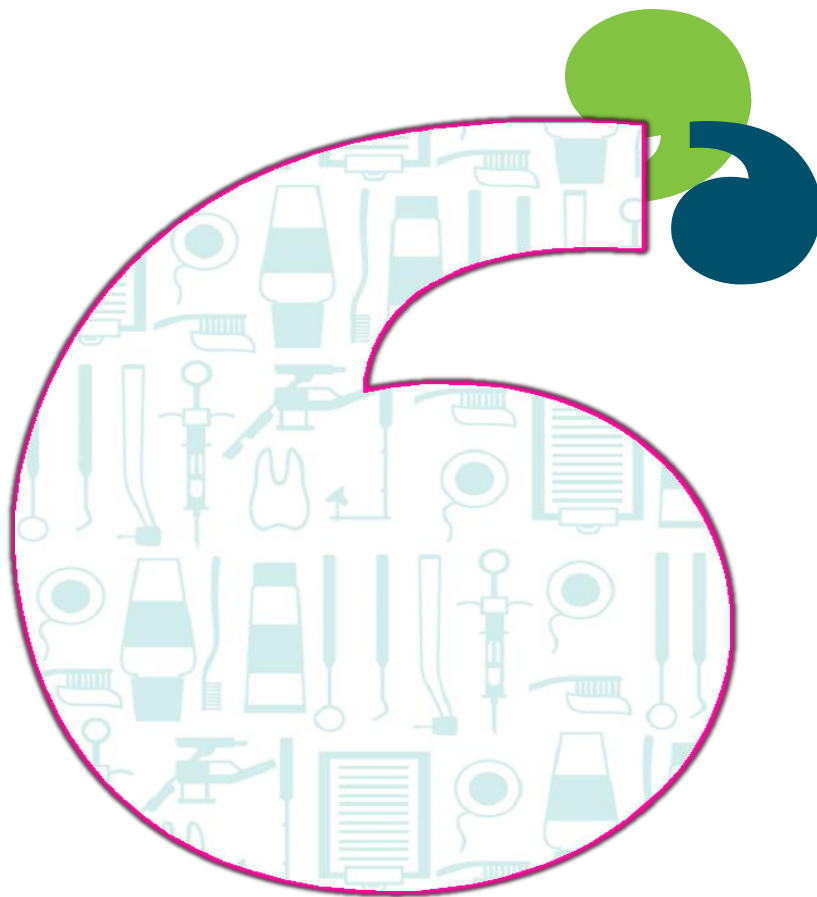


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Hockerill Dental

**25 Hockerill Court, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23
5SB**

East Herts Area

Premises visited: Hockerill Dental
Date and Time of Visit: 01.02.18 10:40
Visit Conducted By: Sam Downing, Kerosé Muanza, Alice Lovell

NHS Contract Holder: Dr Opperman

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

Hockerill Dental is a dental practice situated near the railway station in Bishop's Stortford, at the crossroads of two main roads. The practice has been in existence since 1960. The practice specialises in treating nervous and/or phobic patients. Currently four dentists are working on the premises, as well as two hygienists, a receptionist, and practice manager.

Due to the practice's location near the railway station, travel links are good. A number of different bus routes travel from a stop a short walk down the road, including buses that travel to Stansted Airport, Hertford, Stevenage, other parts of Bishop's Stortford, and surrounding rural areas.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

As mentioned above, the practice is situated on a four-way junction. There were large, branded signs facing the road, at the back of the practice, which made it very easy to find when we arrived. However, the practice's entrance is around the other side of the row of houses that it is situated in. It was unclear how to get to the entrance through signage, although there were passageways via London Road and Dunmow Road to Hockerill Court. The entrance's signage was very clear, as there was a sign to say 'dental surgery' above the porch.

The practice's website has embedded a Google Map of where the practice is on their 'Contact Us' page. In addition to this, they provide an option on the map to create a list of directions from your location to the practice, and a written description of where they are located.

2.2 Car Parking

Due to the practice's location, parking next to the practice is not possible. The practice directs patients on their 'Contact Us' webpage to park at pay and display Jackson Square Car Park in the town centre, or at Crown Terrace Car Park across London Road. The entrance to Crown Terrace Car Park is quite difficult to find without knowledge of the area, as there is little to signpost to it.

