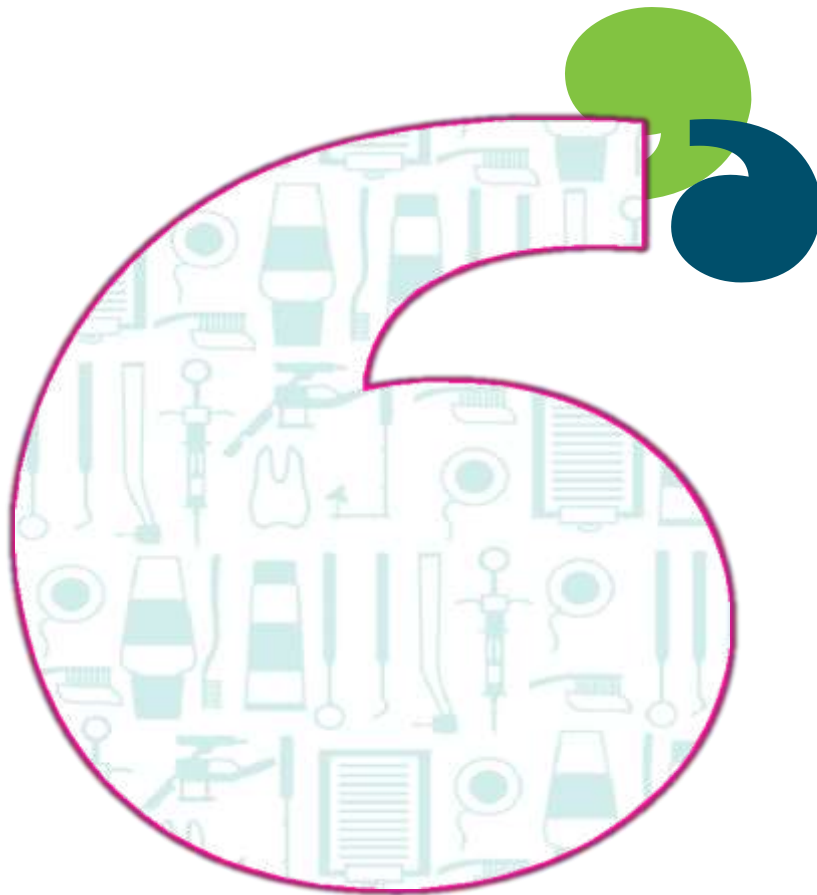


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Knightsfield Dental Practice

171 Knightsfield, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 7QG

Welwyn and Hatfield District

Premises visited: Knightsfield Dental Practice
Date and Time of Visit: 28.02.17 14:00
Visit Conducted By: Priya Vaithilingam and Keith Shephard

NHS Contract Holder: Miss Chohan

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the members of staff who spoke to us at the practice, and those 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

Knightsfield Dental Practice is located in the north of Welwyn Garden City next to a doctors' surgery, which is part of the Garden City Practice group. The dental practice has been established in the town for more than fifty years and it is a large practice; currently there are five dentists, as well as two dental hygienists, five dental nurses, a trainee dental nurse, and three receptionists working on the premises.

There is a row of shops nearby which has free parking available, which is a few minutes' walk away. Directly outside the practice there is a bus stop served by the 300 and 301, which travel to Hemel Hempstead and Stevenage, and the 315 and 316 which travel to Hitchin, Kimpton, and surrounding rural areas.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

At the time of our visit the practice was difficult to see from the road, as the front is quite dark and shadowed by foliage. Although there was a sign to say it is a dental practice, this too was not visible from the road.

2.2 Car Parking

As there was very limited parking directly outside the practice in terms of bay parking, and street parking, we parked in the free car park next to the shops nearby. However, this was across a busy road. There was no visible provision for accessible or blue badge parking.

2.3 Visible External Information

There was no sign outside to say that the practice offers NHS treatment, and there was no reference to 111 for out of hours help. However, there was a different phone number for people to call out of hours.

