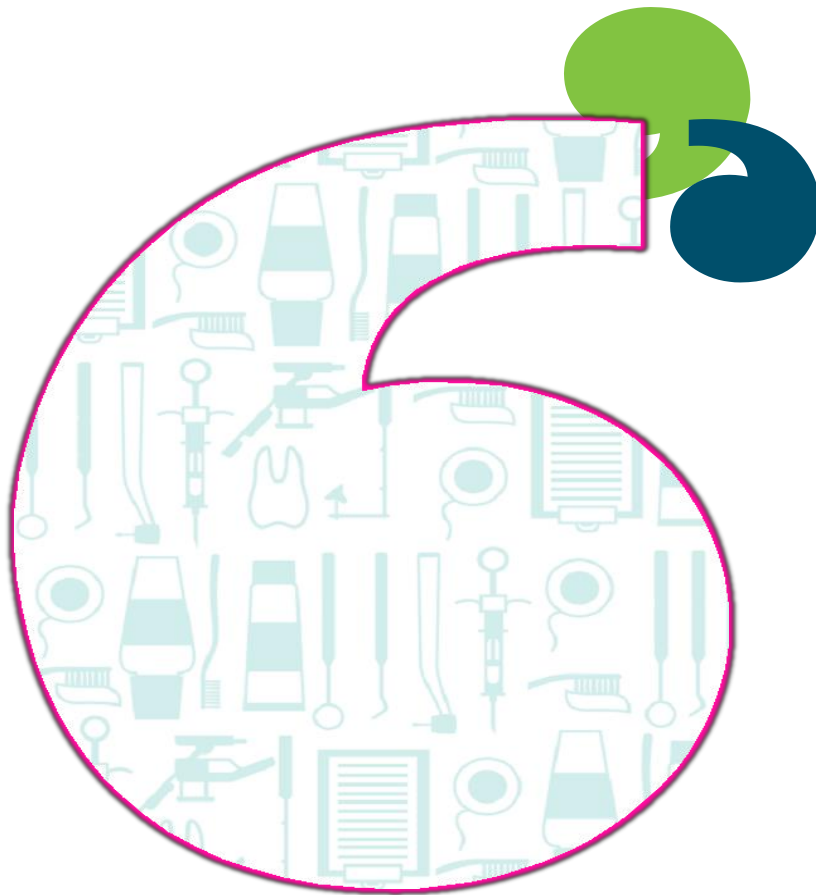


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Bishop's Stortford Orthodontic Practice
The Limes, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2DX
East Herts Area

Premises visited: Bishop's Stortford Orthodontic Practice

Date and Time of Visit: 20.02.18 10.30

Visit Conducted By: Jo Butterfield, Joe Rodia, Jane Brown

NHS Contract Holder: Dr Lorinda Hanlie Pietersen

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the staff we spoke to on the visit.

Purpose for the Visit:

Healthwatch Hertfordshire (HwH) is conducting an Enter and View visiting programme into Dental Practices in Hertfordshire following the outcomes of a joint project between HwH and Public Health locally. For further information our report can be found here:

<http://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Access-to-NHS-Dental-Services-in-Hertfordshire-2016.pdf>

The focus of the visits is to look at the:

- Environment
- Physical Access
- Information Access
- Equality and Diversity
- Complaints Handling

We are working with Public Health East of England and have informed NHS England locally. We are also working closely with the Central Region Inspection Manager - Dentistry at the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The Local Dental Committee has also been informed and has been very supportive of this work.

Methodology:

Healthwatch Hertfordshire (HwH) is the independent health and social care champion. Local Healthwatch is in place to gather the views and experiences of people accessing services, to use this information to influence decisions and to provide information and advice to the local community about health and social care services.

Legislation allows HwH authorised representatives to 'Enter and View' health and social care premises to see and hear for themselves how services are provided.

We are focussing on one area at a time that has been randomly selected. We began with a pilot in Welwyn and Hatfield, where 50% of the practices were randomly selected for an Enter and View visit; the summary report of our findings for the district can be found here:

<https://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WelHat-Summary-Report-FINAL.pdf>

We have visited 25% of the St Albans and Harpenden District, and are now focussing on 25% of dental practices with NHS contracts in the East Herts District.

These Enter and View visits are 'announced/unannounced' visits where we notify the practice of our intention to visit within the next 4 weeks but do not give a specific date or time. Authorised HwH representatives use an observational checklist to record their findings and have thirteen specific subject areas to ask the person on duty at the Reception desk about.

