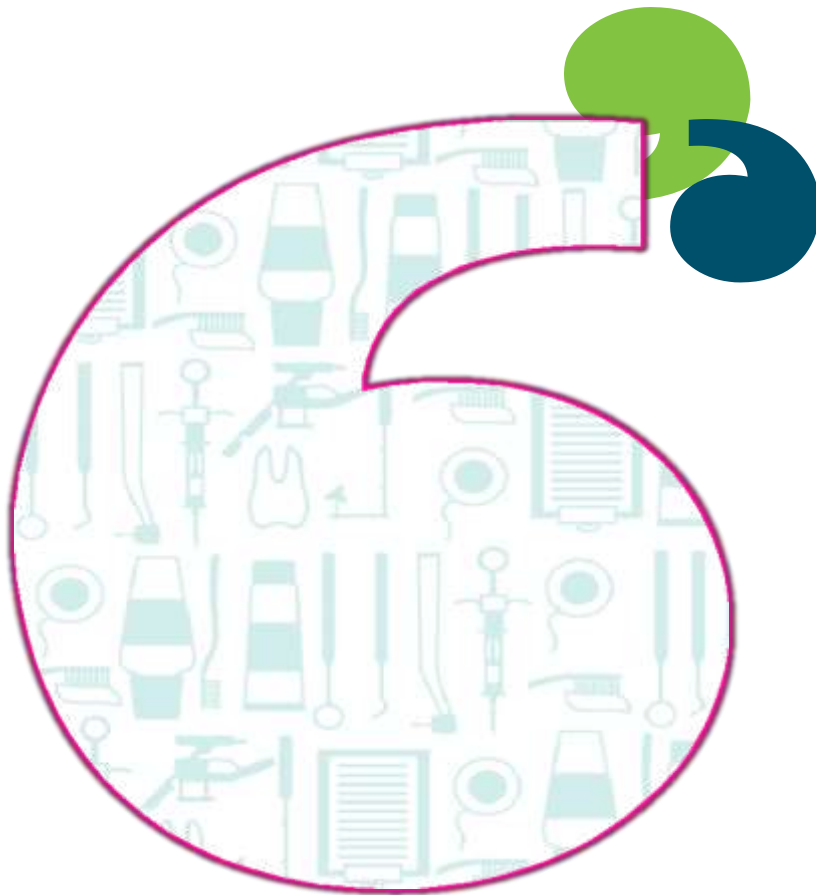


# Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



**Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic**

**10 Howardsgate, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6BQ**

**Welwyn and Hatfield District**

**Premises visited:** Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic

**Date and Time of Visit:** 24.02.17 10:00

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

**NHS Contract Holder:** Mr Khorshidpour

### **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to thank all the staff we spoke to on our visit, and who filled out 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.

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

*Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic shares its premises with Ivory Dental Clinic and the NHS contract. It is situated on the southern side of Howardsgate in Welwyn Garden City town centre. Currently three dentists work here, as well as two dental hygienists, and a receptionist.*

*By virtue of its location in the town centre, the clinic is well served in terms of travel links. There are several car parks nearby, as well as free spaces on the road outside for up to 1 hour's stay during business hours. The bus station is only five minutes' walk away and is served by buses taking routes from as diverse as the surrounding rural areas, to nearby towns, and to Heathrow Airport. As well as this Welwyn Garden City train station is a similar distance's walk from the clinic.*

## 2. Environment

### 2.1 Signage

*The clinic was easy to find, as there is a large sign on the front.*

### 2.2 Car Parking

*As the clinic is located in the town centre, there is street parking as mentioned above which is free for 1 hour. However, we decided to park in the paying car park at Hunter's Bridge, which was only a five minute walk away. There is no provision for disabled parking specifically outside the clinic, but there are disabled spaces for 1 hour on the road nearby; these are located outside HSBC, Superdrug, and on the opposite side of Howardsgate.*

### 2.3 Visible External Information

*Although there is no sign to say it is offering NHS treatment on the outside, 111 is signposted to for out of hours service in the window.*

### 2.4 First Impressions

*The outside of the clinic looks professional; the front door is made out of clear glass which makes it easier for receptionists to see if the person arriving is disabled and needs help to enter the building.*

