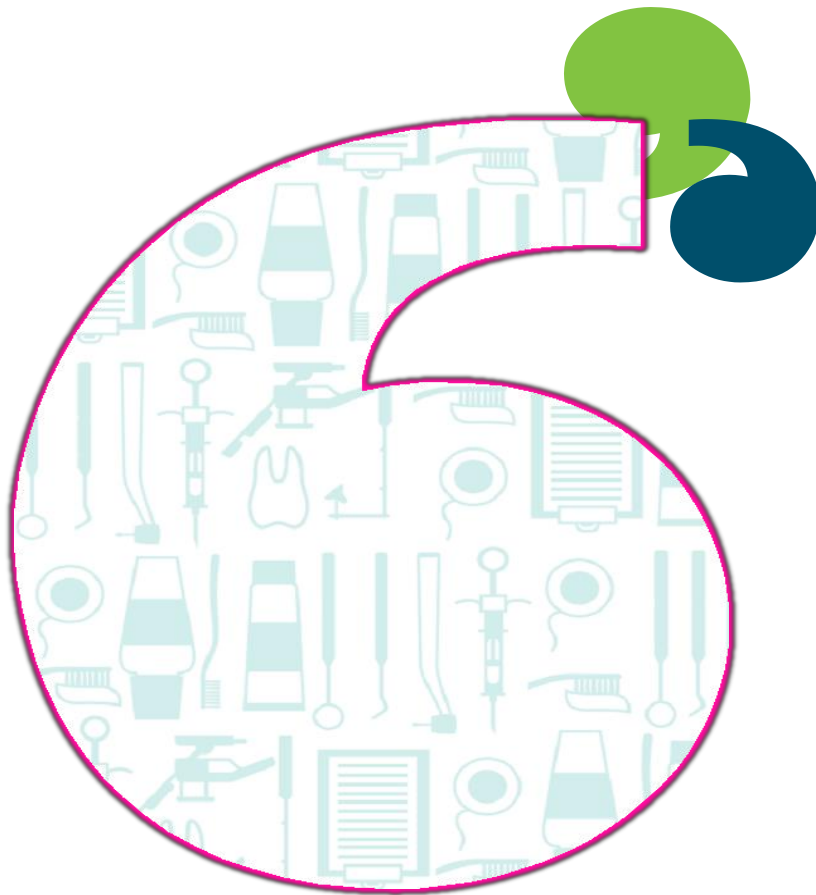


# Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



**The Dentist**

**66 South Street, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 3AZ**  
**East Herts Area**

**Premises visited:** The Dentist  
**Date and Time of Visit:** 01.02.18 10:40  
**Visit Conducted By:** Joe Rodia, Paul Regan

**NHS Contract Holder:** Mr P Kletz & Mr D Sher

### 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

Established over 30 years ago, The Dentist is a practice with two sites. The one visited is situated on South Street in Bishop's Stortford. This site has four different floors, a reception area and 3 waiting areas, and so is an extensive building. Currently working there are two principal dentists, two specialist dentists, four associate dentists, four oral hygienists, a practice co-ordinator, and a receptionist.

Due to the practice's position on South Street in the town centre, there are good travel links. It is a 10 minute walk away from the train station, where there are links into London and further north. There is a bus stop a moment's walk away down South Street that has links to Stansted Airport, Harlow, and surrounding rural areas.

## 2. Environment

### 2.1 Signage

The name of the surgery, which is displayed in clear lettering on the front of the building, makes it very easy to find and understand what the building is. Although nowhere on the front of the building does it say 'Dental Practice', the various photos of perfect smiles and the name itself means it is clear what the building is.

There is a small Google Map embedded in the bottom banner of the practice's website, and there is also a larger map embedded in the 'Contact' - 'Bishop's Stortford' webpage showing the practice's location. However, it is unclear how to zoom in on the map.

### 2.2 Car Parking

When we arrived we saw that there is a high street parking bay opposite the building, however at this time parking was not available, and South Street is busy. One of the public bays was for disabled parking, and this was free. It is important to note that the route from the disabled bay to the front of the reception was all on the same level, which allows excellent access. A person could also be dropped off at the front door, but this would have to be done quickly.

The Practice Co-ordinator told us that once a person has visited the surgery the first time, they are told that there are parking facilities available to disabled visitors only. These are at the rear of the surgery. This area can also be used as a drop off point.

### 2.3 Visible External Information

We could see an A4 laminated page saying that NHS patients were now being accepted, but was in black and white and did not use any NHS branding. The

opening hours were clearly displayed and included '111' to be used in case of an out of hours problem.

### 2.4 First impressions

Upon entry we were welcomed by the receptionist, though they did seem slightly distracted. The reception desk is all low enough to be accessed comfortably by someone in a wheelchair, however there were three pod chairs positioned along it. These are wonderful if a person needs to sit when talking at reception, but one would need to be moved for a person in a wheelchair to be able to talk to the receptionist.

The reception is not a waiting area. The first waiting area (Waiting Room 1) can be accessed through a door and via a few steps. This would prove an issue for someone with reduced mobility, however Waiting Room 1 can be accessed through the rear of the building via ramps.

