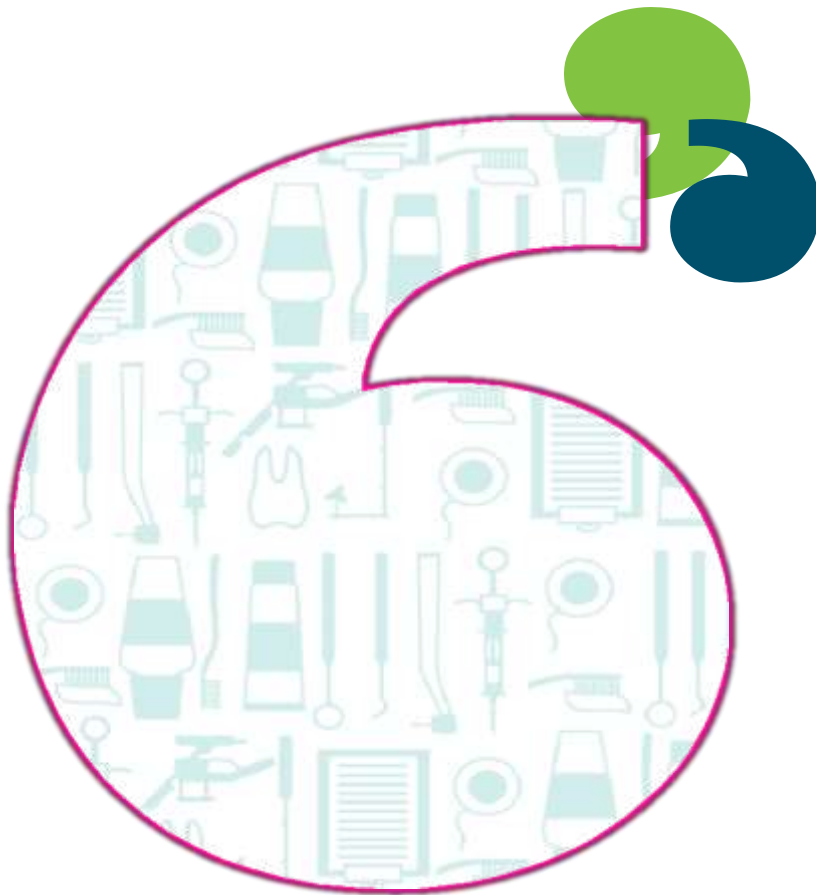


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Ivory Dental Clinic

10 Howardsgate, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6BQ

Welwyn and Hatfield District

Premises visited: Ivory Dental Clinic
Date and Time of Visit: 24.02.17 10:00
Visit Conducted By: Jane Brown, Alice Lovell,
Priya Vaithilingam
NHS Contract Holder: Miss Tombazidou & Miss Bicaku

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the staff who we spoke to on the visit, and who completed the questionnaire.

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 England and have informed NHS England locally, the Central Region Inspection Manager for Dentistry at the Care Quality Commission, and the Local Dental Committee. We will be sharing our reports with all of these bodies.

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 District at a time beginning with Welwyn and Hatfield, where 50% of the practices have been randomly selected for an Enter and View visit.

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 not give a specific date or time. Authorised HwH representatives use an observational checklist to record their findings and have five specific questions to ask the person on duty at the Reception desk.

To minimise disruption to the delivery of the service, a pre-visit questionnaire is sent to the practice to gather additional information.

Desktop research is carried out on the web site 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

Ivory Dental Clinic shares its premises with Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic, and the NHS contract. It is situated on the southern side of Howardsgate in Welwyn Garden City town centre. Currently three dentists work here, as well as a dental hygienist, two dental nurses, and a practice manager.

By virtue of its location in the town centre, the clinic is well served in terms of travel links. There are several car parks nearby, as well as free spaces on the road outside for up to 1 hour's stay during business hours. The bus station is only five minutes' walk away and is served by buses taking routes from as diverse as the surrounding rural areas, to nearby towns, and to Heathrow Airport. As well as this Welwyn Garden City train station is a similar distance's walk from the clinic.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

The clinic was easy to find, as there is a large sign on the front, and the website provides an embedded Google Map.