Desktop research is carried out on the website of the dental practice and the practice's entry in NHS Choices.

Disclaimer

The report relates only to a specific visit (a point in time) and the report is not representative of all service users (only those who contributed within the restricted time available).

1. Introduction

The Bishop's Stortford Orthodontic Practice (also known as the Limes) is located on the Stansted Road about half a mile from the town centre.

It provides orthodontic treatment only and is mainly for NHS patients under the age of 18 by referral. An independent fee structure is available for those that are not eligible for NHS treatment and some adult private patients are also treated here. There are 3 specialists with a supporting team of orthodontic therapists, dental nurses, reception staff, a treatment coordinator, a patient coordinator, a compliance officer, technicians and a practice manager. There are treatment rooms (4 surgeries) on both floors of the building.

Due to the practice's location near the town centre, the travel links are good. It is a ten minute walk to the train station, and there is a bus stop directly outside the building. Buses here run services to Stansted Airport, Saffron Walden, and surrounding rural areas.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

The practice is easy to find. There is a large sign embedded in the grass by the gate to the practice that is visible from the road and the numbering of the building is clear.

The practice has also included an embedded Google Map as a banner near the bottom of every page on the website.

2.2 Car Parking

There is a small car park at the side entrance of the building that can be accessed from the main road. This is reserved for staff and Blue badge holders only. 3 spaces are allocated for patients (we noted spaces available at the time of our visit though the bays are quite narrow for wheelchair users).

Otherwise, parking is available in the Town Centre car parks (e.g. Jackson Square car park) and this is a 15 minute walk which is uphill in places.

Information about car parking is available on NHS Choices but not on the website.

2.3 Visible External Information

There are no signs to say that NHS treatment is available but this service is by referral only. The names of the specialists are on a plaque on the door as you enter. We did not observe any emergency numbers such as the 111 out of hours service but on enquiry, the reception staff were aware of the number and added that emergency information is on their answerphone message should any patient require help when the practice is closed. This is not the 111 out of hours service but access to someone who understands orthodontics.

2.4 First impressions

We were warmly welcomed by the reception staff and then the Practice Manager who together with the Patient Co-ordinator and Compliance Officer answered our questions.

The reception area itself is in the new extended part of the building and is modern, light and airy. The seating consists of padded benches that are not too low facing each other with a tiny table and chairs with books for very small children by the window. There is an electronic check-in close to a small television showing dental information. A small information board and a rack of information is also situated in this corner of the room.

Adverts for different procedures are well placed on the walls to stand out.

The wooden floor gives good colour contrast between the walls and floor for anyone with a visual impairment. This also makes it feel modern and clean.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

The front entrance to the practice does not accommodate wheelchair users as the building is up a steep slope and is reached by a number of steps and a winding path. Anyone with a physical impairment would use the side entrance, which is level with the building and accessed along a small road. The side entrance into the practice is quite narrow in places, so accessibility would have to be checked at the referral stage (this would apply to both patients and their carers).

The reception desk is high with no lower section but as the practice would be expecting the patient (via referral) through the side entrance we were told that they would accommodate for their needs as appropriate. It would also be difficult

for a person in a wheelchair to wait in the reception area without blocking other users due to the lay out of the benches.

There is no lift to the upstairs floor, however, patients who are unable to go upstairs can be seen in the downstairs treatment rooms.

A hearing loop is available but the practice manager said they had never had to use it.

There are two toilets downstairs with washbasins, one of which is an accessible toilet, which also has baby changing facilities (a pull down unit). There is colour contrast between walls and floors and grab rails but we did not see an emergency red cord in case a patient needs assistance. There is also a separate washbasin area.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

Treatment costs are not displayed as those children under the age of 18 and eligible for NHS treatment receive free treatment. The Patient Coordinator explained that after the initial screening following a referral, a treatment plan is discussed twice and the patient/guardian receives a pack with the plans and consent forms which need to be completed before any dental work can take place. Patients are also reminded that lost appliances will incur a charge and will have to be paid up front before being replaced.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints policy is included in the patients' welcome pack and is available on the practice's website.

The Practice Manager (who is the named person for dealing with a complaint) explained the process and stressed that they would try to resolve any complaints with the patient as quickly as possible. However they were clear that a patient would be signposted to NHS England should this not be possible.