In terms of accessible parking, we could not see any available at the time of the visit. However, the practice manager informed us that there is an option via Harlington Close, a moment's walk away from the entrance to the practice. This can be used as a drop off point. The practice manager told us that they help patients from where they have parked as much as possible.

2.3 Visible External Information

Once standing outside the entrance to the practice, some information is visible. There is a sign for 111's out of hours service in the window in the door; however, as a result of the way it is positioned, some of the text is quite small. In addition to this, there is a phone number on a plaque to the left of the front door, which includes a phone number for emergencies and lets people know that there is an answerphone facility. There is no signage that makes it clear NHS patients are treated at the practice.

2.4 First impressions

We were warmly welcomed to the practice by the receptionist, and then the practice manager. The reception area downstairs forms one waiting room, with a few leather-effect upright chairs, which were all the same size and shape. There was a coffee machine on a table on the other side of the room; the room itself is small, but it feels spacious and light. Upstairs there is another waiting room, which is also light, clean, and spacious. There are leather-effect sofas lining the far edges of the room. In addition, there is an armchair under the TV against the wall nearest the stairs. All the chairs are all the same height, which is quite low down, and have high armrests. There is a coffee table in the centre of the room with stands filled with leaflets, as well as one in the corner of the room with more leaflets in stands. There were magazines on the lower level of the coffee table, also, for patients' entertainment. There is a TV upstairs for patients to watch; the practice uses it to display information about oral hygiene, and to show pictures of staff members and their titles.

The noticeboard upstairs is large and well set out, although it only becomes visible once sitting down in one of the sofas. Some of the text on the board was in large print, but not all. There was information on:

- oral hygiene;
- links between oral health and heart disease;
- a notice about services offered by the mental health Trust, Hertfordshire Partnership University Foundation Trust (HPFT), and;
- a notice to remind patients to inform the practice if their medical circumstances change.

However, the abundance of white paper with black text can present an issue for patients with a visual impairment. There was a large number of leaflets on various subjects around the waiting area, as well as on the reception desk downstairs. There was also a box of mini tubes of toothpaste for patients on the desk.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

The entrance to the practice does not accommodate wheelchair users upon arrival, as it is up a step; the doorbell is also situated high up the doorframe and out of the reach of most wheelchair users. There is no colour contrast between the door's colour, and the colour of the doorframe, to aid the visually impaired. There are also no handrails by the entrance, to aid those with a physical disability. However, the practice manager informed us that they have a ramp that they place at the entrance for those who need it. The practice manager also related to us that there are plans to redo completely the entranceway, but this is pending planning permission from the council - it is a listed building.

The practice manager told us that patients who cannot go upstairs can be accommodated in the downstairs surgery. There is no stair lift. The staff are briefed in the huddle at the start of every day who is scheduled to attend appointments that day, and what access requirements need to be arranged for them.

Although the practice did not have a hearing loop at the time of our visit, the practice manager told us they have arranged for one to be fitted shortly to aid those with a hearing impairment.

The waiting room and reception area is spacious, and leaves room for wheelchair users to manoeuvre. However, although the reception desk has a lowered section, this was filled with leaflet stands and a box of small tubes of toothpaste. This could present a barrier to good communication with wheelchair users.

The practice does have a downstairs and an upstairs toilet, but the downstairs toilet has not been adapted to be accessible. There is no colour contrast between the walls and floor, and the facilities in the room, to help protect the dignity of people living with dementia. As well as this, there is no red alarm cord, and nor are there any grab rails. The practice manager let us know that when they have the entrance redone, they intend to redo the toilets too.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

The NHS Bandings for treatment costs were on display and up to date, clearly visible on the noticeboard in the upstairs waiting room. The practice manager also told us that they ensure they change the notice of prices, and the exemptions, every April. We were told that the FP17DC form is used by the practice, and that the dentists always discuss treatment costs with patients in the surgery.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints procedure was available to read in the leaflet stands on tables in the upstairs waiting room. When the practice manager was asked how they make patients aware of the complaints procedure, they straight away showed us the laminated procedure in the stand.

