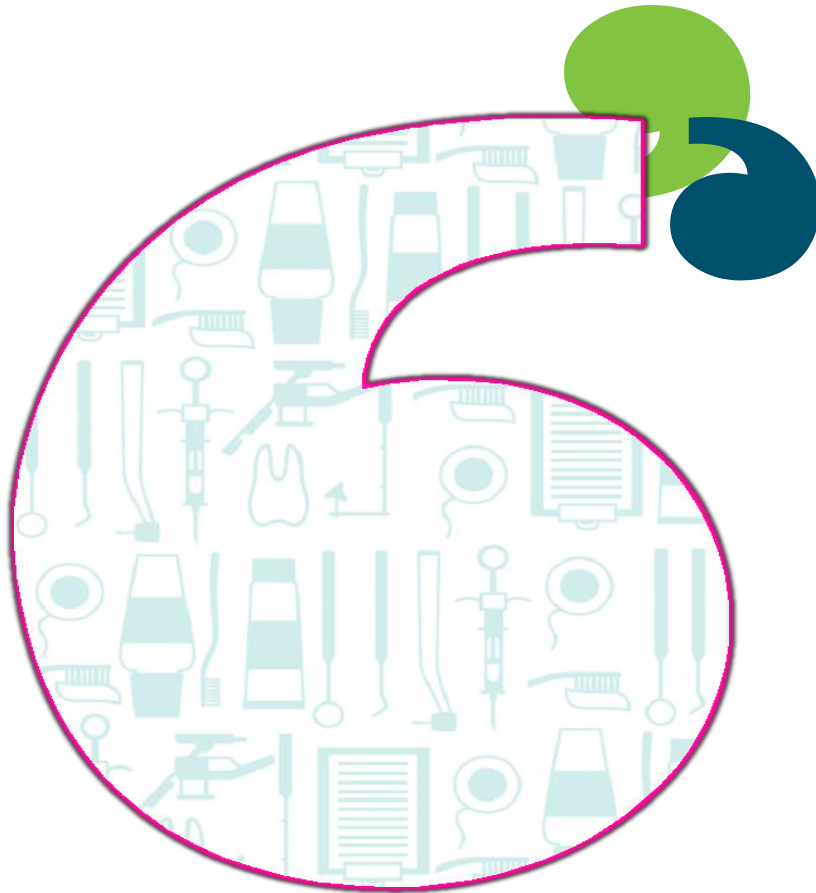


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Marc Friedmann & Associates
452 St Albans Road, Watford, WD24 6PJ
Watford Area

Premises visited: Marc Friedmann & Associates
Date and Time of Visit: 20.12.2018 10.45
Visit Conducted By: Joan Twitchett and Jane Brown

NHS Contract Holder: Mr M E Friedmann

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 practices in the St Albans and Harpenden, East Herts and Stevenage Districts and are now focussing on 25% of dental practices with NHS contracts in the Watford 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

Marc Friedmann & Associates Dental practice is located in a suburb of north Watford along the St Albans Road just off the A41 and is about 5 miles from Watford town centre. This is an area of shops and restaurants as well as residential housing.

The main buses that serve the area are the Sapphire 320/321 that travels from Rickmansworth to Hemel Hempstead. Watford North Railway station is about half a mile away.

The practice has 6 dentists, a hygienist, 5 dental nurses, a practice manager and 2 receptionists.

We spoke to the 2 Reception staff on our visit.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

The practice is easy to find and says 'The Dental Practice' in large lettering in several places on the front of the building together with the practice's name and telephone number. There is no NHS logo as such.

2.2 Car Parking

The Longspring Pay and Display car park is opposite the dental practice. It costs 60p for 1 hour parking but is currently free as the machine has been out of order since 18/10/18. It has 6 clearly marked blue badge parking bays that run into the fenced walkway along the side of the road up to the traffic lights by the practice. Dropped kerbs enable wheelchair users who come by car to access the practice via this route.

Although it is a main road and the traffic lights do not have pedestrian controls we found no difficulty crossing the road. However drop off would be difficult to do safely.

2.3 Visible External Information

On the front door there is a small sign to say that the practice accepts both NHS and Private patients together with opening times. There is also a large wheelchair access symbol to let patients know that assistance is available if they knock.

The 111 Emergency number is given on a separate notice for treatment outside of surgery hours.

2.4 First impressions

The entrance to the practice is at pavement level and opens immediately into the waiting room and reception area. The area is bright, airy and uncluttered with the reception desk to the right and seating to the left. Although the reception desk is high, the receptionists are able to easily leave the area to assist patients or to go over to where they are seated to enable them to complete forms.

We were warmly welcomed by the two receptionists who were also dealing with a steady stream of patients and phone calls.

Overall the practice felt friendly, organised and professional.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

The seating is of the same height but some chairs do have arm rests and the style would allow for easy configuration for wheelchair users or for prams and buggies.

There are 2 notice boards where notices are neatly displayed. This included information on safeguarding, oral health, a pictorial flow chart for making a complaint and the Healthwatch Hertfordshire poster and cards.

A television showing dental information and current news was also on but not obtrusive. Toys and books were available for children as well as up to date magazines for adults. We also noted a colourful display about sugar which a young patient was very interested in.

There was a list of the dentists at the practice but no photographs and we noted the receptionists wore name badges.

All the surgeries are located on the ground floor off a corridor beyond the waiting room.

There is a toilet for the use of patients but it is not accessible (staff say they ensure that patients are aware of this when they register at the practice). This is an area that would benefit from some refurbishment when any new decorations are considered. There was no colour contrast between the walls and toilet/basin - everything was white - which would not support someone with dementia or a sight impairment. There was an emergency red cord but this did not reach to the floor.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

There are up to date NHS charges information on the wall by the reception desk. There is also a leaflet about dental costs. Staff were clear about the services available under the three NHS treatment bands and go through them with patients as required (we were shown the new forms which are now in larger print and which they have been using for several months). The dentist will also go through the treatment plan.

Staff were mindful about ensuring that patients who are entitled to free care understand what they are signing and agreeing to and there are notices to remind patients about this to avoid a penalty charge.

4.2 Complaints

The practice takes a pro-active approach to dealing with complaints which is patient centred aiming to provide solutions for the patient whilst trying to avoid escalation to a full blown complaint. (We were shown the staff guidance on handling patient complaints to support this).

This is a positive approach. NHS patients are also provided with information on taking their complaint to NHS England, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman and support for complaints advocacy and feedback if required, in line with the recommendations in the 'Dental Complaints Statement' from the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.

These leaflets need to be more readily available for patients as they were not on display at the time of our visit.

Summary of the Practice's Complaints Policy:

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 (Practice Manager)	Yes	Not available	DCS* NHS England PHSO*	Yes

*DCS Dental Complaints Service (for private patients)

PHSO Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The surgery has a NHS Friends and Family feedback box in the waiting area and provides slips of paper for patients to record their experience. These are in need of refreshing as they are faded and could also be provided in a larger font size.

4.3 Promoting oral health

Leaflets and posters were available as well as a display about 'Rethink your food' board, demonstrating sugar in food items. Free samples of toothpaste were also available.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS website¹

The practice has basic information on a site called 'Toothpick'. It clearly states that NHS care is available and includes opening times, facilities, directions and photos of staff. The Practice also has an entry on the NHS website which is kept up to date. Though the website states there is no disabled parking, it is available in the Pay and Display car park that would be suitable for some patients.

¹ From September 2018, the NHS Choices website is now known as the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/>. The NHS website (www.nhs.uk) contains information to help people manage their health and care online.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

Staff ask patients about their communication or accessibility needs when they register and log this on their computer system together with medical information to ensure information is up to date and available for all staff.

A hearing loop is available and the sign is clearly visible on the front of the reception desk.

Patients who do not speak or understand English generally come with relatives or friends but staff are aware of how to book an interpreter should that be necessary.

A private space would be made available for anyone who needs some privacy for a conversation with staff or who would need some time to recover from treatment.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

As the practice is generally accessible for most patients, those who are physically unable to access the practice are usually referred to the Community Dental Team run by Hertfordshire Community Trust as other dental practices in Watford would probably not be any more accessible.

Staff were fully aware of the Purple Folder for people who have a learning disability as they have several patients who attend the practice with a learning disability. The dentist will be the one who goes through the Purple Folder with the patient.

Staff are trained in safeguarding and understand about raising safeguarding concerns. The Practice Manager keeps staff informed of ongoing cases and learning from these.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

All staff are trained first aiders and the lead dentist is the named first aider. If he is not available the dentist on duty will take charge.

The practice has a defibrillator and an emergency trolley.

6. Summary of Findings

The Marc Friedmann & Associates Dental Practice has many areas of good practice, and provides a good local service, as highlighted below:

1. Professional, knowledgeable and helpful staff aware of individual patient needs.
2. Clean, organised, accessible and welcoming environment.
3. Hearing loop availability.
4. Comprehensive complaints process

We also found the following areas for improvement:

1. Website.

7. Recommendations

1. Ensure the NHS complaints process leaflets are visible and available for patients to access.
2. Ensure the red emergency cord in the toilet reaches almost to floor level.
3. When next refurbishing / redecorating consider updating the patient toilet.
4. Refresh the Friends and Family Test feedback slips.
5. Consider using a larger font when renewing leaflets and ensuring these are as prominent as possible.
6. Consider providing a more comprehensive website.

Response from Marc Friedmann and Associates

Re: Healthwatch Hertfordshire - Enter & View Report: M.E. Friedmann & Associates

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your Enter and View Report and the recommendations made in Section 7

Items 1, 2 & 4: These were immediately addressed on receiving your draft report; the complaints leaflets are now on display, the emergency cord in the toilet has been lengthened and the Friends & Family slips have been renewed, with larger print copies also made available (photos provided to HwH Quality Manager)

Item 5: Where possible, we have now made available enlarged copies of our current leaflets. Unfortunately, most leaflets and posters provided by NHSE are only ever supplied in a regular size font.

Item 3: The patient toilet will be updated at our next refurbishment.

Item 6: We are currently looking at enhancing the online presence of our practice.