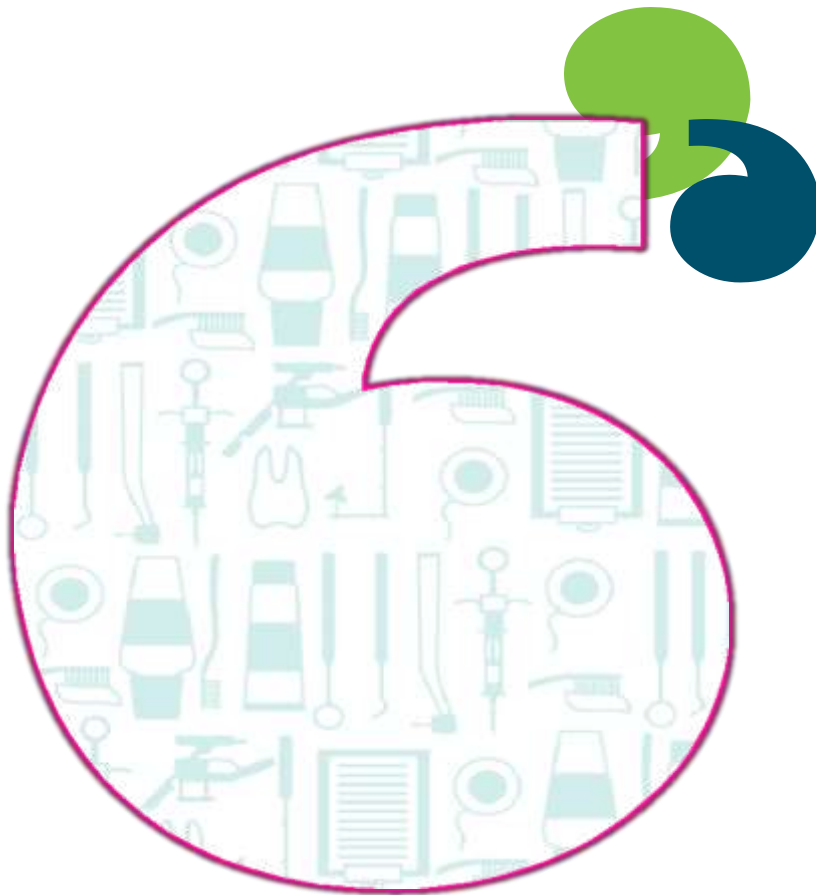


# Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



## **Peartree Dental Clinic**

**43 Peartree Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3UA**

**Welwyn and Hatfield District**

**Premises visited:** Peartree Dental Clinic  
**Date and Time of Visit:** 21.02.17 11:00  
**Visit Conducted By:** Keith Shephard and Sally Gale  
**NHS Contract Holder:** Mr Hajistilly

### **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to thank the staff who 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. 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 and the Central Region Inspection Manager - Dentistry at the Care Quality Commission.

## 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.

Desk top 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

*Peartree Dental Clinic is located in the east of Welwyn Garden City half a mile away from the town centre. It is a dental and facial cosmetic clinic, and has been established for over 50 years in the town. Three dentists work at the clinic, as well as three dental nurses, and a practice manager.*

*Being located close to the town centre means that the clinic is easy to reach. The train station is only half a mile away. A bus stop outside the clinic is served by 3 routes; the 331 which goes to St Albans and Hatfield, the 403 which goes between the east of Welwyn Garden City and Digswell in the north, and the 404 which goes between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. If people are prepared to walk only a little further from the main road, they can catch the 301, 366, or the 653.*

## 2. Environment

### 2.1 Signage

*The clinic was easy to find, though there was no sign outside that called it a dental practice, it is branded as a clinic. Their website provides an embedded Google Map for patients to find the clinic.*

### 2.2 Car Parking

*It was difficult to park close to the clinic, as there are yellow lines on the road outside. The website states that these are single yellow lines only prohibiting parking at lunchtime, however we saw double yellow lines on a large section of the road. There was no provision for disabled parking, or those carrying a blue badge but the practice manager stated that those with accessibility needs would be able to park behind staff members in the staff car park at the front of the clinic.*

### 2.3 Visible External Information

*The dentists' names were displayed on the outside of the clinic, however there was no out of hours information available to passers-by, and nor was it clear that NHS treatment is offered at the clinic.*

### 2.4 First Impressions

*The bell at the front door was located at the opposite end of the ramp where service users approach. This does not allow wheelchair users to ring the bell to open the door before they go up the ramp.*