2.4 First Impressions

When we arrived, the staff were friendly and professional. The reception area and waiting rooms were bright and clean, with good lighting; the reception area is downstairs and shares its space with the downstairs waiting room, but as well as this there is a second waiting room upstairs. Both areas had a tv screen, though these were not switched on, and magazines and children's books for patients to watch or read. The downstairs waiting room had a water cooler for patients to drink from, though there were boxes in the way of patients in the same room.

Both waiting rooms had soft seats; there were four seats the same size in the downstairs waiting room, with benches in the upstairs waiting room; neither of the waiting rooms provided a variety of seating for patients to choose from.

There was a noticeboard which was tidy and clear, containing plenty of information for patients' perusal. However, text on the noticeboard was also quite small, making it difficult to read. Pictures of staff were posted on the wall, which shows the practice's person-centred approach to its staff.

There were feedback forms available in the waiting rooms for patients to fill in produced by the practice itself, as well as NHS Friends and Family Feedback Forms.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

The practice is not accessible at the present time. There are deep steps down from the road level to the front door of the practice, with metal railings, but there is no ramp. The grassy slope next to the steps is too steep for a wheelchair user.

The space inside the practice is very limited. If a service user was to get down the steps, the inside of the practice would be difficult to access as well. Although there were good banisters on the stairs to the upper level, there is little turning space within the waiting room and reception area. There is no accessible toilet on the premises at the moment.

There was no hearing loop that we could see at the time of the visit, and we observed that much of the information on the noticeboards was in small print. This included a note attached to the information on the noticeboard, which suggested if service users would like the information in a different format then they should ask a member of staff.

The practice is seeking to improve accessibility by having an additional, or an alternative, point of access to the building to avoid visitors needing to approach by steep slope and steps. This has proved difficult to arrange, however, as the council have not yet given permission. They are currently in discussions around this. Making these physical changes to the building will greatly enhance the service for those local people who currently need to look elsewhere for their dental care.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

The NHS Bandings were up to date and clearly displayed on the noticeboard for patients to see.

When asked about how treatment costs are explained to patients, the receptionist referred back to the bandings on the noticeboard. When prompted, the FP17DC form was mentioned as a form in use here.

The receptionist told us that treatment costs are talked through with the patient in the treatment room; this would not be discussed in the reception area.

NHS Fees are clearly set out on the practice's website.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints policy was on display in the downstairs reception area and waiting room, though this was in small print. The policy was not on display in the upstairs waiting room.

When asked, the receptionist told us that patients complaining are asked to put everything in writing and email it to the practice manager via email.

However, the complaints policy itself allows for a more conversational approach that was not communicated to us on the visit, which means the complaint could be lodged by telephone call or in person. The staff member dealing with the complainant would take notes, though there is every endeavour in the policy to ensure that the Complaints Manager herself will deal personally with the service user.

The complaints policy is clear and well set out, and has been updated as recently as November 2016. The policy cannot be found on the website, although the practice welcomes feedback whether it is positive, negative, or a complaint via the 'Appointments' page 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 - within 21 days with further notification if required	Yes - PDCS* GDC HSO NHSE	No

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

4.3 Promoting oral health

The Practice has a poster about tooth sensitivity, a picture board about gum disease as well as a flip chart about treatments for missing teeth and a flip chart of how to use an electric toothbrush.

The practice commented that it also makes sure that oral health is discussed with patients in appointments.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices website

Until recently, NHS Choices displayed wholly incorrect information on the services provided by the practice when compared with what the practice had on its website. However, NHS Choices now shows that the practice has not updated its information for 90 days, so there is no longer any information on what treatments they offer.

On the other hand, the information on the facilities available at the site appears correct despite the fact it has not been updated since late 2010. The practice does not have any disabled access for those with a physical disability or a hearing impairment.

