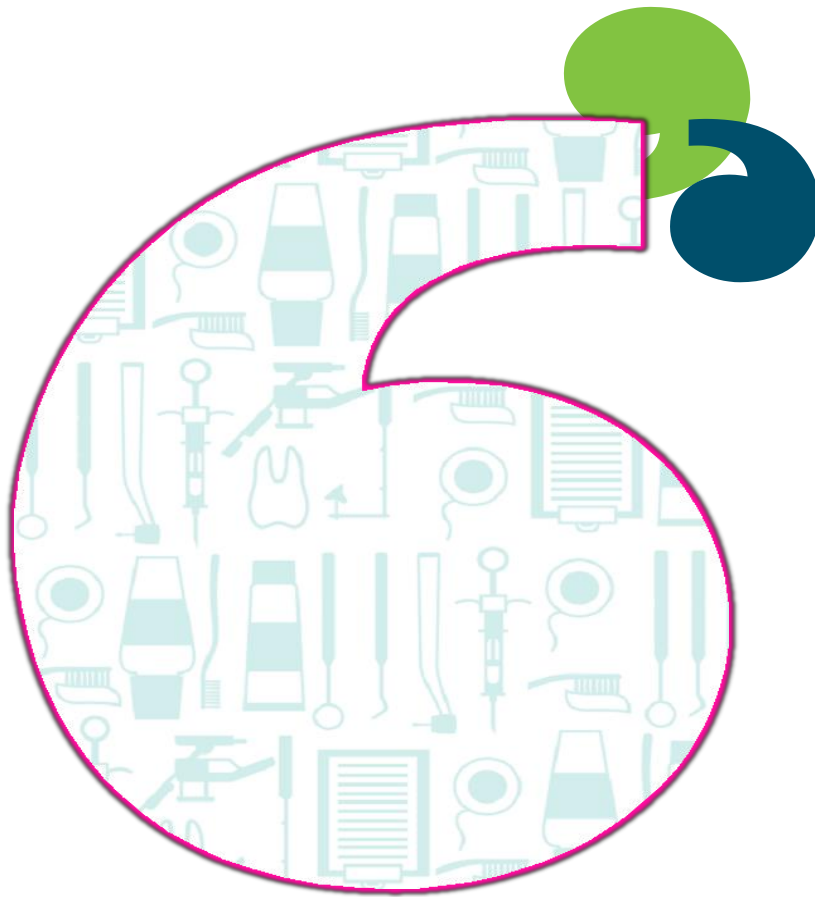


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Shephall Dental Surgery
246 Shephall Way, Stevenage, SG2 9RE
Stevenage Area

Premises visited: Shephall Dental Surgery
Date and Time of Visit: 30.08.18 11.15
Visit Conducted By: Sweenie Gunasekera, Jane Brown
NHS Contract Holder: Miss Sabina Wadhwani, Mr Victor Tikam Gehani

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the staff we spoke to on the visit and for making us feel welcomed.

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 the 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

Shephall Dental Surgery is located in a residential area on a main road, close to a small area of shops and about 3 miles from Stevenage town Centre. The Surgery is served by Centrebus 178 and Arriva bus SB6 that regularly depart from the main bus station which is close to the railway station.

We spoke to the receptionists, and also to one of the dentists on our visit.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

The building is clearly signposted with the name of the practice which displays the telephone number and website (not working at the time of our visit). There is also a sign that says the practice offers both NHS and private treatment. The NHS sign is a large separate sign and matches the style of the main practice signage but doesn't display the NHS logo as such.

2.2 Car Parking

There is a small car park opposite the row of shops nearby that had several spaces available when we arrived. We could not see any accessible car park spaces and the area is enclosed by pavement. Opposite the practice is a lay-by that can be used for parking if spaces are available.

2.3 Visible External Information

On the front of the building by the door there is information about opening times including Easter 2018 opening times. Lunch time closure is helpfully included. An out of hours number for Herts Urgent Care is given with the 111 number given as an alternative option in quite small print.

The names of the dentists are also displayed.

