



2017 Dentist Schedule: Community Dental Service Community Interest
Company

(Luton, Liverpool Road Health Centre, 9 Mersey Place)

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

1.2 Acknowledgments

1.3 Disclaimer

2. What is Enter and View?

2.1 Purpose of visit

2.2 Strategic drivers

2.3 Healthwatch Luton's interest in Dentists

2.4 Methodology

2.5 Summary of findings

3. Results of findings

3.1 Additional findings

4. Recommendations

5. Service Provider response

6. NHS Dental Treatment in England

1. Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address:	CDS, Liverpool Road Health Centre, 9 Mersey Place, Luton, LU1 1HH
Service Provider:	Community Dental Services CIC
Date and Time:	4 April 2017 10am-12pm
Authorised representatives:	Lucy Nicholson, Phil Turner
Contact Details:	Michelle Wood Operations Director CDS CiC Bedford Heights, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7PH Tel: 01234 310223

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Luton would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View Programme.

1.3 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

2. What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Healthwatch Luton Enter and View Report 2017: Dentists Schedule

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they need to inform their lead who will inform the practice manager, ending the visit. In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

2.1 Purpose of visit

- To engage with service users of dental surgeries and understand how NHS costs are communicated to the public
- Identify examples of good working practice
- Observe patients engaging with the staff and their surroundings
- Capture the experience of relatives and any ideas they may have for change

2.2 Strategic drivers

- CQC dignity and wellbeing strategy
- Healthwatch England's 'Access to NHS Dental Services' report
- Healthwatch Luton's increase in intelligence and feedback on Luton dentists after speaking with Seldom Heard groups in Luton (Sept-Dec SH Report 2016)

2.3 Healthwatch Luton's interest in Dentists

Healthwatch Luton target their engagement on seldom heard groups in Luton. In 2016, we targeted young, those with mental health and the homeless to gather their feedback on health and social care services in Luton. Over the course of 3 months, experiences from these groups on dentistry increased showing a trend Healthwatch Luton wanted to investigate further.

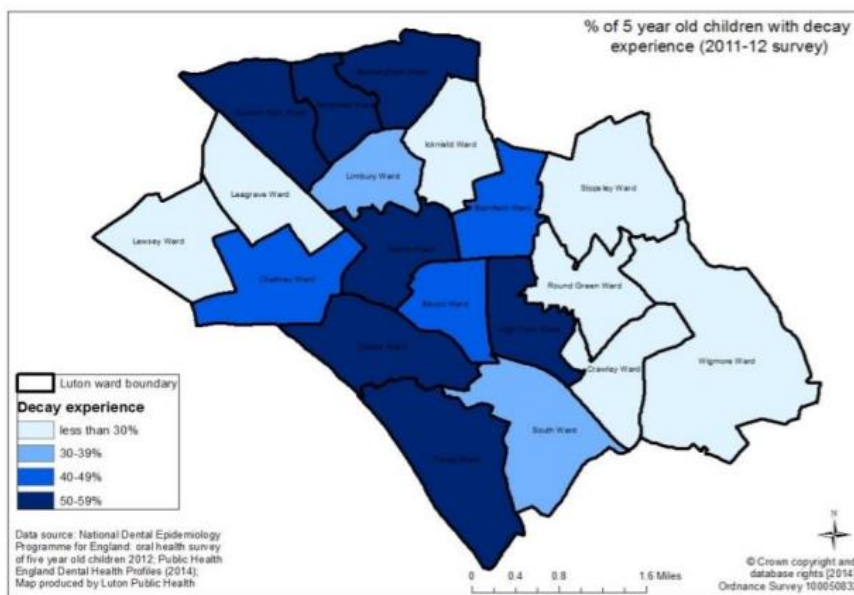
Healthwatch Luton also ran a community event in High Town in 2016, bringing together people of different cultures to experience feeding their children in the school holidays nutritional cheap food¹. During this funded fun day, we captured feedback from parents where it was mentioned the confusion over costs of dental care prevented some people attending their dentists, and prevented them taking their children.

Healthwatch Luton contacted other local Healthwatch who had used Enter and Views, and other work on dentists in their areas. We were contacted by Healthwatch

Healthwatch Luton Enter and View Report 2017: Dentists Schedule

Herts, who had worked with Public Health England on dental care in Hertfordshire in 2015-2016. Public Health England and Healthwatch Luton agreed to begin a yearlong project on dental care in Luton, initiated by Healthwatch Luton’s Enter and Views.