2.2 Car Parking

As the clinic is located in the town centre, there is street parking as mentioned above which is free for 1 hour. However, we decided to park in the paying car park at Hunter's Bridge, which was only a five minute walk away. There is no provision for disabled parking specifically outside the clinic, but there are disabled spaces for 1 hour on the road nearby; these are located outside HSBC, Superdrug, and on the opposite side of Howardsgate.

2.3 Visible External Information

Although there is no sign to say it is offering NHS treatment on the outside, 111 is signposted to for out of hours service in the window.

2.4 First Impressions

The outside of the clinic looks professional; the front door is made out of clear glass which makes it easier for receptionists to see if the person arriving is disabled and needs help to enter the building.

When we walked into reception we were welcomed by the receptionist; the clinic shares its desk with Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic, and so the left hand side of the desk as you come in belongs to Ivory Dental Clinic. The desk was high, but there was information across it, and there was a lowered section on the left hand side

which accommodated a great deal more information and made it more wheelchair-friendly. The room itself was large, light and airy, and gave the feeling that you were in a clean and professional environment. There was no noticeboard that we could see. There was a selection of soft and hard seating in the waiting room, as well as magazines and children's toys for patients to use. In a corner of the room there was a banner which signposted Ivory Dental Clinic.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

The reception area had a wooden floor, which makes it easy to manoeuvre for wheelchair users. All the surgeries are on the ground floor. As stated above, the clear glass front door allows the receptionist to know when a disabled person may need help entering the building.

The clinic offers interpreters via a sign on the desk for the languages that members of staff speak on the premises. On the far left of the desk on the lowered section there was a booklet containing the Accessible Information Standard for patients to read through. There was no hearing loop that we could see.

The toilet was accessible, though at the time of our visit, the red alarm cord was tied up to avoid it trailing on the floor, which would make it difficult to pull the cord to draw attention. There was a contrast between the walls, floor, and utilities in the room to make it more accessible for people living with dementia.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

The current NHS Bandings for cost were laminated and placed prominently on the reception desk.

The practice manager told us that patients will have their personal treatment plan talked through with them item by item. Patients keep a copy of their plan, which includes the FP17DC form but is also detailed in a separate document produced by the clinic.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints policy was on display in a plastic wallet which was taped to the wall next to the reception desk. The practice manager told us that the policy is included in the welcome pack for new patients. However, she would prefer complaints to be made in person.

Their complaints policy is not on the website.

Although the complaints policy is patient-focused and clear, there are a few points that need to be addressed.

1. *In point 8, 'pals.hertfordshire.nhs.uk' is given as a contact, however this email address does not exist. There is no Hertfordshire PALS, but the address and phone number provided is for NHS England.*
2. *In point 8, the Healthcare Commission is listed. This no longer exists and is now the Care Quality Commission (although the CQC does not deal with individual complaints but is a way of raising a concern about the practice.)*
3. *Some grammatical errors need to be corrected.*

The clinic's complaints policy has not been updated since May 2015, yet the Healthcare Commission has not been in existence since 2009.

Summary of the Practice's Complaints Process

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	Yes - 3 working days	Yes - within 10 days with further notification if required	Yes - PDCS* GDC Herts PALS HC HSO	No

*PDCS Private Dental Complaints Service

GDC General Dental Council

Herts PALS Hertfordshire Patient Advice and Liaison Service

HC Healthcare Commission (no longer in service)

HSO Health Service Ombudsman

4.3 Promoting oral health

There were no posters promoting oral health on display in the waiting room or reception area that we could see at the time of our visit.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

Until recently, NHS Choices displayed inaccurate information in terms of what services the practice offers. However, NHS Choices now shows that they have not provided information for over 90 days, and so there is no longer any information about what treatments they offer.

In terms of the facilities available at the premises, NHS Choices has not been updated since 2010, meaning that it predates their move from less accessible premises.

