PASS) Treasurer
- The LDC Administrator

The PASS membership, may from time to time access advice from any other appropriate source deemed to be relevant by the PASS Group

From the PASS Group, a Chairman will be nominated (normally the LDC Chairman) to Chair the meetings

PASS members will be required to demonstrate knowledge and skills, relevant to their role in PASS and expected to adhere to GDC and the 7 Nolan Principles in Public Life

The H&IOW LDC PASS Decisions Group meets biannually and may access administrative support when appropriate to do so

The H&IOW LDC will carry out an annual review of the PASS Group membership at the November main meeting of the LDC

## 2.4 Referral to PASS

Referrals to PASS may be received by any member of the group by the published email or phone on the LDC Website: [www.hiowldc.org](http://www.hiowldc.org) and may come from a variety of sources, including

- Self-referral
- Dental Practice Adviser

- NHS England & NHS Improvement South East Region (self-referral) to include:
  - Professional Standards Group (PSG) – H&IOW
  - Performers List Decisions Panel (PLDP)
- Local Dental Committee Members
- Clinical Governance Lead
- Other Dental Care Professionals
- H&IOW ICB
- GMPs

The initial contact will be passed to the LDC/PASS Secretary.

The first step in managing the referral is for the LDC/PASS Secretary to respond to the referrer within five working days. There will be occasions where it will be necessary to immediately respond to the referrer. The PASS Secretary will contact at least two members of the PASS Group to assess whether the referral is appropriate for PASS. Each referral to PASS will be discussed by a minimum of three PASS members (the PASS Decisions Group) before finalising an agreement on a course of action.

The PASS Decisions Group may decide on one of the following courses of action:

1. That no further action is required as there are no performance concerns
2. That the support required is at a pastoral level to be addressed through the LDC Secretary or any other executive member of the LDC
3. That the case raises some cause for concern and the practitioner may benefit from support from a mentor or peer support from a member of the LDC
4. That the issues raised by the case would be better addressed by another agency e.g. NHS England & NHS Improvement South East Region Contracts Team, Dentist Health Support Trust (DHST), Confidential, NHS Practitioner Health Programme (England only) Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
5. That the issues discovered should be dealt with under the practice's complaints' process

6. That the allegations/issues are of such gravity that the case should be referred back to the referrer with advice to contact another body e.g. Care Quality Commission, General Dental Council, NHS England SE Region Performance Lead.\*
7. That the practitioner should be formally supported by a GDC approved development adviser

All the PASS courses of action will be recorded on the PASS contact spreadsheet and include details of cases that require no further action.

\*The Decisions Group has an obligation to ensure that any onward referral is made. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon the Decisions Group to immediately refer to the appropriate regulatory organisation(s) where there are serious concerns around patient safety

The following issues may not be appropriate for the PASS to progress alone, although its involvement may be required as part of the action plan to address the poor performance:

- Contract management issues, where there are no other aspects of poor performance
- Education and training issues
- Alcohol and substance abuse issues
- Where significant health issues are the main reason for the poor performance
- Suspected fraud, probity issues or criminal activity (including threatening behaviour)
- Poor performance that has already caused harm (physical, mental or financial) to patients/staff/public/ practitioner
- Foundation Dentists, where the Deanery should be the first point of contact
- Those already receiving support from elsewhere e.g. Postgraduate Deanery

Cases falling into the above categories should be referred, by the PASS group, to the most appropriate organisation/body.

## 2.5 Whistleblowing

NHS and GDC whistleblowing and standards policies will be endorsed and adhered to by the PASS. The LDC may also signpost to the support of the local Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

## 2.6 Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest will occur due to the multiple roles PASS members perform. Any conflicts need to be managed and must be declared on a case by case basis to the PASS Secretary

In some cases, the declared conflicts of interest may generate an onward referral to an out of area PASS

## 2.7 Support

Once the Decisions Group has agreed that the case is appropriate for PASS, a **Case Lead** will be appointed from the PASS membership. The **Case Lead** will contact the practitioner to arrange an initial fact finding/action plan, one to one meeting.

The **Case Lead** will not necessarily directly provide all the identified support.

The purpose of the initial (contact) meeting between the **Case Lead** and the **Dentist in Difficulty (DiD)** - (normally of one to two hours duration), is to support the **DiD** and to develop and document an initial action plan with “SMART” (Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) objectives that address the issue(s) for which the referral has been made. The initial and future meetings should be held in an appropriate neutral location (preferably a HEE building) or online as a virtual meeting (Teams/Zoom). A written record of the meeting, stating date, time, venue and meeting outcome, including objectives agreed, future planned meetings, and predicted date of completion must be made by the **Case Lead**. The **Case Lead** will share the drafted Action Plan with at least two members of the **Decisions Group** to ratify the proposed Action Plan. A copy of the agreement and action plan should be

sent to the **DiD** (safe haven or special delivery) within 10 working days for approval. The signed off agreement and action plan must be returned to the **Case Lead** within five working days and a copy kept securely, in accordance with GDPR. The maximum Case Lead chargeable expense is two Guild Rates (Initial contact meeting and compilation of the draft Action Plan).

## 2.8 Cost

At the free initial fact finding meeting, the **Case Lead** will explain to the practitioner what type of support PASS is able to offer. Any future funding implications for the practitioner will also be explained. The PASS support other than at a pastoral level will be offered to the **DiD** and costed at a sessional rate based on the current British Dental Guild Rate (currently £400 for 3.5 hours) and travelling costs based on the current approved HMRC rate (45p per mile). Pastoral support is free of charge.

It is expected that support will be limited to a maximum of 6 sessions. Other chargeable items are out of pocket expenses such as postage, rail travel (standard rate) and parking. Any beneficiary of PASS support will be responsible for prompt (within 30 days of receipt) payment of invoices raised monthly by the PASS Treasurer. Any private practitioner accessing the PASS will incur 100% of the supporting costs. A summary of the support available and the funding required will be included in the record of the meeting. The range of support may range from peer/pastoral support on a 1:1 basis through to sessions with a trained and accredited coach/mentor.

If at the initial meeting it has been agreed that developmental support would be appropriate, the practitioner will be contacted by secure email and given the name of a supporting colleague. Where possible and practicable the practitioner will be offered a choice of **Supporters**. The letter to the **DiD** will state the source and reason for the referral and the name of a proposed supporter who has already agreed in principle to offer the support. The support letter will also explain the responsibilities of the **Supporter and Dentist in Difficulty**, costs and methods of payment, including the consequences of non-payment, and ask the dentist to confirm his/her agreement to these conditions within 10 working days by email or letter.

Once confirmation of **Supporter** choice has been received, the **Case Lead** (when not engaged as the **Supporter**) will send the practitioner's contact details to the **Supporter** explaining that it is the dentist's responsibility to contact the **Supporter** and arrange an appointment.

All individuals providing support to dentists as part of PASS will be suitably trained and accredited. **Supporters** do not need to be PASS members but do need to be approved by PASS.

A copy of the support letter will be kept securely in accordance with GDPR. If no reply is received, one reminder (only) will be sent. If no reply is received after 10 working days following the reminder, the Decisions Group and referrer will be notified and the case closed. The Decisions Group will reassess the case at this point and act accordingly.

If PASS support is agreed as appropriate, the referred dentist will normally receive a maximum of 3 support sessions at the agreed rate within six months of the date that the agreement was signed, after which, the case will be reviewed by the Decisions Group. The **Supporter** or **Case Lead** can, at any time, ask the Decisions Group to review the case prior to the maximum number of sessions being reached. The PASS will normally offer a maximum of 6 sessions. If it is felt that sufficient engagement and associated progress towards completion of the action plan has not been made after the total maximum number of sessions the case will be deemed not to be suitable for PASS and referred to another body.

If at any point it becomes apparent to the **Supporter** or **Case Lead** that the issues fall into a higher risk category the case must be urgently referred back to the Decisions Group for review.