Luton has one of the worst dental disease in East of Englandⁱⁱ. Information below on dental care in children is highlighted by Public Health. Results from Public Health show that in Luton, by age 5, there is a sharp increase in tooth decay and active disease, and while statistically dental care is improving in Luton, there are still areas where there are issues, which fitted with our intelligence and feedback trends. The wards with the highest child decay experiences are Bramingham, Dallow, Farley, High Town and Northwell, Saints and Sundon Park.



Healthwatch England also did a national report on ‘Access to NHS Dental Services’, highlighting issues across the country where people were struggling to access dental care or were inhibited due to NHS costings, or understanding of the cost bands.ⁱⁱⁱ

The report highlighted some emerging issues relevant to the feedback Healthwatch Luton had gathered, such as:

- People in particular groups who may find it difficult to access a high-street dentist
- People who don’t currently do to the dentist, or who attend only when they are having problems

Cost of treatment also was highlighted as an issue nationally, where more than a third (36%) of those who had not been to a dentist in the last two years said it was because it was too expensive. 46% of 18-24 year olds nationally said they did not

Healthwatch Luton Enter and View Report 2017: Dentists Schedule

think going to a dentist was necessary. The most common question highlighted by some local Healthwatch nationally was ‘How do I get an NHS Dentist?’

Healthwatch Luton, with their feedback, and with the above information decided to use Enter and View on 3 dental surgeries in Luton we had received feedback from (both positive and negative) and attend the Community Dental Service available in Luton.

2.4 Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View visit.

We wrote a letter to a member of management before we spoke to anyone in the surgery and took their advice on whether any patients would be available as well as staff.

Authorised representatives conducted short interviews with members of staff, patients and relatives.

Topics such as experience of dental care, access, costs and the patients themselves were explored. We also informally noted observations on environment.

Our representatives explained to all those interviews why they were there and took minimal notes.

A substantial proportion of the visit was observational, involving the authorised representatives walking around the public and waiting areas, observing the surroundings to give an understanding how the surgery works and how the patients engaged with staff and facilitates.

2.5 Summary of findings

We visited CDS Liverpool Road between 10am and 12pm. We spoke with 6 patients and 6 members of staff.

Of those patients we spoke with one was white British, one was Polish, one was Bengali, two were Bangladeshi and one was Pakistani British.

Overall, everyone we spoke with on the day, including staff and patients thought the service was run very well. CDS covers all of Bedfordshire (Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton) and has two clinics in Luton, one single surgery in Marsh Farm, and the seven surgery clinic in Liverpool Road.

The surgery overall was very professional and friendly, the clinic accepted over 1434 referrals last year and provided care for 3830 patients. The majority being children and adults with additional needs.

3. Results of visit

Environment

Overall the environment of this dentist was clean, light and airy. From the outside, there was wheelchair access to the building via a ramp, and lift availability to the first floor where CDS is located.

The reception area had room for up to 14 patients to wait for their appointment, and there were many and varied information posters for patients to read regarding treatment, care, costs and complaints. There was also a lot of information provided regarding treatment and care beyond the dental care in clinic. The CDS also promoted bands of pricing, and what was available within each banded price category.

The Dentist and staff

All the patients we spoke with regarded their dentist highly, stating they were 'professional and friendly'. The reception and other staff were friendly and approachable and most patients felt their dentist was 'exceptional'.

Overall people were happy with their dentists, but some mentioned wishing they could have all their family registered at CDS, but not all the family members required the specialist services offered by CDS so were unable. CDS accepts patients on referral from a wide range of health care professionals according to an acceptance criteria detailed on their website www.communitydentalservices.co.uk.

Access

Everyone found the distance they had travelled to their appointment satisfactory although one mentioned it was far for them to travel, however the service they received made this acceptable to them.

When asked if the building met their needs, all responded that it did and one commented 'more parking would make life easier'.

Nearly all those we spoke with felt that the clinic provided reliable, accessible information about their dental service, and nearly all understood the communications they received. Everyone responded that they were contacted on average every 6 months by the surgery.