The practice's website is professional, clear, and navigable. The practice is transparent around the costs of treatment for NHS patients. However, the 'Testimonials' section of the website has not been updated since July 2016. The 'Blog/Newsletter' page under 'More' also has not been updated since June 2014.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

The practice states that its ethos is to treat all its patients in a fair, just and equal way. They always do their best to accommodate all patients who wish to access the service. The practice states that they treat patients with all the protected characteristics, and every patient is privy to the same access to appointments, reminders, similar waiting times, and information offered.

The practice has endeavoured to follow the Accessible Information Standard; when patients register they complete a medical questionnaire paired with a note around any information or communication needs the patient may need support for. Any needs highlighted in this way then form part of the patient's computerised notes, which flags up every time they contact the practice. They try to ensure that patients receive useful communications in any format they would prefer, including large print, braille, and via a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.

Foreign language interpreters are accommodated at the practice, though no mention is made of the practice itself employing an interpreter to aid communication with a patient. Chaperones are also accommodated by the practice, which are often accompanying a patient who needs help communicating.

Post-operative instructions will be given to patients who need it if they have had a procedure like an extraction. This information would include precautions to take, tips for the care of the site, as well as suitable amount, types, and temperatures of food and drink.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

Staff at the practice ensure that any patients requiring a reasonable adjustment are accommodated. They strive to treat patients with respect, without discrimination. Patient records show whether a patient has dementia, learning disabilities, or any mental health condition, which lets the practice know whether that individual will require the reasonable adjustment of a chaperone, or if (with consent) a family member may need to attend. In the case of learning disabilities, they are aware that they should refer to that patient's Purple Folder if they have one.

For example, the practice states that for patients with a hearing impairment or a learning disability, although the explanatory process may take longer, they ensure that the patient is not rushed, and has a chance to confirm they have understood or to ask questions if they have not.

Patients with HIV or AIDS and other blood borne viruses are treated the same as all their patients. The practice also treats patients who were homeless and are now residing in the YMCA. They always attempt, wherever possible, to provide emergency care for patients with dental pain or in a dental emergency. This is no different for the homeless, gypsies, travellers, refugees, asylum seekers, or members of the LGBT community.

Patients with various medical conditions that need to be accommodated attend the practice. This can include service users with personal oxygen cylinders, or those who need support or an adjustment to be made in how they lay back in the chair. Patients with guide or hearing dogs are also accommodated.

The practice states that 'each patient is treated as an individual and their individual access needs would be judged and catered for in order to provide their dental treatment.'

For example, when there is a long appointment for extensive treatment, the practice would take into account meal times particularly when the patient has disclosed that they are diabetic. They would always try to ensure that the patient has eaten and had a drink before starting.

In cases of patients with certain medical conditions that need close monitoring after treatment, the practice would try to make sure they are seen early in the week and in the morning. This helps to ensure they can provide the necessary care. In addition, the practice will often telephone the patient later in the day to make sure they are recovering well and check for any queries.

The practice states that staff training includes the management of patients with special care requirements. When there are new patients, or there has been a change of circumstances with a current patient, which requires new special care requirements, they will be discussed in the monthly staff meetings. All staff are aware of which services to refer patients to if their special care requirements cannot be carried out at the practice.

Staff training includes Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children; this training is regularly updated with continuing professional development annually.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

When asked about the procedure in a medical emergency, the receptionist when prompted, confirmed the process. She told us that everyone is trained in CPR and that there is a defibrillator on site. She was also clearly able to name the two qualified first aiders that the practice has. We observed that there was a notice in the hall with the designated first aiders identified.

The practice told us that in the case of a medical emergency, they would assess the patient and then call for an ambulance. If the patient was not breathing normally, they would have three members of staff with roles in carrying out the medical emergency procedure. One team member would call 999, one would start CPR on the patient, while another person set up the defibrillator for use as quickly as possible.

Training in carrying out basic life support and using the defibrillator is given to every member of staff annually.