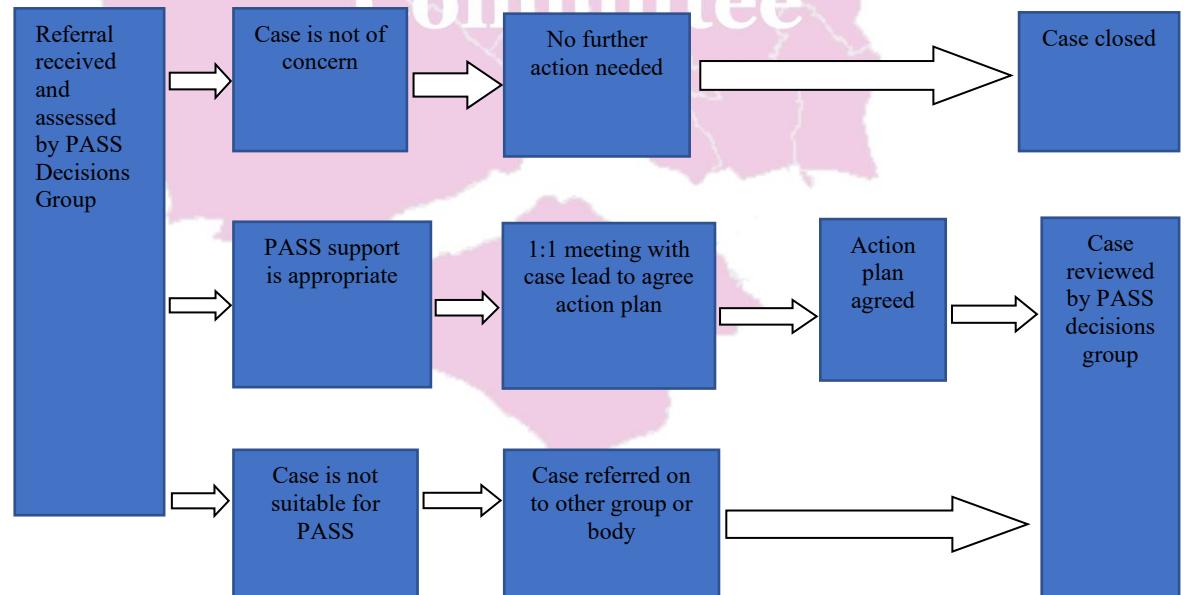
Further information about the supporting process, skills, competencies and code of ethics can be found in the texts of Coaching and Mentoring at Work and GDC Standards for Dental Professionals.

The Decisions Group will review the drafted **Final Report** and evaluate the outcomes and make one of the following recommendations:

- The **Final Report** requires additional information
- The case is no longer a cause for concern and PASS support is no longer necessary
- The professional requires further support from PASS or another agency of support
- The case should be referred to NHS England SE Region or other body for review of the completed **Portfolio of Evidence and Final Report**

**Figure 2 The PASS Process**

1. Referral received by PASS member (all members can receive referrals)
2. Receiving PASS member liaises with PASS Secretary/LDC Secretary
3. The Secretary/LDC Secretary convenes a Decisions Group
4. The Decisions Group appoints the **Case Lead** where mentoring and support is needed.



### 3. Administrative Process and Governance

The PASS administrative process will comply with the following principles

- All contact with a dentist receiving support will be logged and documented, even if it is an informal or telephone conversation. The level of detail that is recorded will vary and is a matter of professional judgement. All receipts will be available for scrutiny by the PASS Decision Panel.
- Copies of all letters etc. will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- Summary (anonymised) reports of PASS activity will be shared with any other relevant parties annually. PASS activity will be the subject of a developmental audit on an annual basis but dependent on the number of cases supported by PASS and the associated data.
- The Decisions Group will be responsible for responding to the referrer, the outcome of the initial review of the case by the decision-making group. Any further details will only be made available with the consent of the dentist involved.
- All documentation relating to an individual dentist should be shared with them as a matter of course and factual accuracy corrected and agreed prior to any onward transmission. Where there is a difference of opinion, both opinions should be recorded.
- There should be a clear written statement available that explains the overriding responsibility of those providing support to abide by ethical principles. This should identify the limits of confidentiality and how issues will be managed.

When a referral is accepted by the PASS a **Case Lead** will be immediately assigned.

The **Case Lead** is responsible for ensuring that all paper work and documentation relating to the case is completed correctly. The **Case Lead** will start a case tracker sheet (Appendix 2) and ensure that it is kept up to date throughout the duration of the case.

All discussions of the PASS Decisions Group will be recorded and documented. The rationale for the decisions taken by the PASS Decisions Group will be clearly expressed and noted.

Notes of meetings/sessions with the practitioner will also be documented and agreed with the practitioner. If agreement cannot be reached the areas of disagreement will be clearly noted. Notes taken at any mentoring sessions are confidential and are not disclosable without written permission from the mentee.

The **Case Lead** will communicate with the practitioner throughout the process. Copies of all communications will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

At the time that the case is closed the **Case Lead** will ensure that the practitioner completes a satisfaction questionnaire (Appendix 1).