*When we walked into reception we were greeted warmly by the receptionist; the clinic shares its desk with Ivory Dental Clinic, and so the right hand side of the desk as you come in belongs to Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic. The desk was high, but there was information across it, as well as on a lowered section to the far right. The room itself was large, light and airy, and gave the feeling that you were in a*

*clean and professional environment. There was no noticeboard that we could see. There was a selection of soft and hard seating in the waiting room, as well as magazines and children's toys for patients to use. In a corner of the room there was a banner which signposted the Implant Clinic for patients to see; otherwise there was very little to let us know that there were two different practices operating out of the building.*

### 3. Physical Access

#### 3.1 Facilities

*The reception area had a wooden floor, which makes it easy to manoeuvre for wheelchair users. All the surgeries are on the ground floor. As stated above, the clear glass front door allows the receptionist to know when a disabled person may need help entering the building.*

*The clinic offers interpreters via a sign on the desk for the languages that members of staff speak on the premises, but this was the only clear sign of accessibility needs being addressed proactively in the clinic. There was no hearing loop that we could see. When asked, a practice nurse stated that when the practice does not have a person on site who speaks the language required, they use a website to source translators.*

*The toilet was accessible, though at the time of our visit, the red alarm cord was tied up to avoid it trailing on the floor, which would make it difficult to pull the cord to draw attention. There was a contrast between the walls, floor, and utilities in the room to make it more accessible for people living with dementia.*

### 4. Information Access

#### 4.1 NHS Charges

*The current NHS Bandings for cost were laminated and placed prominently on the reception desk.*

*When asked how the costs would be explained to a patient, the receptionist told us that when a patient registers with the clinic they will have all the systems explained to them. Each time they need a course of treatment, they will be talked through it by the dentist, and then this will be explained again at the desk by the receptionist. Once the treatment plan has been agreed, the patient will be given their own copy of what treatment is to be carried out with the costs all laid out.*

#### 4.2 Complaints

*The complaints policy was framed on the desk where patients could see it, alongside a suggestion box where patients could fill in comment forms to give feedback. There were two such boxes, which was confusing as it was unclear which of the boxes service users should use.*

*When asked, the receptionist stated that if a patient asked about the complaints policy, she would point them to the framed copy on the desk. Alternatively, she said she would give them a hard copy of it if they asked, and she would talk them through the process if requested.*

*Although the policy is clear, it is quite basic and does not include the escalation process to NHS England, which is open to any NHS patient unhappy with how their complaint has been handled by the original service provider.*

*The complaints policy could not be found on their website.*

#### 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 - between 10 and 20 working days	Yes - PDCS*	No

\*PDCS Private Dental Complaints Service

### 4.3 Promoting oral health

*There were no posters promoting oral health on display in the waiting room or reception area. The receptionist told us that information is displayed in the surgeries.*

### 4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

*This clinic does not yet have an entry on NHS Choices as separate from Ivory Dental Clinic.*

*Their website is very clear, professional, and navigable. NHS Fees are easy to find on the website and they offer an online appointment booking system. The website*

may be difficult to find on a search engine, however, unless you type the exact name of the clinic. Also, the embedded Google Map of the clinic's location is not available at the time of writing. Additionally, the complaints policy has not been included on the website.

## 5. Supporting Patients

### 5.1 Communication

*The clinic stated that patients with any of the Protected Characteristics would be treated with respect and welcomed by the clinic.*

*The clinic is proactive in trying to ensure that all communication needs are met by staff upon registration and continuously whilst they are using the service. The patients are asked if they require any support from the clinic in order to reach a good level of understanding of the treatment they are receiving. A text message was also sent to all patients to ascertain any additional needs that they may have. Text messages are also used by the clinic to communicate information to patients in addition to the paper letters sent out.*

*The clinic carried out a review of all printed communication on display in the building to adhere to the Accessible Information Standard. There is a screen with a feed of information above the patient whilst they are in the dentist's chair so that they are aware of their rights via the Accessible Information Standard, amongst other informational messages.*

*Clear, unambiguous, standardised details are displayed on a patient's electronic file when it is opened, stating any specific needs the patient has. Staff training has been carried out internally with a specific focus on the Accessible Information Standard; this enabled a more collaborative process in improving the accessibility of written information in the clinic. Through this, staff were trained in:*

