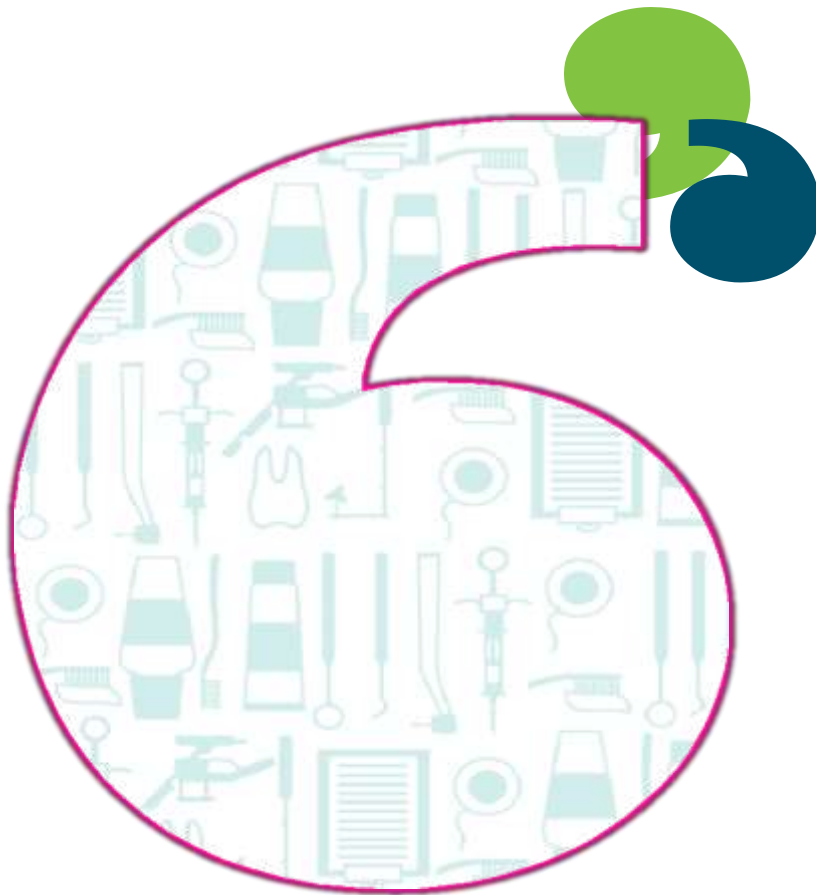


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Church Road Dental Practice

4a Church Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6NE

Welwyn and Hatfield District

Premises visited: Church Road Dental Practice

Date and Time of Visit: 24.02.17 13:30

Visit Conducted By: Jane Brown, Alice Lovell,
Priya Vaithilingam

NHS Contract Holder: Mr P Sansi

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the staff who we spoke to on the visit, and the practice manager who completed the questionnaire.

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 England and have informed NHS England locally, the Central Region Inspection Manager for Dentistry at the Care Quality Commission, and the Local Dental Committee. We will be sharing our reports with all of these bodies.

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.

Desktop 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

Church Road Dental Practice is situated at the southern end of Fretherne Road in Welwyn Garden City town centre. It was founded by the clinical director Mr Perri Sansi in 2001; it is a large practice and as such three dentists, two specialists, a visiting implantologist, and three hygienists work at the practice currently, as well as a practice administrator, three dental nurses and a receptionist. It is attached at the back of the building to the adjoining physiotherapy treatment centre, whom they share an accessible toilet with.

It is easy to access the practice with good travel links. The practice's proximity to Sainsbury's supermarket will be a contributing factor in how comprehensive the transport links are. Welwyn Garden City railway station is only a short walk away, and the closest bus stop is served by the 300 which goes between WGC, Stevenage and Hemel Hempstead, and the 405, which goes between WGC and Hatfield.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

The practice is easy to find, though the website simply provides a map for members of the public to find their own way there with the help of Google Maps. There are large signs on the frontage of the practice, as well as a protruding sign that can be read when walking down the street. Normally they also have a street stand signposting the practice, however this had been taken inside at the time of our visit because of cars taking up its usual space.

2.2 Car Parking

There seemed to be no provision for accessible or blue badge parking, though there was a small slip road that could be used as a drop off point. However, at the time of the visit it was taken up by cars at both entrances, so it was inaccessible. A sign etched into the practice's window stated that clamping was in force in the area. The overall impression was that you could only park at one of the several town centre car parks, such as Sainsbury's or Hunter's Bridge, and then walk to the practice if you were coming by car.

2.3 Visible External Information

In terms of the information available to passers-by, or people who come to the practice looking for out of hours information, there was very little. There was an NHS sticker in the porch to let people know they treat NHS patients, but this was small. For out of hours help, there was a premium rate number in the window for people to call, and no sign for 111.

The practice manager said that there are also: the names of all the dentists and hygienists, membership of our professional bodies, opening times and the website address in the porch area.