It was noted by a few patients that the only issue they had were long waiting times for appointments. A few mentioned they had waited months to be seen, but were not overly disgruntled by this.

Costs

We informed patients (all of which were NHS patients) of the banding prices of NHS costs for dental care. We asked them if they knew what these banding costs were for, or whether they were aware of them. 5 out of 6 patients did not know about NHS banding costs and what the bandings meant, although none of them (as they were mainly children or those who do not pay) paid for their treatment.

Healthwatch Luton observed posters in the reception which explained the banding, and explained the treatment per banding. The waiting room also has a TV monitor displaying a variety of oral health information, including criteria entitling people to receive free NHS dental treatment and details on banding and care provided.

For those patients who had children under 18, all were aware that they would receive free NHS dental treatment for their children and brought their children regularly.

Nobody out of the patients had heard of the NHS Low Income scheme.

One patient mentioned issues with working tax credits, and one had issues regarding costs and being on maternity but none had issues for their current treatment and process.

Other

When asked if patients knew where to make a complaint or compliment regarding any treatment they had received, only one of the patients knew where to or how to do this. We observed a complaints policy on the notice board and informed them of the process.

3.1 Additional Findings

The staff were all friendly and seemingly happy to work here, and were proud of the professionalism and community work the surgery provided.

Staff had a good understanding of the dental disease within their practice, all rating around 70-90% of patients had some form of disease or decay. It would be good for staff to know the actual figure within their practice for information.

The staff felt that overall, they looked after patients well and most rated patient care and customer service as an area in which they do well.

Healthwatch Luton Representative, Phil Turner spoke with 4 staff:

I met with the Operations Director, Operations Manager, Senior Dental Nurse, Dental Nurse, Referral Administrator and Senior Dental Officer. This meeting took place in one room and was a communal discussion. CDS is an employee owned Community Interest Company (CiC) and operate their own budgets funded by the NHS with additional funds being obtained by grants that are tendered for. CDS also have contracts for clinical services in Suffolk, Essex, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire as well as Public Health contracts in Oxfordshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

The discussions were very open and I was free to ask any questions that I wished. I believe that the discussion was forthright and nobody was under any duress to withhold information or make comments that they did not truly believe.

The practice operates on patients referred to them by other dental practices in the area and from a wide range of other health care professionals and carers. The referral must meet very clear criteria. Once treatment has been completed then the patient is returned to their referring dentist. This is varied and can be viewed on their web site. It covers those that are housebound for which a mobile service is available. It also covers those that have high anxiety levels, agoraphobic and generally need specialist attention in respect of their fears and concerns. This includes those with learning difficulties and the very young. It will often include patients who have neglected their oral hygiene and reached a point where they simply must seek help and extensive treatment is required.

The staff are trained in specialist behavioural skills to be able to address the patient's fears and anxiety as well as their dental needs. Specialist equipment is available to aid with wheelchair users and to administer sedation at varying levels to suit the needs of the patient. The practice also undertakes dental care under general anaesthesia at the L&D hospital, with the L&D providing a Consultant led anaesthetic and recovery team for up to 4 sessions a week. Most dental care under general anaesthesia is for young children who are unable to cope with having multiple extractions of decayed teeth.

There are 25 staff working at the practice, primarily specialists and consultants with additional administrative staff, although there is movement between their locations and some staff have responsibilities at other of their practices in the area. Staff attrition is approximately 5% pa. Sickness is less than 2%.

It was said that one of the best things that they experienced by becoming a CIC from being a NHS trust was that they had access to a range of professional management services allowing fast and responsive decisions to be made. Training is provided on a regular basis including Adult and Child safeguarding, Diversity and non-accidental injury. Radicalisation and FGM training.

There is a patient feedback process including the NHS required Friends and Family feedback forms.

Healthwatch Luton Enter and View Report 2017: Dentists Schedule

Their complaints procedure is contained in a leaflet which we have copies of. This leaflet includes the contact details of Healthwatch in all areas covered as an organisation that can help a patient with any complaint they may wish to make.

There are occasions when patients ask for a gender specific dentist and on occasions cultural specific.

It was said that the feeding habits of children in different communities was the cause of much dental decay in certain communities. When families move to an unfamiliar area and culture then often parents and grandparents give children sweets etc. to comfort them.