*Upon entering the clinic an NHS sign near the door made it immediately obvious that NHS treatment is offered. The staff made it a very welcoming and professional*

*environment; there was an open reception and a cosy waiting area with nice décor. The noticeboard was good.*

### 3. Physical Access

#### 3.1 Facilities

*The reception area is quite small and as such is not very accessible for a wheelchair user. However ground floor surgeries are available for disabled patients, and they say so on their website. No hearing loop was visible. Nevertheless, when questioned the staff seemed to be aware of the specific needs some of their patients have and are prepared to provide assistance.*

*There is a toilet on the ground floor, but this is not wheelchair accessible.*

*Currently they have a planning application with the council to improve accessibility in the clinic, as well as an expansion to the car parking to enable disabled parking.*

### 4. Information Access

#### 4.1 NHS Charges

*The up to date NHS Bandings were available to see in the clinic.*

*When asked about how the cost of NHS treatment is explained to patients, the practice manager stated that she discusses the cost with patients to help them ‘mix and match’ between private and NHS treatments. The FP17DC form was not mentioned.*

*NHS Bandings do not appear on the website. Only private fees can be viewed for all the treatments here.*

#### 4.2 Complaints

*The complaints policy was on display on the noticeboard, but in small print. They keep a folder at reception which works in conjunction with a practice management software system.*

*The practice display their complaints policy for NHS patients on their website, though it is quite hidden away at the bottom of their webpage. The policy, as it appears on here, is clear and well written. However, it should be made clear that the Ombudsman will not consider dealing with a complaint until it has been dealt with by both the dental clinic and NHS England.*

### 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	Yes - 3 working days	Yes - within 3 weeks	Yes - NHSE* HSO PDCS GDC	No

*NHSE	NHS England
HSO	Health Service Ombudsman
PDCS	Private Dental Complaints Service
GDC	General Dental Council

### 4.3 Promoting oral health

*There were no posters promoting oral health on display in the clinic at the time of our visit.*

### 4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

*NHS Choices and the clinic's website currently match up in terms of what services they offer; they updated their information as recently as February 2017. Facilities information was last updated in November 2016 and appears also to match with the reality of the clinic in terms of accessibility.*

*The clinic's website has a very professional appearance which interacts with social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.*

## 5. Supporting Patients

### 5.1 Communication

*This has been left blank as the clinic did not return its questionnaire.*

### 5.2 Patients with specific requirements

*This has been left blank as the clinic did not return its questionnaire.*

### 5.3 Medical Emergencies

*The practice manager told us that the clinic has emergency equipment on site and an emergency procedure in place. They also have a defibrillator upstairs in the clinic.*

*Every member of staff attends annual accredited first aid training. However, there is no designated first aider at any given time.*

*Further information could not be included as the clinic did not return its questionnaire.*

### 6. Summary of Findings

*Patient feedback to the clinic could not be included as they did not return their questionnaire.*

*However, there are some areas of good practice that we identified:*

- 1. Staff created a friendly and welcoming environment for service users.*
- 2. Training all staff as first aiders.*
- 3. Steps are being taken to encourage people with disabilities to attend the clinic.*
- 4. Parity of information between the clinic's reality, and NHS Choices.*
- 5. Professional, navigable website.*

*There were on the other hand, the following areas for improvement:*

- 1. Bearing in mind that they are pursuing a planning application for expansion, accessibility improvement should be high on their list of priorities.*
- 2. Provision of information for passers-by on the outside of the clinic.*
- 3. Clarity that NHS Treatments are available on the website.*
- 4. Promotion of oral health in the waiting room and reception area.*
- 5. Clarity in who is the first aider.*

### 7. Recommendations

*These recommendations have been taken from the website and from our own observations:*

- 1. Improve the outside information for passers-by by signposting NHS treatment and 111 for out of hours help.*
- 2. Consider installing a hearing loop in the clinic for the hearing impaired.*

3. *Place the bell for help at the bottom of the accessibility ramp, rather than at the top.*
4. *Consider placing oral health posters for children and adults in the waiting room and/or reception area.*
5. *Ensure that there is always a designated first aider from day to day; this could be done via a rota system as all staff have the correct training.*
6. *Ensure it is made clear in the complaints policy that the Ombudsman is a final recourse after complaining to the clinic and to NHS England.*
7. *Make the complaints policy easier to find on the website, rather than it being at the bottom of the webpage.*
8. *Incorporate Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER (a patient advocacy organisation) into the complaints policy, in accordance with the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.*

***We did not receive a response to our recommendations from the practice. We will therefore re-visit the practice in early 2018 to see what progress has been made.***