2.4 First Impressions

We entered through a transparent glass door, which is useful from the point of view of seeing when a person with a disability is approaching; the receptionist could get up and open the door for people if they need help. The receptionist we met was on the phone when we arrived, however she was very welcoming and helpful once she was able to give us her full attention. The desk had no lowered section for wheelchair users.

Upon entering the reception area, you felt as though you were in a professional environment. The entrance was carpeted, but this changed to wood once you were in the waiting room. The place was clean, bright, and spacious in a modern style with good soft furnishings. There was a noticeboard in the corridor on the way to the treatment rooms, which was out of the way but well set out. All of the information on the noticeboard was up to date and current; we particularly noticed that the Friends and Family Test results for January were on display, showing positive results. In addition, we noticed that the General Dental Council's 9 Principles were on display, showing how to practice in a patient-centred way.

There was a large television on the right hand side of the reception area as you walk in, but this was not turned on at the time of our visit.

The practice manager said that the television is used to play Medivision which is usually on during busy periods. Medivision is a patient centred educational programme.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

Entry to the reception area was accessible to wheelchairs, however the reception desk was too high for a wheelchair user to speak to the receptionist comfortably. The transparent door needed to be pushed to enter, but as stated above, the transparency makes it easier for the receptionist to know when a person needs help. The entire practice is on one level.

The practice does have a hearing loop. The receptionist stated that a patient could expect reasonable adjustments upon request if they had more needs.

We asked the receptionist if there was an accessible toilet in the practice, and she showed us to one near the back of the practice, which a person in a wheelchair

could easily reach via the wide corridors. The door was wide enough for wheelchair access. When we looked inside, we saw that there was a contrast between the colour of the fixtures and fittings, and the walls and floor as is the recommendation for people living with dementia. However, the light switch pull cord was tied up very high, and the paper towel dispenser was also above wheelchair height. There was no red emergency cord that we could see.

The practice manager said they also have reading glasses for patient use. The light switch in the patient toilet is kept permanently 'ON' during opening hours.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

The current NHS Bandings for dental care was on display in the practice on the noticeboard, which was in the hallway between the waiting room and the treatment rooms.

When asked about explaining the cost of treatment, the receptionist said she would refer to the NHS issued poster on the noticeboard around the corner.

When prompted, she showed us the 'blue form', or the FP17DC form. She also said that every patient is given a treatment plan with the estimate printed off. They use software called 'Excellence SRE' to create these estimates.

NHS Bandings can also be found on the website at the bottom of the page titled 'Fees and Offers'.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints policy was on display on the noticeboard; the receptionist said this would be what she referred to if a client asked for information on complaining. She said that a person could complain face to face, over the phone, or in a written format. They would deal with it any way the person preferred.

The complaints policy is included on their website; it can found by clicking on 'Give Feedback' on their homepage, and then scrolling to underneath the embedded map.

Summary of the Practice's Complaints Process

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 10 days with further notification if required	Yes - PDCS* CQC HSO NHS England	No

*PDCS Private Dental Complaints Service

CQC Care Quality Commission

HSO Health Service Ombudsman

4.3 Promoting oral health

At the time of the visit we could not see any posters in the practice giving information on oral care for children or for adults.

The practice manager said that there are abundant BDA leaflets on view and more specialist ones upon request.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

Until recently, NHS Choices displayed inaccurate information; it stated that the practice does not offer emergency appointments, and does not treat children. However, the practice's own website shows that they do offer emergency appointments and a member of staff told us that they do treat children during a brief phone call. However, NHS Choices now shows that they have not provided information for over 90 days, and so there is no longer any information about what treatments they offer.

In terms of the facilities available at the practice, according to NHS Choices they do not have a hearing loop, however upon visiting the practice we know that they do. In addition, NHS Choices says that they do have disabled parking, but we know that they do not. There is a clear disparity between what NHS Choices shows and what the practice truly has.

The practice's website is full of information, professional and navigable. However, as stated above, the NHS fees are hard to find at the bottom of the fees webpage. The website leaves it unclear as to whether they accept NHS patients, aside from this mention at the bottom of the page.

The practice manager said that NHS Choices has now been updated, see Recommendations.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

The practice states that all patients are welcomed and that they do not discriminate against any of the Protected Characteristics. They offer a hearing loop, a translation service by telephone, spare reading glasses for patient use, and they can produce most information in large print.

To meet the newly introduced Accessible Information Standard, every patient is asked at their appointment for their communication and information needs. This could relate to a physical disability, impairment, or sensory loss. The practice collects this information with the aim of being able to better meet the patient's communication needs, no matter what it is. These needs will be recorded and reviewed at each appointment to monitor any changes.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

Marginalised or socially excluded groups are welcome at the practice.

In the case of people with mental health issues, and people living with dementia, the 5 Key Principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 are taken into account. These are followed by the practice when there is reasonable belief that a patient lacks the capacity to make their own decisions. They carry out training every year on the Mental Capacity Act to ensure this is followed.

People who are disabled are enabled by the practice being fully wheelchair accessible. They have an access audit carried out every year.

