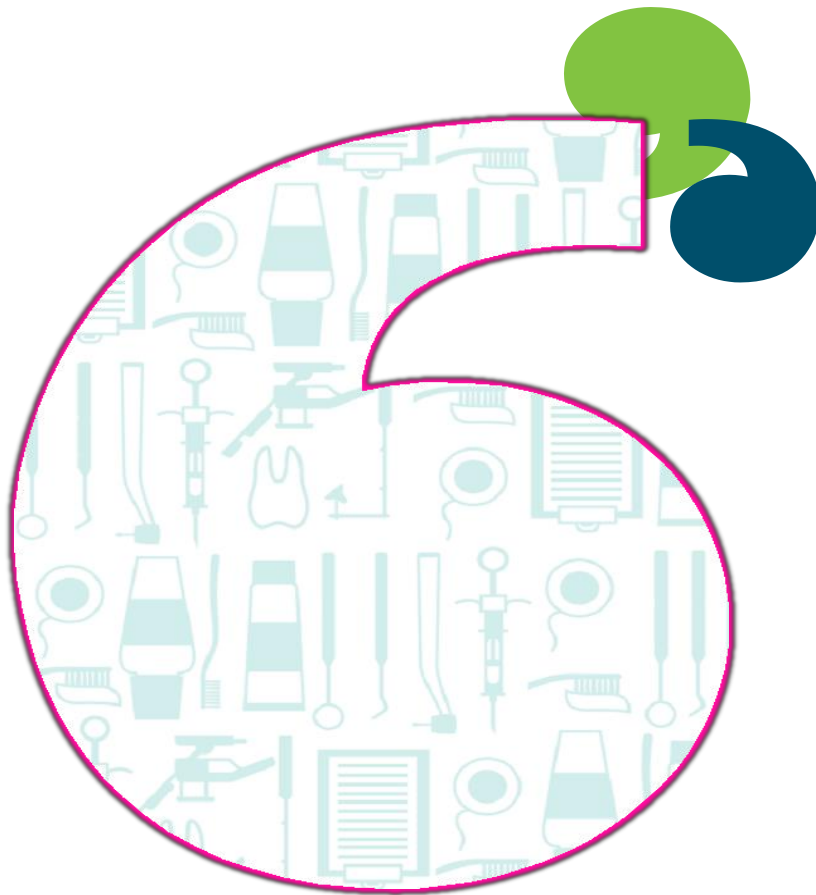


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Chells Dental Practice

5 Mobbsbury Way, Stevenage, SG2 OHL

Stevenage Area

Premises visited: Chells Dental Practice
Date and Time of Visit: 19.06.18 11.00
Visit Conducted By: Joan Twitchett, Keith Shephard

NHS Contract Holder: Mr A Patel

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the receptionist we spoke to on the visit for welcoming us to this facility, and for responding to our enquiries in a positive, thorough, friendly and professional manner.

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 focusing on one area at a time that has been randomly selected. We began with a pilot in Welwyn and Hatfield district, 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 East Herts District and are now focusing on 25% of dental practices with NHS contracts in the Stevenage area.

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 Chells Dental Practice is located in a busy residential area in Stevenage. It is easy to find and close to local amenities including shops and a school.

It is a small practice providing a mix of NHS and private dental treatment. There are currently 5 dentists, 3 dental nurses and 2 reception staff working in the practice, with three surgery/treatment rooms.

Travel links to the practice are typical of a practice that is in a residential area outside of the town centre. There is a bus stop nearby the practice that is served by the numbers 1 and 390 buses, which go elsewhere in Stevenage including the town centre, as well as travelling out to Hertford and Ware.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

Outside the practice there is a large notice, visible from the pavement or the road. The path into the practice leads to a courtyard area where there are two further notices, one on the entrance door to the practice displaying the names of the dental staff, opening times, telephone numbers and the emergency out of hours 111 number. The other notice on the adjacent fence displays the name of the practice and the logo “your smile our passion”. All notices have the blue NHS banner and logo.

The practice website is currently being updated. However, there is a google map embedded on the site.

2.2 Car Parking

There is no on or off-street parking available at the practice and no safe drop off zone or disabled or blue badge parking bays.

There is however parking available across the road behind the shopping area which also has two dedicated disabled parking bays; this is a few minutes’ walk to the surgery. Directly outside the practice there is a zebra crossing with dropped kerb leading to the car park or to the dental practice.

Although when we visited the practice, we managed to get parked (though spaces were limited), it was mentioned by the reception staff that at certain times of day

parking can be difficult. Therefore patients travelling by car may have a problem locating a suitable parking / blue badge disabled space.

2.3 Visible External Information

As mentioned in 2.1 there is plenty of information outside the practice including three large notice boards containing comprehensive information about the practice.

2.4 First impressions

The reception staff were very professional and welcoming and made us feel comfortable. We witnessed a number of patients approach the reception who were all treated in the same professional and courteous manner.

The reception and waiting area are both located in the same room and was tidy, clean, light and airy and overlooking the garden. Although this is a fairly small area there were no obstructions or barriers making the best of the space available. The reception desk gave the impression of being very well organised, was uncluttered and included a lowered area making it accessible for wheelchair users.

There were a number of notices displaying information about NHS Dental Charges 2018, general information about NHS dentistry and NHS quality assurance statement. These notices are displayed underneath the reception desk and were in small print and difficult to read for people with visual impairments and also the display position was at knee level. However, individual leaflets were available about NHS dental services, this leaflet explains how to find an NHS dentist and what treatment to expect and the cost.

Emergency contact numbers, fire evacuation procedures were prominently displayed in the waiting area and in larger print.

No staff photographs were on display and the reception staff were not wearing name badges.

The waiting area was not large enough to provide children's toys or books. There was a TV on the wall, which was tuned to radio, and suitably low.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

Access from the pavement outside the building was good. When we arrived, we noticed that on the entry door to the practice there is a step of approximately six

inches into a porch which leads to the reception and waiting area. We confirmed that a mobile ramp is available for usage by patients in wheelchairs or those with impaired mobility therefore this would not hamper access to the surgery. The doorbell could normally be reached by a wheelchair user.

The seating in the waiting area was bench style (at a height making transfers easy) with comfortable washable cushioning. There was sufficient space to accommodate a patient in a wheelchair. The bench style seating maximises use of the space available. There is insufficient space to accommodate a choice of seating.

There are three dental surgeries (two upstairs and one downstairs) the downstairs surgery has wide double doors.

The small clean toilet is located downstairs near to the entry door. There is no toilet upstairs in the practice. A soap dispenser and air dryer are provided. The walls, toilet and wash basin are all the same pale shade. There is no red emergency cord in the toilet. This toilet is not accessible for wheelchair users.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

2018 NHS dental charges are displayed in the reception area. As mentioned previously a leaflet produced by NHS dental services England is available. This leaflet gives comprehensive information about NHS dental services including dental charges and price bands. These posters and leaflets are in fairly small print and could be difficult to read for people with impaired vision. The reception staff confirmed that the dentists always discuss the charges with clients prior to treatment commencing.

The FP17DC was in use.

4.2 Complaints

There did not appear to be any information available in the waiting area on how to make a complaint. The reception staff said that they do have a “complaint form” that they can provide for people who wish to make a complaint. However, they like to resolve any concerns informally whenever possible. We were handed a copy of the form. The form does not provide information about the procedure or the escalation process (or any associated contacts).

There was no suggestion/feedback box available at the practice.

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?
Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available

4.3 Promoting oral health

A variety of self-help and information leaflets and posters are provided at the surgery. Free toothpaste samples and dental items are on sale.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

Chells Dental Practice was easy to find on NHS Choices; information included on the page is the practice's opening times. The page was recently updated with information on whether they are accepting new NHS patients, as well as information being included on the facilities offered there for individuals with a disability and parking.

The practice's own website is currently under construction, although the homepage is friendly and provides clear information on how to contact them, and where to find them. However, the opening times included on this page are inconsistent with what is on the NHS Choices page, and the complaints procedure does not appear anywhere on the page. It is also unclear whether NHS treatment is offered at the practice, which is added to by 111 for out of hours help is not being listed.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

The reception staff confirmed that relevant information regarding patients' needs are recorded electronically and would be incorporated into care plans as necessary.

They commented that patients who did not speak English would usually be accompanied by someone who was able to translate for them. They have not used the interpreting service, and were unaware of it.

In terms of a private space for confidential conversations or an area to sit and recover after treatment there is a room upstairs that can be used in such circumstances. Should the patient be unable to go upstairs there is a surgery downstairs that can be used if available.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

The surgery has no hearing loop or specific support for patients with visual impairment. We noted that the reception staff were very efficient and would try to resolve all situations as best as they could with the resources they have available.

Many of the notices and literature displayed appeared to be in small print, which would be a problem for patients with a visual impairment. However, many of these seemed to be standard NHS communications and it is unclear if these are available in large print.

The practice supports people with learning difficulties but reception staff were not aware of the purple folder, however they did comment that the dentist may know about this. They said these patients were accompanied when visiting the surgery.

Information regarding disability is recorded on the electronic data base.

We asked the reception staff if they would signpost patients elsewhere if they found access to the Chells surgery to be restrictive, however they were unaware of alternative suitable dental practices.

The reception staff have not attended formal safeguarding training; however, they have an "I comply" document available which has been edited to match the practice requirements this includes a list of people who they can contact in the event of a safeguarding concern.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

The practice had named first aid members of staff. A certificate of their competence is displayed with the other emergency equipment.

The practice has well marked emergency equipment which is located in a prominent position in the waiting / reception area. This includes a defibrillator and lockable emergency box secured to the wall. We were informed that should the emergency happen in an upstairs surgery, all equipment was portable and would be carried upstairs.

In the same area there is an accident report book.

6. Summary of Findings

The Chells Dental Practice has many areas of good practice, and overall provides a good local service, as highlighted below:

1. Professional, efficient and helpful staff.
2. Clean, organised and welcoming environment.
3. Up to date information for patients
4. Clear emergency procedures, with secured equipment, and with named first aid staff.

We also found the following areas for improvement:

1. Complaints policy and procedure.
2. Website.
3. Support for patients with specific needs.

7. Recommendations

In line with our findings we offer the following recommendations for action.

1. Upgrade the website as soon as possible.
2. Review the display of information in respect of location and font size (for example A4 posters at ground level below reception desk should be at a more convenient height for the reader (content is fine).
3. Review arrangements for those with specific needs to cover:
 - a. provision of hearing loop
 - b. awareness raising of 'purple folder'

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social->

[services/disability/learning-disabilities/my-health/my-purple-folder.aspx](#).

- c. awareness of interpreting service
 - d. awareness of other local providers should need for signposting elsewhere arise
4. Develop existing complaints procedure to include a 'whole system' approach in line with the Dental Complaints Statement from the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.
 5. Instigate arrangements for patient feedback (such as a 'suggestion box') and communicating any actions arising ('you said' 'we did') .
 6. Utilise external safeguarding information and expertise to ensure that safeguarding training is appropriate and timely, going beyond the 'I comply' format.
 7. Introduce name badges for staff.
 8. Consider the display of staff photographs and roles in reception/waiting area.
 9. Fix an emergency cord in the toilet as a matter of priority.
 10. When next refitting/redecorating the toilet take account of comments here on colour contrasts and best practice.
 11. In the event of any future structural work on the site consider at design stage wheelchair access at front entrance (fixed ramp, wider door) and toilet (wider door, more space, hand rails)
 12. Ensure that the opening times on NHS Choices and the website are clear and match up.
 13. Ensure that 111 for out of hours help is included on the website.
 14. Ensure it is clear that NHS treatment is offered at the practice.

Response from Chells Dental Practice:

- 1) We are in the process of completing the dental website and have a deadline day for completion of 01/12/2018. We will ensure details on 111, NHS Choices and website match up.
- 2) We applied to the council to convert the front garden in to parking spaces with a dedicated disabled bay. However, this was declined as it would not fit with the rest of the street scene.
- 3) We now have a display in the reception area with photos and names of all members of staff
- 4) Name badges have been provided to all members of staff and at our last staff meeting we discussed the importance of wearing these.

- 5) We also in this staff meeting discussed our complaints procedure and the steps involved. We have developed a complaints leaflet that is now in the reception area for patients to take as well as our complaints forms.
- 6) We have installed a feedback box in reception and have NHS Choices feedback forms printed and located in the reception area for patients to fill.
- 7) We have enrolled the whole dental team in safe guarding training that is due to take place 04/10/2018.
- 8) We are currently undergoing a minor refurbishment and have engaged the construction company to install an emergency cord in the downstairs toilet. We will discuss also the possibility of a fixed external ramp for wheelchair access. The practice is owned by Stevenage Council, so approval would need to be sought from them.

Thank you for giving the opportunity to comment on your report which I found very informative and beneficial to improve the service we provide.