Often patients and families wish to become continuing patients for all their dental needs. This is not possible as this is not the service that CDS provide. For the patient, this can be difficult as when they once experience the services of a highly-trained specialist who provides top levels of service their instinct is to want that service ongoing.

CDS have a Patient Engagement Group who meet quarterly. This is attended by both patients and staff. There are 4 regular patients that attend and a further 15 who are in a virtual user group.

The leaflet viewed in the waiting room informing of treatment and bands is a leaflet that comes out annually in April for the financial year. This is provided by the NHS.

It was suggested that some dentists may refer patients to CDS where the treatment required may not be cost effective for the dentist on NHS provision. There have been cases where patients have been referred as anxious or having fear of the dentist and when they turn up and are asked if they are anxious say they are not. The clinical team are in the process of developing a new referral form that will give additional information, to help clarify if the referral is appropriate.

Generally, when asked about one thing they would like to see improved they said they would like to see General practices doing more in addressing high levels of decay and dental varnish.

4. Recommendations

Healthwatch Luton observed the patients at this dentist and felt overall the surgery was efficient, professional and well run.

Healthwatch Luton would like to suggest some recommendations to CDS to consider when developing their surgery:

- As all those patients we talked to did not understand the banding structure of NHS costs, or the treatments available per band, Healthwatch Luton would recommend this clinic promotes this further to their patients. Despite having posters on the notice boards, and despite most people not being able to pay, the patients should still be informed of costing should they need to be charged.
- A greater understanding of dental disease levels in the local population would be helpful for the whole team and promote to staff internally the level of decay from patients within this surgery.
- Further communications to patients on the complaints process would be recommended. Healthwatch Luton saw the complaints process on the notice board the patients we spoke with were still unaware of how to make a complaint.

5. Provider Response

Changes or outcomes agreed with the provider are as follows:

The report is based on a small number of clients interviewed, but it is pleasing to hear how our clients value our service.

We welcome working with Healthwatch to provide additional information to our clients about the NHS low income scheme. We can add this to our TV monitor display and display information in waiting rooms, as well as ensuring our teams are aware of the scheme.

We welcome advice from Healthwatch regarding improving our information to clients about how to make a complaint or compliment.

We will keep Healthwatch informed about oral health initiatives for Luton, the Picnic in the Park event was well attended and we look forward to engaging further with our community in Luton. As an organisation we plan to raise the awareness of our clinical team about the valuable role Healthwatch performs.

6. NHS Dental Treatment in England^{iv}

You do not have to pay for NHS dental treatment, if, when your treatment starts, you are:

- Under 18
- Under 19 and in full-time education
- Pregnant or you have had a baby in the last 12 months before treatment starts
- Staying in an NHS hospital and the NHS dentists carries out your treatment
- An NHS Hospital Dental Service outpatient (although you may have to pay for your dentures or bridges)

You can also get free NHS dental treatment if, when the treatment starts or when you are asked to pay:

- You're included in an aware of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Pension Credit guarantee credit and Universal credit
- You're named on a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate
- You're names on a valid HC2 certificate

If you receive any of the following benefits you will not be exempt from paying for NHS dental treatment unless you also fall under one of the categories listed above:

- Incapacity Benefit
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit
- Housing Benefit
- Pension credit savings credit

Proof of your entitlement

You'll be asked to show your dentist written proof that you're entitled to financial help with dental treatment. This will vary depending on your circumstances. To check what documents you need, see the NHS HC11 leaflet.

NHS Low Income Scheme

The NHS Low Income Scheme provides financial help to people not exempt from charges, but who may be entitled to full or partial help with healthcare costs if they have a low income. Anyone can apply as long as they don't have savings or investments over the capital limit. In England, the capital limit is £16,000 (or £23,250 if you live permanently in a care home). Help is based on a comparison between your weekly income and assessed requirements at the time the claim is made. Entitlement broadly follows Income Support rules to decide how much, if anything, you have to pay towards your healthcare costs, including dental treatment.

ⁱ Family Cooking Taster Session, Healthwatch Luton, www.healthwatchluton.co.uk

ⁱⁱ

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Community_and_living/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/JSNA/6.3%20Oral%20health%20in%20children.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ 'Access to NHS Dental Services: What people told local Healthwatch', Evidence Review, November 2016

^{iv} www.nhschoices.uk