2.4 First impressions

Access to the Surgery is via a flight of about 7 stone steps down to the front door. There is an iron hand rail down the side of the steps from top to bottom to give some support but this would be inaccessible for anyone in a wheelchair or with severe mobility issues. The outside was a little unkempt as the grass needed cutting.

On opening the front door, as this a converted house, there is a narrow corridor with the Reception signposted to the side room on the right and stairs leading up to treatment rooms on the left. Two treatment rooms are available downstairs (one past the waiting room and one through the waiting room, accessible by a small step).

The staff were welcoming, friendly and helpful.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

Space is limited in the combined reception area/waiting room. Wheelchair access would be difficult but is not applicable due to the surgery itself not being accessible to those unable to negotiate the steps down to the surgery.

The reception desk is very high with no lower section although the receptionists do come out if required to help and support patients. At the far end of the desk near the wall there is a display of leaflets for patients to take.

Although this is a fairly small area there were no obstructions or barriers making the best of the space available and was clean and tidy. The chairs had no arms and are all the same height and are arranged around the walls opposite the reception desk. The room is well lit and has both natural and artificial lighting and has a plain wood floor.

There was a TV on the wall (which was waiting to be repaired) so the radio was on instead. The Receptionist said they use the TV to distract patients waiting for treatment and alter the programme depending on the makeup of the patients e.g. children's programmes for children.

The notice board was on the far wall above some of the chairs. Notices were neatly displayed and included the NHS Dental Charges 2018 (also displayed on another wall), up to date Safeguarding posters for both adults and children, the complaints process, the Healthwatch Hertfordshire poster and a number of other patient focussed notices.

Elsewhere on the walls and surfaces were posters about GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and signs advertising the availability of a hearing loop system.

No staff photographs were on display.

The toilet is located at the top of the stairs on the first floor and the space inside the toilet is exceedingly limited. There is some colour contrast to enable a patient with sight problems or dementia to more easily use the facility. There was no emergency cord.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

There are up to date NHS charges information both on the noticeboard and on the wall by the Reception desk. 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 form used). 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.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints procedure was displayed on the notice board and would be difficult to read if there were patients sitting in the way. The receptionist was unable to provide us with a copy to take away and the website was also unavailable.

According to the copy on the notice board, verbal complaints are dealt with in the first instance by the 'Complaints manager' within 3 working days and the practice would endeavor to sort out any issues quickly which is good practice. However should a patient want to take their complaint further or not wish to talk to the 'Complaints Manager', the information provided is outdated (the telephone number given no longer exists) and does not meet the guidelines set out by the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.

The surgery also has a Feedback box which is normally displayed but was on the top of the filing cabinets behind the Reception desk when we visited. Any verbal compliments are given to the person concerned but not officially recorded.

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? Pofwer or Healthwatch?
No - Complaints Manager only	Within 3 working days	Complaint completed 'as soon as practicable'	CQC PALS ENHWH PCT	No

* CQC Care Quality Commission

PALS Patient Advice Liaison Service

ENHWH PCT East and North Hertfordshire and West Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust (This organisation was replaced in 2010 by Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust and in 2013 by East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group).

4.3 Promoting oral health

We did not see much information on oral health in the waiting room although there was a display of toothbrushes etc. in a glass cabinet.

4.4 Dental Practice and the NHS¹ website

Shephall Dental Surgery's NHS website page was not easy to find as it under the principal dentists **Gehani Mr V & Wadhvani Miss S** rather than the name of the Surgery. The page has not been updated in the last 90 days and therefore does not show up to date information about whether the practice is accepting NHS 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.

or not. However the accessibility information and car parking details are correct and very clear. There is also correct information about facilities available.

The practice's own website is currently unavailable and is showing an error message when the link is clicked and therefore is unavailable for comment in this report.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

Staff note and log information about a patient's medical history and communication needs on a computer and in their file. It was evident that the receptionist was familiar with patients who require support including those patients with autism, learning disabilities and dementia.

There is a hearing loop available and it is used on occasion. Patients that do not speak or understand English often come with someone supporting them and therefore the practice has not had to book an interpreter for them. They were unsure how to do this.

A private space would be made available if a patient needed to discuss anything private or recover from treatment.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

People who are physically unable to access the practice are referred to Hydean or Bedwell Dental practices. Dentists at the practice used to treat local patients that were housebound in their homes (also those in nearby care homes) but can no longer do this as the Domiciliary dental care contract changed in April 2018 following an NHS England procurement process and is now run by Hertfordshire Community Trust (HCT) that covers the whole of Hertfordshire. The dentist we spoke to was obviously passionate about delivering care to local people and was happy to support HCT with any information about her patients if requested.

A person with a learning disability would usually be accompanied by a carer. Staff ask which condition(s) patients are living with to help them to understand what approach is best for the individual. They were not aware of the Purple Folder (for people with learning disabilities) which records the individual's health needs over a range of services.

All staff have both vulnerable adult and child safeguarding training annually and as a part of their induction. Staff felt confident that they could recognize and raise safeguarding concerns with senior staff members.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

All staff are first aid trained but there is no designated first aider person. Medical emergencies have happened in the past and staff talked confidently about what to do.

The Practice has its own defibrillator. An emergency kit is also available for use.

6. Summary of Findings

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

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

We also found the following areas for improvement:

1. Complaints policy and procedure.
2. Website (Practice's own and the NHS website).
3. Accessibility for patients with limited mobility.

7. Recommendations

1. Update external information (remove Easter opening times) and make 111 more prominent as the out of hours/ emergency service.
2. Revise the complaints policy in line with the recommendations in the Dental Complaints Statement from the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board
3. Make it clear who the 'Complaints Manager' is by including a named person.
4. Ensure copies of the Complaints Procedure are readily available for patients.

5. 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>
6. Update the NHS Website to show current capacity and consider changing the entry to reflect the name of the practice to make it easier to find.
7. Provide an updated website for patients.
8. Consider installing an emergency cord in the toilet.
9. When next refurbishing/ redecorating consider having a lower section in the reception desk to make it more patient friendly.
10. When next refurbishing / redecorating consider plans for making the practice more physically accessible.
11. Consider having a named First Aider in the Practice.

Response from Shephall Dental Surgery:

We are happy overall with the report and have already implemented some changes which we hope will change the recommendations now.

1. External Information sign has been updated (evidence supplied to HwH)
2. We have revised the complaints policy and made it clear who the complaints manager is. We have also produced this in a leaflet form for patients. (Evidence supplied to HwH)
3. All staff have been alerted to “the purple folder” we have also all taken time to look at the link provided. 2 staff members were aware of the purple folder from a course they undertook in 2013 but when they asked a patient about it previously the patient seemed unsure. We will keep ourselves and the staff updated though.
4. We have updated the NHS website and have had the name changed now.
 - a. <https://www.nhs.uk/Services/dentists/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=26256>

5. We are unsure as to why the website was down and we now have a log to check it weekly (I have supplied the address below)

www.stevenagesmiles.co.uk

6. We are looking in to the emergency cord in the bathroom (we had the locks changed so that it can be accessed from the outside in an emergency).
7. We are looking in to a course for a dedicated first aider at the practice and plan to send 2 staff members as we would like someone on site at all times but we do carry out BLS/CPR and defibrillator training annually.
8. We do make it clear the surgery unfortunately is inaccessible to certain patients with physical and mobility disabilities. In the past we have had quotes to construct a slope to the front of the building but unfortunately were told we would be unable to widen the front door area due to the original construction of the building. We do not have rear access. We have had handrails put in down the front steps, on the front door, along the hall way area and both sides of the stair case and we do inform patients of the steps to the front of the surgery. We often book patients with mobility issues who would still like to attend in the downstairs surgeries. We used to have the domiciliary contract but in April this was taken over by the community dental service although this is something that we now offer privately. We also make patients aware of the NHS domiciliary service as well as local surgeries with step free and wheelchair access at Bedwell dental Surgery.
9. Our gardener had let us down on 2 occasions prior to your visit we now have employed a new gardener who has visited twice since your visit and is on an annual contract.
10. We do on occasion move the comments box as in the holidays the children tend to play with it
11. We have looked in to BSL and interpreters and have details on file for prestige networking. This has been discussed with all staff members.