The reception area and all of the waiting rooms are clean and clutter free, with ample natural light. The facility had a modern, professional feel. We did notice a few cardboard boxes in reception, but though unsightly these did not cause any obstruction.

There were no noticeboards; however each waiting area had various signs displayed in individual frames. This clear and minimalist approach was felt to encourage reading as they looked professional.

In general the majority of the information displayed was in relatively small print. This was not too much of an issue if you were able to stand in front of the notice, but as they were often displayed over a chair, this would not always be possible as people can sit in the way.

The information displayed was:

- Complaints Policy
- Failure to attend/late cancellation policy
- An apology in the event of delays
- NHS Fees
- Radiation Protection Model notice for patients
- A notice reminding patients to inform the dentist of changes in circumstances
- Information on claiming free treatment

In addition, there were posters about private treatments and stopping smoking.

There were no photos of staff.

### 3. Physical Access

#### 3.1 Facilities

The reception area is highly accessible, as is the ground floor waiting room. The rest of the surgery is accessed only via stairs and would be impossible to access for someone in a wheelchair, and unlikely to be accessed by someone with mobility issues as there is no lift. However, all patients with mobility issues are accommodated downstairs where there is a surgical space, which also allows wheelchair access.

There was an accessible disabled toilet, which had correctly positioned seat, washbasin and grab rails. The soap and hand drying facilities were also correctly positioned. There was no colour contrast in the toilet facilities.

There was also no red emergency cord. There was a long cord and there was confusion over whether this was the light switch or not. When we asked the receptionist on the main desk, they said they weren't sure, checked, and confirmed that it was a light switch. They said if someone did need assistance in the disabled toilet, the facility is close to the reception desk in Waiting Room 1. At that time there was no one on that reception desk, however by then it was 12.10 and it may have been lunch.

When we visited there was a chair outside the disabled toilet. Presumably this is so that people who are waiting for a lift may sit. As the disabled toilet is positioned close to the rear door, which is used by people with mobility issues, this is understandable. However, the chair did prevent the door to the disabled toilet from being fully opened, and would have meant someone with a wheelchair would have needed to find help to access the facilities.

Inside the disabled toilet there was a vacuum cleaner being stored.

### 4. Information Access

#### 4.1 NHS Charges

The NHS Charges poster was displayed in the waiting areas and was in date, as well as some leaflets being available in the practice. The practice co-ordinator told us that before any treatment begins, the dentist discusses the charges with patients. The practice co-ordinator also talked about the FP17DC when we asked about how they explain charges to patients.

## 4.2 Complaints

Though information on how to complain is clearly displayed, and this includes highlighting concerns rather than a full complaint, we did not see any way of leaving informal feedback e.g.: The friends and family test.

In addition to the complaints policy being on display, it is also available at reception, and there is a copy in each treatment area. Patients are able to talk in a private space if they have concerns, and the practice co-ordinator showed sympathy and understanding that patients might require this for a range of reasons.

The complaints procedure is straightforward and set out clearly in steps. It manages expectations, and tries to ensure that it is patient focused. However, although the practice treats NHS patients, the practice have not included NHS England as part of the escalation process. NHS patients would not be able to complain to the Private Dental Complaints Service, and vice versa.

The practice does have a section of the 'Contact' page about the complaints procedure, although they do not display the actual procedure. The website sets out a slightly different expectation, in terms of time, than the procedure, giving 7 days as their target to get back to a patient about their complaint. They also provide only the General Dental Council as the escalation procedure, which again differs from the procedure.

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 - 2 working days	Yes - 10 working days, with further notification if required	PDCS GDC	No

### Summary of the Practice's Complaints Procedure

\*PDCS      Private Dental Complaints Service

GDC      General Dental Council

### 4.3 Promoting oral health

Though there were oral health tools on sale in reception, in the waiting area there were no posters promoting things such as regular brushing or not eating sugar. There were posters promoting additional treatments and hygienist services available in the surgery.

### 4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

It was difficult to find the practice on NHS Choices, as it is not titled 'The Dentist' on the website, but rather 'Kletz Mr PM & Sher Mr D'. The only way to find it is to search for the same postal address on the website, rather than its name. The practice's entry on NHS Choices has not been updated since 2010; as such no information on the services provided here can be found due to the website's 90 day rule. As well as this, information about the facilities appeared to be incorrect.

The practice's own website is nicely set out and navigable. There are photos of the principal dentists on the website's 'About' page; however photos have not been included for any other employees at the practice. The NHS Fees are not published on the website. The practice's opening hours are also not included.

## 5. Supporting Patients

### 5.1 Communication

All patients have to fill in a medical history, which the practice co-ordinator told us they are supported to do, if needed. If they need extra help for visits, this is on their notes.

We were also told that the surgery has only had a few deaf patients and they have always brought interpreters. There is a notice on the staff noticeboard about NHS translation facilities that are available. When we asked the receptionist what they would do to help a deaf patient, they said they talk slowly and use pen and paper if necessary. They also mentioned that they had a card with simple British Sign Language (BSL), though they were unsure where it was. They did not mention any information from the staff noticeboard.