The practice also gave the example of a different kind of medical emergency, such as an asthma attack, or hypoglycaemia. In these cases, the practice has an emergency drug box; every drug is clearly labelled with patient presentations and

the drugs contained so that they can come easily to hand. The practice said they would call for an ambulance in these other cases of medical emergency, if necessary.

6. Summary of Findings

There are many areas of good practice at Knightsfield, which is borne out by the positive patient feedback they have received; the practice provided us with examples of feedback they have received in the past six months.

‘Always a pleasure to visit Knightsfield Dental Practice.’

‘Lovely dentist and reception staff helped reassure a very anxious child. Thank you.’

We identified the following areas of good practice:

- 1. Clear complaints policy.*
- 2. Good, comprehensive communication with patients.*
- 3. Steps taken to accommodate patients with specific requirements.*
- 4. Medical emergency procedure.*

We also identified the following areas for improvement:

- 1. Accessibility to the practice.*
- 2. Visibility of provisions made for the Accessible Information Standard.*
- 3. Clarity amongst staff in the medical emergency procedure.*
- 4. Ensuring the currency of the information on the practice website and NHS Choices.*

7. Recommendations

- 1. As mentioned above, install an accessibility ramp to the practice.*
- 2. Review the possibility of making the downstairs toilet into an accessible toilet.*
- 3. Improve signage outside the practice to ensure it can be seen from the road.*
- 4. Ensure that all patient areas are free from clutter.*
- 5. Consider installing a hearing loop.*
- 6. Consider offering translation services, rather than relying on patients to supply their own interpreters and translators.*
- 7. Consider displaying information on oral healthcare in the reception area and waiting rooms.*

8. *Ensure that it is clear on the outside of the practice that NHS treatment is offered here.*
9. *Include 111 for out of hours help on the outside of the practice.*
10. *Explore the possibility of creating provision for blue badge parking outside the practice with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.*
11. *Include the complaints policy on the practice website.*
12. *Update NHS Choices with the correct information on services offered at the practice.*
13. *Update the practice website testimonials and blog pages.*
14. *Incorporate Healthwatch Hertfordshire and POhWER (a patient advocacy organisation) into the complaints policy, in accordance with the Regulation of Dental Services Programme Board.*
15. *Refresh all staff on emergency procedures to be sure that they are understood, well-rehearsed, and ready to apply.*
16. *Ensure that there is clear signage to convey to patients that they can request the information on the noticeboard in another format.*

Practice response:

1. It is my aim to create step free access into the practice. We are seeking permission from Welwyn Hatfield Council. I have proposed to put a path through our front garden which is flat and on the opposite side to the steep slope where the steps currently are. I have been advised by the council that I have to extend my lease to allow people to cross over the councils grass verge to enter our front garden which is the practice property, as well as an application to change the greenery in the garden. This requires contact with the council estates manager to gain consent for these works as well as being responsible for the Council's fees for preparing the lease and formal consent. I will continue to look into this matter.
2. Currently the building constraints will not allow this but it will be reconsidered when possible.
3. We have installed a banner on the wall on the practice boundary to ensure the practice can be seen from the road which is easily visible from the road.
4. Staff have been instructed to ensure that deliveries are clear of the reception area and that there is no clutter in patient areas.
5. This will be considered in the future.
6. This will be considered in the future.
7. There are posters and flipcharts displaying information on oral healthcare in the reception area and waiting rooms.
8. New signage will be considered in the future.
9. We have updated the website to include 111 and will include this on the information outside of the practice too.

10. This will be considered for the future. This was requested on a recent parking survey carried out by the council. It will be requested again when there are further parking consultations.
11. This has been uploaded to the practice website.
12. The NHS Choices site has been updated.
13. The practice website pages have been updated.
14. The policy has been updated.
15. We have had a staff meeting to refresh all staff regarding medical emergencies and our annual CPR training has also been booked. Our three first aiders are attending their annual refresher course this month.
16. This has been done.