- *Identifying information and communication needs;*
- *Top implementation tips;*
- *Meeting information and communication needs.*

*This training continues weekly during Practice Meetings; often staff are requested to research certain items and small presentations are given by staff to share valuable experiences.*

*Three members of staff have attended professional training courses in the past six months, though it is not specified exactly what they were trained in.*

*Their website also has a facility available to book appointments at the clinic. On receipt of written consent from the patient, email correspondence can be accommodated by the clinic.*

## **5.2 Patients with specific requirements**

*Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic has a Diversity, Respect and Fair Access Policy and Procedure as a measure to ensure the dignity, privacy, and independence of patients. The clinic states that this policy ensures the diversity, values, and human rights of patients at the clinic are recognised. It also aims to ensure that treatment is provided irrespective of race, gender, marital/civil partnership status, age, disability, religion or belief, national origin, or sexual orientation. Adherence by staff to the core values outlined within this policy ensures all patients are treated with kindness, dignity, respect, and compassion at the clinic.*

*The clinic states that it has separated from Ivory Dental Clinic to ensure dignity and respect is given to their patients.*

*The clinic uses their Medical History Form in order to identify specific needs of patients and prompt discussions with the Principal Dentist.*

*Their electronic files have a 'callout' feature, which lets staff know any specific needs and ensures reasonable adjustments to the service provided.*

*If the patient has communication difficulties of any kind, the clinic will endeavour to meet their needs. This may include interpreters, lip readers, speech to text reporters, sign language interpreters, and note takers. These would be sourced from the National Registers of Communication Professionals.*

## **5.3 Medical Emergencies**

*The receptionist told us that there is a clear procedure in a medical emergency, however at the time of the visit she was unsure as to what this was. She was also unsure as to the identity of the first aider. This may have been because she was a new member of staff, with under six months of employment at the clinic. The receptionist has a CPR course booked to be attended in April.*

*The clinic states that a medical emergency poster is on display in the dental surgery, which identifies the suitable response for a large number of different medical emergencies.*

*Their Accident and Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure states that the relevant Accident and Incident Log form would be completed and reviewed to minimise the danger of the same accident occurring in the future. This form will be filed in the individual's personal file, and detailed in the Accident book.*



*The clinic does not have its own defibrillator, however the staff are aware that there is one located at Zizzi's Restaurant, HSBC, and The Two Willows Pub, which are all nearby.*

### 6. Summary of Findings

*The clinic has a number of areas of good practice, which is shown in these comments amongst many made by patients:*

*'I love this practice and my dentist. He puts me at ease, especially as I have a fear of the dentist from a previous bad experience elsewhere.'*

*'Excellent care I received - thank you.'*

*We found the following areas of good practice:*

- 1. The clinic has gone above and beyond to ensure it meets the Accessible Information Standard.*
- 2. Transparency around costs and fees for treatment.*
- 3. Accessibility of the reception and waiting room area.*
- 4. Weekly practice meetings taking a collaborative approach with staff.*

*We also found the following areas for improvement:*

- 1. Clarity in the division between Ivory Dental and Implant Clinic, and Ivory Dental Clinic.*
- 2. Promotion of oral health.*
- 3. Awareness across all staff of the medical emergency procedure.*
- 4. Provisions available for the hard of hearing.*

### 7. Recommendations

- 1. Consider ways of making the division between the two clinics on the premises clearer in the interior and on exterior of the building.*
- 2. Consider introducing a noticeboard for patients to see.*
- 3. Place oral health posters in the reception area and waiting room.*
- 4. Signpost more clearly which feedback box patients should use and remove, or move, the second box.*
- 5. Ensure that all staff are aware of the medical emergency procedure and who the designated first aider.*
- 6. Consider installing a hearing loop.*
- 7. Better promote how the Accessible Information Standard is followed at the clinic via the website.*

8. *Untie the red alarm cord in the accessible toilet so that the pull mechanism is hanging properly and touching the floor.*
9. *Update the website to include the complaints policy.*
10. *Update the complaints policy to include the escalation process to NHS England.*
11. *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.***