People with learning disabilities have a range of aids available to meet the Accessible Information Standard as above in 5.1.

Equality, dignity, and human rights policy is reviewed on a monthly basis in staff meetings. They also hold staff meetings or training sessions with the agenda changing every month on an annual cycle.

The practice has a list of rules that it follows in order to treat patients with dignity and respect, whether they have a protected characteristic or not. They aim to:

- *‘Treat patients with dignity, respect and fairly without discrimination at all times.*
- *Give all patients the information they need, in a way they can understand, so they can make informed decisions about their care.*
- *Keep patient information confidential.*
- *Tackle health inequalities through positive promotion of care.’*

Currently the practice is accepting new private patients.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

When asked about what the procedure would be in a medical emergency, the receptionist said she would clear the area. At this point the medical emergency process was pointed out as being attached to the inside of a cupboard behind the desk. On site, there is a full emergency medical kit, oxygen cylinder, and defibrillator. The emergency medical kit was in the cupboard behind the desk; the defibrillator was described as being towards the back of the practice. They follow the DR ABCDE Assessment Procedure, which stands for:

- *D: Assess for Danger*
- *R: Evaluate patient Response*
- *A: Airway*
- *B: Breathing*
- *C: Circulation*
- *D: Disability*
- *E: Exposure*

The receptionist was asked if the identity of the practice’s first aider was clear, and she identified that the dentist present at the desk at the time of the visit is their designated first aider, once prompted.

Training on basic life support is carried out annually with the staff, while in-house emergency training is carried out on a 6-12 monthly basis.

The emergency procedure posters are situated throughout the practice.

6. Summary of Findings

Church Road Dental Practice has many areas of good practice, and this is evidenced by the positive patient reviews that the practice has received:

‘This service was able to provide a service that I wanted and expected—very satisfied.’

‘Staff always welcoming and friendly.’

These show a positive patient reaction to the way they deliver their service.

We have identified the following areas of good practice:

- 1. The building is an asset. The reception area is clean, bright, and professional.*
- 2. Steps have been taken to meet the Accessible Information Standard and to be inclusive of people with Protected Characteristics.*
- 3. Feedback is encouraged via their website and the complaints policy ensures a prompt response to patient concerns.*
- 4. Clear, professional website that includes a great deal of information about the practice and welcomes new patients.*

We have also identified the following areas for improvement:

- 1. Accessibility to the drop-off area outside the practice.*
- 2. Window display of information visible to passers-by and people looking for help out of hours.*
- 3. Oral health information being on display in the reception area and waiting room.*
- 4. Awareness across all staff on what the medical emergency procedure is.*
- 5. Parity of information between NHS Choices and the practice’s website.*

7. Recommendations

- 1. Update the window display with the emergency number 111 and remove the premium rate number or make clear that this is for private patients.*
- 2. Improve accessibility to the drop-off area outside the practice and make it clear that this is an option for patients.*
- 3. Review the accessible toilet to ensure that all facilities are at an accessible level for wheelchair users, and introduce an emergency cord.*
- 4. Consider introducing a lowered section to the desk to improve communication.*
- 5. Consider displaying information on oral healthcare in the reception area and waiting room.*
- 6. Make it clearer on the website that NHS patients are accepted; this could be achieved by making the NHS fees more prominent on the website.*
- 7. Ensure all staff are aware of the designated first aider and the procedure during medical emergencies.*
- 8. Update NHS Choices with current services offered at the practice.*
- 9. Incorporate Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER (a patient advocacy organisation) into the complaints policy, in accordance with the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.*

Practice response:

1. The window display with the emergency number will be updated. The premium number has been removed and we are arranging to have a new display done for the enquiry number 111.
2. Accessibility to the drop off area - unfortunately we do not own this space and therefore have limited control of its use. Local parking control officers do patrol the area to ensure no one is parked illegally. We will continue to inform our patients that this area can be used to drop off and collect patients.
3. We have instructed a qualified electrician to install a red cord into our patient toilet to create an alert.
4. When a wheelchair user attends for an appointment reception will stand to greet. Appointments can be arranged in the dental surgery if the patient prefers and our card machine can reach up and over the desk for easy payment. Reception staff regularly come round to reception to assist wherever needed, wheelchair, strollers and elderly.
5. A full set of BDA patient education leaflets are on display and available in reception.
6. Our website is currently undergoing improvements - we will be including a clearer message for our acceptance of new private patients and NHS patients.
7. In-house medical emergency training was carried out on 24/01/2017, this is done on a 6/12 basis (the next training session is booked for 27/06/17) A staff meeting is booked in for 25/04/2017, the topic for this session is Health & Safety - we will re-cap over the emergency procedure and the first aider and the 2nd appointed person. There are several emergency procedure posters displayed throughout the practice including one in each treatment room, in the corridor and in reception.
8. NHS choices has now been updated. The practice will update this every 2 months.
9. Our complaints policy has been updated to include Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER.