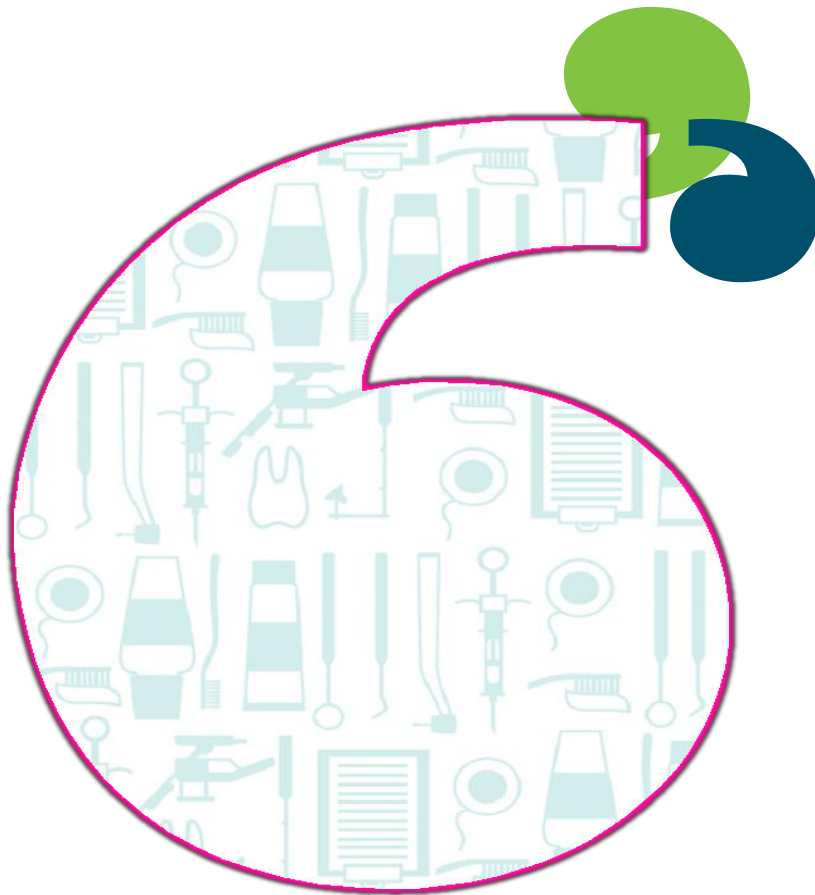


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Stevenage Dental Studio

93-95 Queensway, Stevenage, SG1 1EA

Stevenage Area

Premises visited: Stevenage Dental Studio
Date and Time of Visit: 12.06.18 11.00
Visit Conducted By: Roger de Ste Croix, Jo Cahill
NHS Contract Holder: Mr A Pangotra & Dr P Taneja

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 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

Stevenage Dental Studio is located in Stevenage Town Centre on the second floor of a building that forms part of the shopping precinct with no lift access. There are three dentists, three dental nurses and two receptionists. The Regional Manager is currently acting as the Practice Manager. This post is currently being recruited to.

The practice is looking to move to a more accessible location.

We spoke with one of the receptionists, and also to the Regional Manager/Practice Manager.

Travel links to the practice are good, as it is located just 5 minutes' walk from the town centre bus station, with the train station only an extra few minutes away. Buses from the town centre travel out to other parts of Stevenage, as well as to towns such as Harlow, Bishop's Stortford, Hemel Hempstead, Welwyn Garden City, Hitchin and Luton. There is also a taxi rank nearby the bus station.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

There is a hanging sign at second floor level advertising the surgery which is not very clear from street level. There are also signs on the front and side aspects of the wall by the street entrance.

The practice does provide an embedded Google Map on their website for patients' convenience in the 'Contact Us' section, including a facility to programme Google Maps with directions from a patient's home.

2.2 Car Parking

There is a multi-storey car park at the nearby Westgate Shopping Centre, and other nearby car parks e.g. The Forum. There is no drop off point or blue badge spaces nearby. Staff told us that the TKMaxx (Forum) car park to the rear of the Surgery has 5/6 disabled spaces.

2.3 Visible External Information

Both street level signs have an NHS logo but no indication of the NHS treatment offered. The sign on the front aspect gives the Surgery's out of hours number. The 111 number is displayed on the sign on the side aspect of the entrance door without indicating it is an out of hours contact.

2.4 First impressions

Access to the Surgery is via two flights of stairs. Inside the surgery the corridors and reception/waiting area are bright and uncluttered. There is limited space in the reception area.

The staff were welcoming and friendly.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

The surgery is on the second floor via two steep flights of stairs; there is no lift and only a handrail on one side of the stairway, so climbing up or descending could be daunting for people with mobility issues.

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 stairs. There are no surgeries on the ground floor.

There is no lower section to the reception desk. The chairs are hard, with no arms and are all the same height. The room is well lit and has natural lighting but was very hot.

There is no disabled toilet and the space inside the toilets is limited, which would make it difficult for a carer to assist someone who needed support. There was not enough colour contrast to enable a patient with sight problems or dementia to easily use the facility. The hand washing basin is not at a height to enable a wheelchair user. There was no emergency red cord.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

There are up to date NHS charges information both on the noticeboard in the corridor and on the reception desk. These were photocopies (the Practice Manager explained they were waiting for updated posters). The one on the noticeboard was dated 'from April 2018'. Staff were clear about the services available under the three NHS treatment bands and go through them with patients on the initial visit. They use form FP17DC.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints procedure was displayed on the front of the reception desk but was in very small print. Staff showed us the large print version which was available to patients if requested.

Verbal complaints are dealt with in the first instance by the practice manager if available or one of the reception staff. All complaints both verbal and written would be sent to the Regional Manager. They also have a comments book at reception and a comments box on the window sill.

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	Within 3 working days	Complaint completed 'as soon as practicable'	PDCS CQC PHSO NHS England	Healthwatch Hertfordshire

*PDCS Private Dental Complaints Service

CQC Care Quality Commission

PHSO Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman

The complaints process follows the good practice suggested by the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board though 'to find out who provides Independent Health Complaints Advocacy in Hertfordshire' could be added to the Healthwatch Hertfordshire information.

4.3 Promoting oral health

There was little information promoting oral health - one A4 poster on the office door encouraging children to brush their teeth. Most information was promoting cosmetic procedures. There was free toothpaste on offer.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

Stevenage Dental Studio and Implant Centre's NHS Choices page was easy to find and has been recently updated with the opening times, as well as information on whether they are accepting new NHS patients, and urgent dental appointments. There is also correct information about facilities available.

The practice's own website is smart and navigable. The fact that they treat NHS patients is on the home page, although this could be made more prominent. This is because NHS treatment being available does not seem to appear anywhere else on the website, including the Fees & Offers page. The opening times are clear to read on the 'Contact Us' page, however there is a discrepancy between what is written here and what is written on their NHS Choices entry. The practice's facility for sending in feedback and complaints is hidden away on the bottom banner for each page, on the bottom right hand side as 'Dental Feedback' in small print. 111 for out of hours help does not appear on the 'Contact Us' page, and nor does any information on the practice's complaints procedure.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

Patients are asked to fill in a medical history form, assistance is available if requested. If any problems are flagged up a member of staff would speak with them to ascertain what help was required. Private space is available, if needed, in the office or staff room.

There are currently two patients who lip read and staff know to speak clearly and to ensure they are facing the person. They will communicate in writing if that is what the person wants. Staff will book an Interpreter if required. There is no hearing loop. Staff said that they respond to each individual's needs.

People who do not speak or understand English would usually be accompanied by a friend or relative who was able to interpret for them. Staff can arrange an interpreter if necessary.

Patients sign an agreement when they join the practice that includes the process about arriving late for appointments. A patient will be telephoned if they have not arrived by 5 minutes after the booked appointment time. If the patient has not arrived within 10 minutes of the appointment time, they are classified as a 'did not attend' and will have their appointment re-booked to minimize the impact on other patients. This is particularly necessary when dentists are fully booked.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

People who are unable to access the practice are referred to a 'sister' practice in either Letchworth Garden City or Royston. If they are unable to travel they would be signposted to either; the Village Dental or Stevenage Dental Practice.

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 which records the individual's health needs over a range of services.

One of the patients who has a visual impairment comes with a guide dog which is cared for during the appointment by staff. All blind and partially sighted people are asked what support they need, e.g. having a nurse to escort them in, help with filling in forms including it being read out and filled in by a dental nurse if required.

All staff have both vulnerable adult and child, online safeguarding training annually and as a part of their induction. Clinical staff have level 3 safeguarding, other staff have level 2 safeguarding. We were shown evidence of completion. Staff also have training on the Mental Capacity Act. All policies and procedures and training modules are available to staff via their intranet access.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

Should someone collapse or feel unwell, staff would check the person over including their airways and call 999 if required. They would follow the ambulance service instructions whilst waiting for the ambulance to arrive. When asked about this they informed us they have two first aiders: the Regional Manager/Practice Manager and one of the receptionists. There was nothing to show in reception who the first aiders are.

The Practice has its own defibrillator. This is kept in the staff room which is not locked. It is checked daily by the Dental Nurse. We were shown the up to date record. The oxygen is kept in the same place with daily checks. Drugs are kept in a locked cupboard in the corridor, the key for which is kept behind the Reception Desk. Drugs are checked weekly by the nurse and we were shown up to date records.

6. Summary of Findings

Staff we spoke to are friendly, helpful and well informed about NHS charges and bands and have a very person-centered approach to patients, including those with additional needs, and do their best to ameliorate the shortcomings of the building for all their patients.

The current premises do not enable everyone regardless of protective characteristics¹ access to the premises. The Surgery is on the second floor of a listed building with access via two flights of stairs. The reception/waiting room is small and would not enable wheelchair access. There is no lower section to the desk and no choice of seating in the waiting room. There is no disabled toilet and no red emergency cord. However the practice is due to move to a more suitable ground floor premises by the end of August 2018 once building work is completed. Current patients have already been informed of the move and will be contacted again once they have the move date. The new building will have designated patient parking including disabled spaces.

7. Recommendations

7.1 See the move to new premises through at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that the needs of patients with additional needs can be catered for. Including:

- a) Providing a lower section to the reception desk for wheelchair users
- b) A choice of seating of different heights (some with armrests) in the waiting area, to help those patients who find it difficult to rise from a seated position.
- c) Provide colour contrast in the toilets to help those with dementia, visual impairments, or other disabilities be self-caring where possible.
- d) Provide a red cord in the toilet to call for aid in an emergency.
- e) Install a hearing loop.

7.2 On external signage, provide the 111 number for out of hours help and make it clear that NHS services are provided and that they welcome new NHS patients.

¹ The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a 'protected characteristic'. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex equality, sexual orientation.

7.3 Display information about the complaints procedure in larger print and consider revising the lay out to make it easier for patients to read and understand.

7.4 Ensure all information is displayed in large print and consider displaying more information on oral care and the treatments available on the NHS.

7.5 Ensure it is clear the NHS treatment is available at the practice on the website.

7.6 Ensure there is clear and consistent information on what the practice's opening times are.

7.7 Display 111 for out of hours help on the 'Contact Us' page.

7.8 Display the practice's complaints procedure on the website, as well as making it clear where on the website patients may be able to leave feedback and/or complaints.

7.9 Review emergency procedures to ensure all staff know what to do and who the on call first aider is.

7.10 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>

Response from Stevenage Dental Studio:

The Regional Manager for Alliance Dental Care (responsible for Stevenage Dental Studio) apologized for the delay in responding to the report. They are moving to their new site on Monday 29th October 2018 and the response reflects what will be available there:

7.1

- a) Providing a lower section to the reception desk for wheelchair users. **Lower desk has been built at new practice**
- b) A choice of seating of different heights (some with armrests) in the waiting area, to help those patients who find it difficult to rise from a seated position. **Different section of chairs have been purchased**
- c) Provide colour contrast in the toilets to help those with dementia, visual impairments, or other disabilities be self-caring where possible. **Point noted and we will try and incorporate into the new site to make it easier for different patient groups**
- d) Provide a red cord in the toilet to call for aid in an emergency. **Installed at new practice**

e) Install a hearing loop. **We will look into the need for this, we feel at present we are able to meet our current patient needs**

7.2 On external signage, provide the 111 number for out of hours help and make it clear that NHS services are provided and that they welcome new NHS patients. **New signage being made for new practice and will take this into consideration**

7.3 Display information about the complaints procedure in larger print and consider revising the lay out to make it easier for patients to read and understand. **New signage made and put on display**

7.4 Ensure all information is displayed in large print and consider displaying more information on oral care and the treatments available on the NHS. **Poster adjusted and larger print available to patients if they need it**

7.5 Ensure it is clear the NHS treatment is available at the practice on the website. **We feel we already meet this requirement. The websites are being redesigned and we will ensure this point is considered in the new design**

7.6 Ensure there is clear and consistent information on what the practice's opening times are. **New signage clearly outlines practice opening hours and updates will be made to the website**

7.7 Display 111 for out of hours help on the 'Contact Us' page. **This will be updated on our new website**

7.8 Display the practice's complaints procedure on the website, as well as making it clear where on the website patients may be able to leave feedback and/or complaints. **This will be updated on our new website**

7.9 Review emergency procedures to ensure all staff know what to do and who the on call first aider is. **Meeting held and all staff were already aware of the procedures and who the 1st aider are. Unsure why this point was included in the report.**

7.10 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>
Addressed this point with all the staff during a team meeting