

Patient Engagement Day

at Morecambe Dental Access Centre

Contact Details:

Queen Victoria Hospital
Thornton Road
Morecambe
LA4 5NN

Dates and times of visit:

18th May 10am – 4.30pm

**Healthwatch Lancashire
Representatives:**

Amanda Higgins (Lead Project Officer)
David Barnett (Volunteer)
Jean Wither (Volunteer)

Version 2.1

Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is committed to listening to patients and members of the public in Lancashire and making sure their views and experiences are heard by those who run, plan and regulate health and social care services.

On the 18th May, 2016, three Healthwatch Lancashire representatives gathered survey responses from patients and relatives at Morecambe Dental Access Centre in Morecambe, to obtain the views of people using the service and to observe the environment.

The focus of the visit was to gather qualitative intelligence about access to special care dental services and to identify how people felt they may have been able to access services sooner.

This report summarises reviews from 39 service users, relatives or carers.

DISCLAIMER

This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit, and is only representative of the views of the patients who met members of the Patient Engagement Day team on that date.

General Information

Morecambe Dental Access Centre is a community service provided by Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Healthwatch Lancashire visited the service to gather patient and relatives' views after being invited by Kathryn Bain from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank the patients and relatives for taking part in the activity. We would also like to thank Kathryn Bain, from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, for supporting our visit together with the staff at the surgery, who made the team feel welcome during the visit.

Methodology

The focus of this Patient Engagement Day was to gather patients' views on the accessibility of their special care dental surgery, the quality of the treatment provided and to identify how people could have accessed services sooner. The team from Healthwatch Lancashire interviewed patients and relatives using a set of questions and recorded their feedback whilst in the waiting room.

The team compile a report reflecting these observations and feedback. The report is sent to the manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at:

<http://healthwatchlancashire.co.uk/reports/>

Patient Engagement Day Observations

Location

The facility is located within Queen Victoria Hospital in Morecambe.

External Environment

There is a car park, which appears to have adequate spaces, designated disabled parking and pedestrian crossings. External signage for the Dental Access Centre was not found by Healthwatch Lancashire representatives.

Internal Environment-First Impressions

The signage for the Dental Access Centre is located inside the hospital and once inside it is well signposted. As the waiting room became busy, there did not appear to be sufficient seating for patients and many needed to stand and wait to be called in for their appointment.

Reception

The waiting room and reception staff were very busy, although appeared organised and calm. Reception staff were friendly and welcoming to patients and to Healthwatch Lancashire staff and volunteers.

Patient Engagement Day Results

The Patient Engagement Day at Morecambe Dental Access Centre took place on the 18th May 2016. 39 people shared their views.

1. We asked: 'Are you a service user, relative/friend or carer?'

Service User	Relative / Friend	Carer
30 (77 %)	5 (13%)	4 (10%)

2. We asked: 'How were you initially introduced to come here?'

Referral from a professional	Personal request	Emergency appointment	Unsure
14	15	7	3

Some patients provided more detail about why they visited the surgery:

"My support worker is supposed to be writing to here today to make me a permanent registered patient. At the minute I am only here when I have tooth problems/pain."

"I have a full set of false teeth so I haven't seen a dentist for 20 years since moving to the area. My false teeth broke so I went to me nearest dentist at Carnforth and they told me to phone here."

"My son has been coming since he was 5 because he has a learning disability."

"My referral was dealt with by the care home but it was easy. They have been very good about fitting in around what is happening in the care home."

"I am here for medical reasons (Parkinson's and cancer) The dentist I had was too far away. My old dentist recommended it."

3. We asked: 'How was your experience of getting a referral to come here?'

95% said Easy

0% said Difficult

5% said Not sure

A number of patients said that this was their regular dentist and had been visiting for a long time:

"It was about 10 years ago that I was referred by my doctor. Think it was easy."

"I rang the emergency number and that was easy, but it took me to the Queen Victoria Hospital number rather than directly here."

"Very quick, I phoned late on a Friday afternoon and was seen on a Saturday morning."

"Easy. My dentist is in Ormskirk. I had a stroke so I want to be closer to home."

"Unsure - I've been coming a long time."

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4. We asked: 'How was your experience of getting an appointment?'

82% said Easy **7.7%** said Difficult **10.3%** said Not sure

The majority of patients said that it was easy to get an appointment although there was an inconsistency between the length of time service users waited for appointments:

"I needed an emergency appointment. It was very quick. Today I phoned up at 8.40am and got an appointment for 12.15pm."