The practice's complaints procedure is patient-focused. However, there are a few points in need of addressing:

1. The address for the Private Dental Complaints Service, and the PO Box number for NHS England are incomplete.
2. The procedure/policy states there are 5 pages within it, however only 4 are present.
3. Information about Healthwatch Hertfordshire is included in a policy document aimed at the practice that is not included in the procedure, which is aimed at patients.

There is also a lack of uniformity in what is presented as the practice complaints procedure between the written copy, and the version given on the website; for example, a premium rate number is given on the website for the Private Dental Complaints Service that is not given on the paper copy.

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? Pophwer or Healthwatch?
Yes	Yes - 2 working days	Yes - 10 working days, with further notification if required	PDCS GDC NHSE CQC	Healthwatch Hertfordshire only

*PDCS Private Dental Complaints Service
GDC General Dental Council
NHSE NHS England
CQC Care Quality Commission

4.3 Promoting oral health

At the time of our visit there was plenty of information on oral health for both adults and children on the walls in the waiting room and reception area. There was an abundance of leaflets on display, including a dial showing how much sugar is in certain foods. Information on oral hygiene was also being shown on the TV screen upstairs.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

Hockerill Dental Practice is easy to find on NHS Choices, and has been recently updated with the correct information about facilities available. Opening times are shown on the page, as well as information on whether they are accepting new NHS patients.

The practice's own website is sophisticated, professional, and friendly. The NHS logo appears on the homepage, although it has to be scrolled down to. If this is clicked on, the NHS Dentistry webpage appears, which gives information on their opening times, and how to complain if a patient is unsatisfied with their treatment. On this page, there is also a link to an NHS Choices webpage about dental charges; however, the 111 service for out of hours treatment is not included in the 'Emergency Contacts' section on this page. There is a discrepancy between their opening times on the NHS page, and their opening times on the 'Opening Hours and Emergency' page, on the bottom banner.

The complaints procedure can be found on the 'Complaints' page, which is also on the bottom banner of every webpage on the website.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

When the practice manager was asked if patients' communication needs are recorded, they showed us the key on their computer system of the various needs and disabilities that are recorded. The practice manager told us that these show up on their system, and then when the day of a patients' appointment arrives, they are prepared for them via the staff huddle in the morning. It was not mentioned how often a patient's communication needs would be checked, however as mentioned above, there is a notice in the waiting room reminding patients to inform staff of any change in their circumstances.

When asked how the practice deals with patients who cannot speak or understand English, the manager told us that a number of their staff speak more than one

language. The practice manager told us that they speak four languages, and one of the nurses speaks two. The practice manager was also aware that there is a phone service that they can use for interpreting. This was the case for patients with a hearing impairment too, although as mentioned above, they are arranging for a hearing loop to be installed.

In cases where patients would like to sit in a private room to recover from treatment or speak confidentially to a member of staff, we were told that this is always a possibility for patients. They would bring the patient to one of the two offices in the building, either upstairs or downstairs.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

As mentioned above, the practice records any disabilities on their system, which are then tagged on the patient's file when they have an appointment. This is then communicated to the team in the staff huddle at the beginning of the day.

With regard to patients with learning disabilities, the practice manager let us know that they usually bring their carers to the appointment. However, the practice does make efforts to ensure that patients with learning disabilities are booked in for their next appointment at the end of their appointment; they also try to ensure they always see the same dentist. This is so they can become familiar with that dentist. The practice manager highlighted that they are a practice that specialises in patients with dental anxiety. When asked about the Purple Folder, the practice manager was aware of them, and told us that these are completed in the dental surgery.

In terms of support for patients with a visual impairment, we were told that staff will always go out to the patient and collect them from their car to accompany them into the practice. However, they did mention that patients with a visual impairment usually bring a carer to help.

When the practice manager was asked about the frequency of safeguarding training, they told us that there is a training course booked for all staff in mid-March. In the meantime, the practice staff have been sharing a DVD, and a questionnaire on the DVD's content. They said that they spent a lunchtime going over the questionnaire.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

The practice manager informed us that in the case of a medical emergency, the person dealing with the patient would shout for help. One of the three first aiders at the practice would then go to help that individual. The first aiders were recently trained in the beginning of January. We were told that there is a sign by reception that lets everyone know who the first aiders are on the premises.