The practice co-ordinator said that they only have a few people who cannot speak English and that they always bring their own interpreters. They also said that there was information available on the staff noticeboard. When we asked the receptionist, they did mention that there was information on the noticeboard.



### 5.2 Patients with specific requirements

Due to the rear entrance and medical facilities all being available on the same level, the practice said they have never had to deal with a patient being unable to access the premises.

The staff told us that they are used to dealing with people with learning disabilities as there is a residential home close by, and they have a good relationship there. They tailor their support to each individual. However, they did not know what a Purple Folder is, and requested more information.

In terms of support for patients with a visual impairment, the practice told us that they previously had a patient with a guide dog. They said that they support patients by offering one to one assistance throughout a visit.

With regards to staff training, once every two years there is staff training where an external trainer comes in and delivers a safeguarding session. Additionally, staff are expected to refresh and update their knowledge every year, which they told us is currently happening at the surgery.

### 5.3 Medical Emergencies

In a medical emergency the practice co-ordinator co-ordinates the response. The practice let us know that they have emergency medical equipment available with easy access in the staff kitchen on the middle floor. This includes a CPR and Defibrillator kit. We were also told that in the case of an emergency, the computer system is able to put out an alert around the building's computers and phones.

We were informed that there are two first aiders at the practice whose names are on the staff noticeboard and, additionally, all other staff members have CPR and Defib training updated every year. The practice co-ordinator was able to give an example of previously having to use emergency procedures which included CPR. They were pleased to tell us that the individual survived, and continues to be a patient at the practice.

## 6. Summary of Findings

The Dentist is a busy practice whose staff are obviously very proud of the work they do. We found the following areas of good practice to highlight:

1. Willingness of the staff to provide one-to-one support for patients.
2. Light, clean, uncluttered building.
3. Excellent disabled access.

4. Multiple steps ensuring that patients are aware of treatment costs.

We also found the following areas for improvement:

1. Clearer promotion of NHS patient list.
2. Better access to disabled toilet.
3. Larger print on notices.
4. NHS Choices listing matches the practice's name.

## 7. Recommendations

### 2.1 Signage

1. Consider ways of making the map embedded on the website more user-friendly.

### 2.3 Visible External Information

2. Consider incorporating the NHS logo into the sign to make it clearer that NHS patients are accepted on the premises.

### 2.4 First Impressions

3. Look into ways of improving accessibility for wheelchair users in the reception area; this could be done by removing one of the chairs at reception.
4. Try to ensure it is clear that some of the documents on the noticeboard are available in large print.

### 3.1 Facilities

5. Ensure that the accessible toilet is clear of all clutter during business hours.
6. Ensure that there are no obstructions to the door for the accessible toilet, or any door used by the public. Chair placement should be monitored.
7. Consider installing a red emergency cord in the accessible toilet.

### 4.2 Complaints

8. Ensure that the complaints procedure is the same across all platforms.
9. Include NHS England in the escalation procedure, to account for NHS patients' needs.
10. Incorporate Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER (a patient advocacy organisation) into the Complaints Policy, in accordance with the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.

### 4.3 Promoting Oral Health

11. Place oral health posters in the reception area and waiting room.

#### **4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices Website**

12. Update the practice's entry on NHS Choices.
13. Publish NHS Fees on the practice website.
14. Consider including photos of all members of staff on the practice's website.
15. Include the practice's opening hours on the website.

#### **5.1 Communication**

16. Consider ways of making it clearer to patients and staff that support for communication is available for all disabilities.

### **Practice response:**

#### **2.1 Signage**

1. I have forwarded on your feedback to the website company.

#### **2.3 Visible External Information**

2. I have displayed a new sign with the NHS logo on it, in the practice window and waiting rooms as well.

#### **2.4 First Impressions**

3. Our wheelchair patients come to the rear of the practice, here there are no chairs in front of the desk, thus allowing wheelchair access.
4. I have displayed a sign informing patient's the information displayed is available in larger print.

#### **3.1 Facilities**

5. I have displayed a sign on the front and back of the door, asking for the area to be kept clear at all times, to allow for disabled access.
6. The chair has been repositioned to another wall.
7. I have contacted an electrician he will be popping in to organise a quote.

#### **4.2 Complaints**

- 8,9,10. The complaints procedure has been updated with the latest BDA version, this has been displayed in all waiting area, reception and in the treatment rooms as well, all staff have been informed.

### 4.3 Promoting Oral Health

11. Posters for top tips for teeth and NHS call 111 have been added to waiting rooms 2 and 3 and the reception area.

### 4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices Website

12. I am waiting to confirm log in details, once I have these I will update our NHS Choices details.

13. I have emailed our website support with NHS dental charges asking them to be added.

14. This is under review until a later date.

15. I have emailed our website support with this information asking them to add this.

### 5.1 Communication

16. We have placed this on the agenda for all staff as a refresher.