Ivory Dental Clinic's website is clear and professional. Several relevant organisations are signposted to at the bottom of the webpage. Contact forms are available to fill in easily on the same webpage. However, NHS Fees are not published, and neither is the complaints policy.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

The clinic stated that all patients are treated with dignity and respect, and all staff have a caring manner. They aim to ensure that patient confidentiality and diversity is of paramount importance.

If there are any communication issues, the clinic stated that these would be identified via the medical history form that all new patients must fill in when they register. This could be filled in by the patients themselves, or by the patient's carer.

They also display a copy of the Accessible Information Standard in the practice reception area.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

The clinic states that they treat all patients from marginalised and/or socially excluded groups equally and respectfully.

Wheelchair and pushchair access is no longer a problem as a result of their relocation from less accessible premises.

The clinic offers multilingual services that may support patients from overseas.

Staff are trained in dealing with patients' special care requirements; this includes annual safeguarding training. In-house training is also carried out with all staff on a regular basis.

The clinic will offer private areas for patients who have sensitive matters or information to discuss to ensure proper sensitivity and dignity is provided to patients.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

In a medical emergency, the practice manager stated that there is a procedure; the member of staff dealing with it would assess the patient, call other members of staff in to help, and a third member of staff would be given the responsibility of calling for an ambulance.

They regularly train staff in the medical emergency procedure.

A significant risk log is kept up to date.

When asked if the identity of the first aider is clear, the practice manager stated that it is, and that the person responsible has recently completed a first aid course with St John's Ambulance service. The practice manager told us that she is keen to have more members of staff undertaking to complete first aid training courses.

The practice does not have its own defibrillator, although they are looking into procuring one for the premises. However, there are some located in a number of locations nearby such as HSBC, Zizzi's Restaurant, and The Two Willows.

6. Summary of Findings

The clinic told us that positive feedback can be found on the clinic's Google reviews, as well as on the NHS Choices website. They also have a book of testimonials on the reception desk.

We found a number of areas of good practice in the clinic:

- 1. The accessibility of the reception and waiting room area.*
- 2. Keeping a copy of the Accessible Information Standard on the reception desk.*
- 3. Clarity of the procedure in cases of a medical emergency.*
- 4. Annual Safeguarding training.*

We also found the following areas for improvement:

- 1. The complaints policy.*
- 2. Clarity around NHS treatment on the clinic website.*
- 3. Information available on NHS Choices.*
- 4. Promotion of oral health.*

7. Recommendations

1. *Consider ways of making the division between the two clinics on the premises clearer in the interior and on exterior of the building.*
2. *Consider introducing a noticeboard for patients to see.*
3. *Place oral health posters in the reception area and waiting room.*
4. *Consider installing a hearing loop.*
5. *Untie the red alarm cord in the accessible toilet so that the pull mechanism is hanging freely to the floor.*
6. *Update NHS Choices with the current accessibility and services information.*
7. *Update the complaints policy in accordance with the points in need of addressing discussed in section 4.2.*
8. *Incorporate Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER (a patient advocacy organisation) into the complaints policy, in accordance with the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.*
9. *Publish the updated complaints policy on the clinic's website, incorporating the escalation process via NHS England.*
10. *Publish NHS Fees on the clinic's website, and make it clearer that NHS treatment is offered here.*

Practice response:

1. The clinic has been trying as you are aware to try to resolve any issues regarding making the separation between the clinics clearer. Any changes that are made are currently ongoing.
2. The practice will not be considering adding a notice board in the clinic because we feel that our patients are always verbally informed of any notifications that concern them, we also give information leaflets and news letters to individuals on a regular basis.
3. We would not want to place any posters in the waiting area promoting oral health as oral health promotion materials are displayed in the Hygienist's room and the dentist's rooms. Leaflets are provided to individuals promoting oral health and nutrition.
4. We are looking into installing a hearing loop.
5. The alarm cord has been untied.
6. The NHS Choices accessibility and service information will be updated as and when new publications become available.

7. The complaints policy has now been updated and will be updated annually.
8. We have now incorporated Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER to our complaints policy.
9. We are also going to publish the complaint policy on our website
10. The NHS fees will also be published on our website.