The complaints policy lists a number of contacts for a patient to use if a patient is unhappy with the response. The policy just requires a few additions and amendments to bring it in line with the 2017 Statement on Dental Complaints recommended by the General Dental Council, Department of Health, NHS England, Care Quality Commission and Healthwatch England. This includes updating the 0845 numbers for the Private Dental Complaints Service, and the General Dental Council, to their current phone numbers.

Summary of the Practice's Complaints Procedure

Named Responsible person	Acknowledgement Of complaint	Clear timescales for complaint	Additional information about organisations to take complaint to?*	Support for complaints? POhWER or Healthwatch?
Yes	3 days	10 working days with further notification if required	NHS England ENHCCG PHO CQC GDC	No

*ENHCCG East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group

PHO Parliamentary Health Ombudsman

CQC Care Quality Commission

GDC General Dental Council

A feedback box is available in reception area for patients to comment on their experience and this is also mentioned in the complaints policy.

4.3 Promoting oral health

The practice has a small video room where patients can learn how to care for their braces or teeth following their treatment. Information is also part of the patient's pack.

The screen in the reception area was showing a video about teeth and care.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

The practice's NHS Choices is entry is easy to find, complete, and up to date. It includes clear opening times, information for emergency appointments, and details of the allocated accessible parking facilities at the practice, as well as information on all the facilities they offer there.

The practice's own website is clear and friendly. There is a bar of clear tabs at the top of every page that patients can navigate from; 'NHS Treatment' sits under the 'Treatments' tab, and is a very informative page for patients who are unsure if they are eligible. Photos of all the staff that work at the practice are also available on the 'Meet the Team' pages for patients' awareness and comfort. However, an exception is that the 'Patient Feedback' page does not give any opportunity for patients to give feedback, as the title suggests. In addition to this, the practice's complaints policy is slightly hidden away on a banner at the bottom of every page.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

We were informed that a patient's communication needs would be sought at the initial consultation and recorded on their records. There may also be information from the referring dentist.

The Practice Manager was aware of the NHS interpreter services should they have any patients who have difficulty understanding English but said they had never had to use them. The staff could also speak a number of different languages and would help if required.

When asked if there was a quiet space for patients to recover from treatment or to speak more confidentially, we were told that the downstairs video room could be used in this instance.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

The practice could not recall having had any patients with a learning disability (they may have been referred to an alternate service) and were unaware of the Purple Folder scheme.

Medical history details of each patient is recorded and updated regularly.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

All staff receive training in case of a medical emergency and there are two emergency trollies. The practice has a defibrillator which is located downstairs and is advertised by a sticker in the reception area. Staff sounded confident that they knew what to do if there was an emergency in the waiting or treatment areas.

6. Summary of Findings

The Bishop's Stortford Orthodontic Practice has many areas of good practice, some of which have been identified below:

1. Friendly and helpful staff.
2. Information pack and support for patients with their ongoing treatment.
3. Regularly updated website.

We also found the following areas for improvement:

1. Complaints Policy.
2. Information Board.
3. Knowledge of the Purple Folder for people with learning disabilities.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Car Parking

1. Ensure information about car parking is available in the website and in particular that on-site parking is limited to those with specific needs.

7.2 Visible External Information

2. Consider adding information about the 111 out of hours service should the emergency number quoted on the answerphone message be unavailable. (Pack and telephone message).

7.3 First Impressions

3. Review the location of the noticeboard to make it more accessible for patients.

7.4 Facilities

4. Consider installing a red emergency cord in the accessible toilet.

7.5 Complaints

5. Update the complaints policy in line with the Statement on Dental Complaints advice and include Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER (a patient advocacy organisation).
6. Ensure that all contact information given for the escalation procedures are completely up to date, and uniform. (I.e. provide phone numbers and email addresses if both are publically available and exist)

7.6 NHS Choices and Practice Website

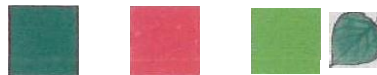
7. Consider ways of making the complaints policy more prominent and easy to find on the website.
8. Consider providing the facility for patient feedback on the practice website.

7.7 Patients with Specific Requirements

9. Improve awareness of the Purple Folder across all staff.
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/disability/learning-disabilities/my-health/my-purple-folder.aspx>.

Practice Response:

Bishops Stortford Orthodontic Practice



Thank you for sending the report following Healthwatch Hertfordshire's visit to the practice

I have thoroughly read the report which is factually accurate and also read the recommendations listed in section 7.

It is always very helpful to have feedback on areas where improvement can be made and I will ensure that the necessary action is taken to implement the recommended changes.

Yours sincerely

Lorinda Pietersen Practice Principal