The practice has its own defibrillator, located upstairs in the manager's office; this is signposted on the door to the office. We were told that everyone at the practice knows how to use the defibrillator. Instead of an emergency trolley, there is a large first aid kit, also located in the upstairs office, that contains oxygen tanks and epipens, amongst other emergency drugs, with the 'use by' dates clearly written in the pack.

We were informed that there is another first aid kit downstairs by reception.

6. Summary of Findings

Hockerill Dental has many areas of good practice. We found the following areas to highlight:

1. Friendly, helpful, and welcoming staff.
2. Promotion of oral health.
3. Up to date NHS Choices entry.
4. Responsiveness to patients' communication needs and specific requirements.

We also found the following areas for improvement:

1. Visible external information.
2. The complaints procedure.
3. Navigability of the practice website for NHS patients.

7. Recommendations

2.1 Signage

1. Consider ways of improving signage to the entrance of the practice from the main roads.

2.2 Car Parking

2. Consider liaising with the local authority to create a disabled parking bay for patients, to prevent vulnerable patients from crossing a busy road.

2.3 Visible External Signage

3. Ensure that there is clear signage stating NHS patients are treated at the practice.
4. Clearly signpost to 111 for out of hours help.

2.4 First Impressions

5. Consider introducing different heights of chairs into the waiting room, to aid patients less able to rise from a seated position.
6. Ensure all text on the noticeboard is available in large print.
7. Consider introducing a greater contrast between different notices and the wall behind them, to aid those with a visual impairment.

3.1 Facilities

8. Consider ways of making the entrance more accessible, for example by introducing a colour contrast between the door and the doorframe, and installing handrails.
9. Ensure that the lowered section of the reception desk is clear, to improve communication for all.
10. Consider converting the downstairs toilet into an accessible toilet.
11. Install a red alarm cord in both the toilets to ensure the safety of all patients using the practice.

4.2 Complaints

12. Update the complaints policy in accordance with the points in need of addressing discussed in section 4.2.
13. Ensure that the practice complaints procedure is separate from the complaints policy so that all the correct information is included for the patient.
14. Ensure that the complaints procedure is uniform across all platforms.
15. Incorporate Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER (a patient advocacy organisation) into the complaints procedure, in accordance with the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices Website

16. Consider ways of improving navigability to the NHS patients' page on the website.
17. Ensure that information about practice opening times line up across all webpages on the practice website.
18. Include 111 for out of hours help on the webpage pertaining to NHS patients.

5.1 Communication

19. Ensure that patients' communication needs are checked regularly in order to meet the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

20. Ensure that there is always a designated first aider from day to day; this could be done via a rota system as a number of staff have the correct training.
21. Ensure that there is a clear written protocol for medical emergency situations.

Practice response:

1. Due to the type of building, we are quite limited with what can be done however, we had already had additional signage ordered and has since been put up.
2. Over the years, the practice has looked at many different options for the parking. However, as the practice is on a busy junction, there is no feasible place to put a disabled bay. We will continue to assess this though.
3. This has been updated.
4. This has been updated.
5. This is under consideration.
6. A poster has been put on the notice board, advising all information is available on request, in large print.
7. We are looking at mounting the notices onto a different colour card, to increase the contrast.
8. Although the front door is already brown and the doorframe white, we are in the process of ordering a new door so will ensure the contrast remains, and install handrails at the same time of installation.
9. This has been cleared.
10. We are happy to look into this to see how this can be done.
11. These have been ordered and are awaiting installation.
12. This has been amended.
13. This has now been separated.
14. All old ones have been removed and replaced with the updated one. This has been sent to the website designer to update on here also.
15. Healthwatch Hertfordshire had already been amended into the procedure but, have now also included POhWER.
16. This has been requested to the website designer.
17. This will be updated and reviewed regularly.
18. This has been requested to the website designer.
19. We already have the following in place, and will be reviewing this regularly to ensure the standard is met: Hearing Loop in place, interpreters number in place behind reception, staff members multilingual.

- 20. First Aid posters in place and also written designated first aiders written on it. The designated first aider is also discussed in the daily morning huddle.
- 21. There is a clear protocol in place that has been read and signed by all members of staff.