The original referrer will also be informed that the case has been closed.

Once the case is closed the **Case Lead** will ensure that case file contains all relevant documentation and is filed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

At the end of each financial year the PASS group will provide an anonymised summary report of referred cases. The annual report will contain the following detail:

- Number of cases referred
- Summary of main concerns
- Case outcomes
- Results of practitioner satisfaction questionnaire
- Financial summary
- Number and summary of complaints received

## 4. PASS complaints procedure

- Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to the named complaints officer namely: The PASS Secretary (PASS Coordinator)
- A written acknowledgement will be provided within seven days, and a formal written response to the complaint in accordance with 4.1 below.
- Complaint details will not form part of the PASS Group case file and will be stored separately.
- Any practitioner who has been the subject of a PASS Decisions Group case discussion, or their representative may access the complaints scheme.
- A complaint may be accepted from any statutory NHS body or on behalf of the subject practitioner, with the fully informed consent of that practitioner.
- Requests for information will be handled according to relevant legislation e.g. GDPR.

### Time limits for complaints

### Committee

A complaint should be made within twelve months of the date of the event. The discretion to waive this time limit rests with the PASS Chair. The time taken to investigate and respond to a complaint will depend on the complexity of the issue raised in the complaint. The timescale for the response will be agreed with the complainant and will never exceed 6 months.

### Process

1. On receipt of a complaint, the complaint will be forwarded to the complaints officer for investigation.
2. Following the investigation, a response will be sent out to the complainant by the complaints officer setting out any findings and recommendations and copied to the PASS Chairman and the relevant Decisions Group members for information.

3. If the complainant is satisfied following the final response, the case may be closed. Complaints received should be discussed by PASS and learning fed into ongoing quality improvement processes.
4. If the complainant remains dissatisfied then the complaints officer should seek clarification of the points about which the complainant remains unhappy.
5. On receipt of these points, further comments may be sought via the complaints officer or a mediation meeting may be arranged dependent upon the views of the complainant.
6. If the complainant is satisfied following this further response, the case may be closed.
7. The PASS Group will audit all complaints annually and ensure that all learning is translated into relevant changes in policy, procedure and practice.

**Appendix 1.**

**REF NUMBER**

**DATE**

## **CLIENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please complete the following short questionnaire and return the completed form in the pre-paid envelope enclosed. This survey can be completed in **less than five minutes**. All responses will be carefully reviewed as part of our commitment to maintaining a quality service and information gathered from this questionnaire will be treated in the strictest confidence - *Thank you.*

*How well did we meet your expectations regarding the following?*

Please rate your responses as follows:

		<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>		<b>Excellent</b>		
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

### **ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT**

Telephone calls answered/returned	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Response to written communications	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Clarity of instructions/guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Helpfulness of the team	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Adequate time to plan meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Overall efficiency of administration	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Comments*****SUPPORT/ ADVICE/ MENTORING***

Ability to manage and control process	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Establishing confidence/trust of parties	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Knowledge/understanding of the case	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Neutrality	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Listened well to your views	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Professionalism of approach	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Contribution to achieving settlement	<input type="checkbox"/>					

**Comments**

Please rate your responses as follows:

<i>Poor</i>	1	2	3	4	<i>Average</i>	5	6	<i>Excellent</i>
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***OVERALL***

How useful was the PASS group process?	<input type="checkbox"/>					
How would you rate our service quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Would you recommend our scheme to others?	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Comments*****How could the PASS service be improved?***



**Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

# Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Dental Committee

Appendix 2

**Practitioner Advice and  
Support Scheme**

**Protecting Patients  
Supporting Dentists**

## CASE TRACKING SHEET

CONFIDENTIAL

### Referred Practitioner's details

Name: .....

GDC No .....

Contact address: .....

.....

Date of birth: .....

Action tracker (to be completed by case lead)	Date	Responsible person
Date referral received by PASS Secretary		
PASS Decisions Group and Referrer contacted		
Initial discussion by PASS Decisions Group		
Case Lead appointed		
Initial contact with Practitioner		
Initial action plan and costings agreed		
Date of support sessions with Practitioner		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Minutes of support sessions agreed with Practitioner		
1.		
2.		
3.		
Case re-considered by Decisions Group		
Case closed		
Final report completed by case lead		
All paper work relating to case collated and filed appropriately		
Case file destruction date		

Referred by .....

PASS Secretary .....

PASS Decisions Group Members .....

.....  
PASS Case Lead: .....

**Brief summary of case**

**Main concern/s**

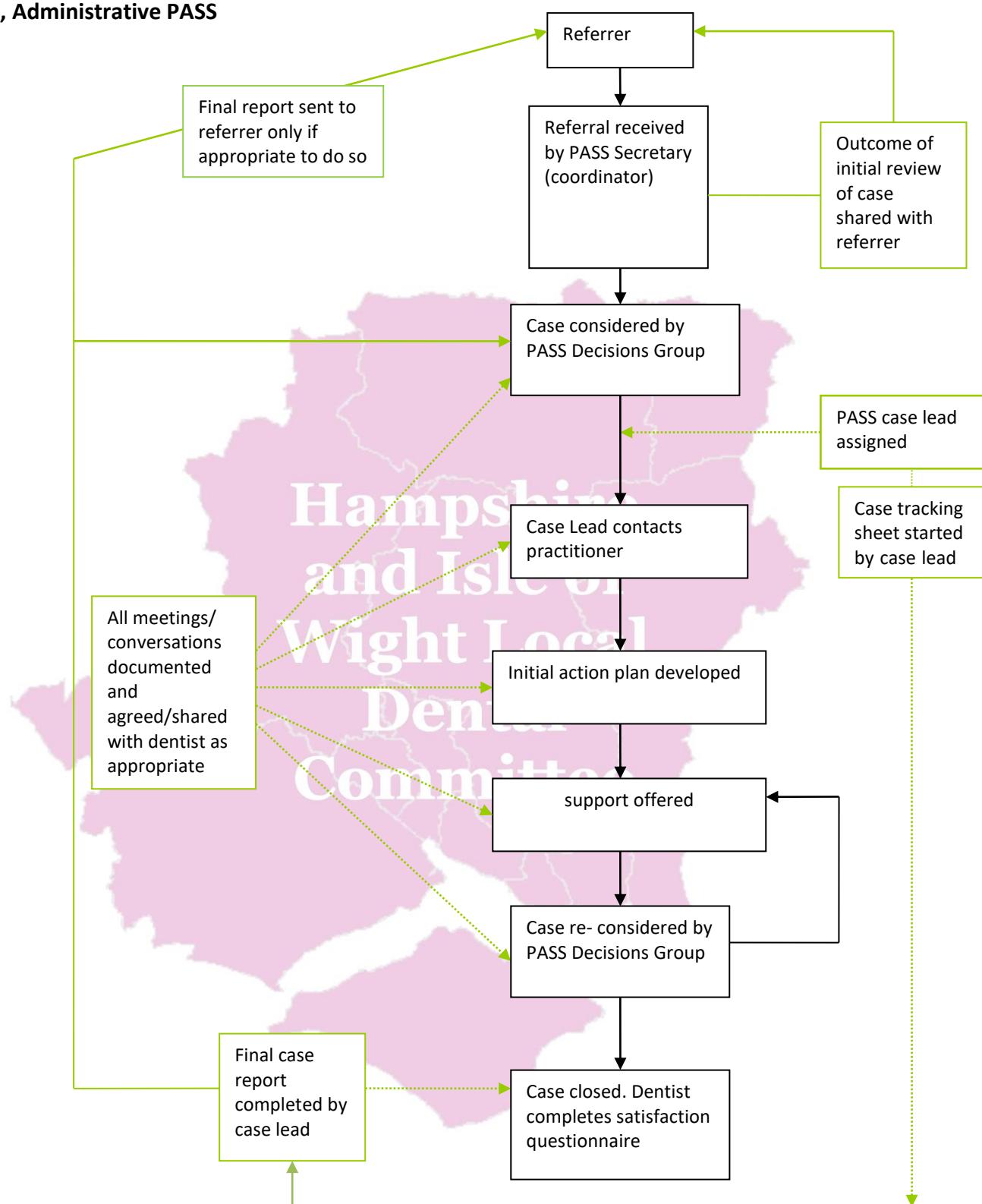
**Outcome from PASS Decisions Group (initial decision)**

**Hampshire  
and Isle of  
Wight Local  
Dental  
Committee**

**Summary of Support offered to Practitioner (if applicable)**

**Further outcomes from Decisions Group**

**Appendix 3.**  
**Flow Chart, Administrative PASS  
process**



## Appendix 4