"It took three days to get an appointment."

"Brilliant. Very easy, very quick. What works well is the strict appointment system rather than a drop-in so we get seen quickly and they keep to allocated times."

"It took four months. I could have done with coming earlier but it wasn't a problem."

"I phoned NHS 111 and have been waiting for two days in pain."

"It takes a long time to get an appointment here - around two months."

"Easy and quick, I phoned at 8am and I was given an appointment at 10am."

5. We asked: 'Could the stages between referral and appointment have been quicker or easier?'

1 service user said Yes **21** service user said No

17 people did not answer this question as they felt it was not relevant to them. Most service users who did provide a response said that they were happy with their experience:

"From my GP it was quick. There was a waiting list for general anaesthetic appointments."

"No but I have been waiting two months for my false teeth. That is not the dentist's fault though, they had to cancel appointments because the teeth were not ready"

"Not really, but they could have chased us for appointments more. It is partly our fault but I would have thought they would have called out of duty of care."

"Not really, the delays seem to come from waiting for the heart surgeon to get back to the dentists."

"No, they were brilliant."

"The first few times I came I had to walk out as I was nervous about the procedure. They persisted with consultations and making sure I was confident to go through with the procedure, but it took a few visits. I wouldn't have had treatment if they hadn't."

"Quite happy with these stages."

"No, the whole service is fit for purpose."

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6. We asked: 'Have you struggled to get access to dental services in the past?'

18 said Yes

17 said No

3 said they had not tried

One person did not answer this question as they felt it was not relevant. The main reasons service users said they had struggled to access dental services were practices changing to private then, being removed from a list, travel and transport and difficulties for people with disabilities:

"I had to go to Chorley and South Ribble Hospital for specialist appointment and then went for surgery at Royal Preston Hospital, which was inconvenient. The anaesthetist in Lancaster would not do it."

"Yes, they are all full unless they are private. It is too far away from us to the closest NHS dentist and I have children so it makes it more difficult."

"I wanted an NHS dentist but I didn't want to go back to my old one. When I called the dentist number they always gave me the old one, so I could never find a suitable place."

"I have been in the country 8 years but have not been to a dentist before."

"I used to be on Yorkshire street but he died a few years ago. The person that took over the dentist changed it to private so I couldn't go there because I don't work and have a learning disability. so I came here instead."

"I was not getting good treatment from my own NHS dentist so I came here."

"No, I have my own NHS dentist but this is an emergency."

"I wasn't the best patient - when I was younger I lost two front teeth- I didn't look after my teeth and didn't go to the dentist regularly, so I was always taken off the list and didn't get dental care."

"Yes, because of being in a wheel chair it is difficult."

7. We asked: 'Is this service open at time that are convenient to you?'

100% said Yes

0% said No

8. We asked: 'Is this your first time here today?'

7 service users/relatives said Yes

32 service users/relatives said No

18 people said that they had visited less than 5 times whilst 15 people said that they had visited more than 5 times. Of those that said they had visited more than 5 times, a number said that they had been visiting for years as this was their regular dentist.

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9. We asked: 'Have you received treatment here yet?'

74% said Yes

26% said No

A number of people said that they were visiting for their first consultation or that they had only yet had one consultation:

"One consultation and I have three more appointments but I don't know what they are for. Think I'm having treatment today."

"One consultation, and then I have three treatment appointments booked in. I need a lot of needles to numb my gums so they have booked in three appointments to remove a lot of teeth."

"I was treated first time as an emergency and I am now back in for further treatment."

"Just check up - haven't needed any treatment yet."

"Every 6 months for check ups and treatment as necessary."

"My first appointment was a consultation but I've had treatment every time since then."

10. We asked: 'Are you happy using this service?'

94.9% said Yes

5.1% said No

The large majority of patients said that they were happy with the service, however two respondents said that they would prefer to have been treated by their own NHS dentist.

"I'd prefer to have my own NHS dentist because usually by the time I get here, it means I need a tooth out. I'd rather prevent this."

"Fantastic. I couldn't ask for better. Amazing."

"No - I'd rather use an NHS dentist that I'm registered with."

"I've only used this service as an emergency but it couldn't be better, does just what you want."

"The quality of the service is why I am here. I was worried about my teeth."

11. We asked: 'How could this service be improved?'

A small number of service users / relatives provided some suggestions for how the service could be improved:

"The surgical side and continuity from the waiting room to surgery could be improved. Waiting in a room like this is unhelpful - bright lights and noisy." (the patient said that they have Asperger's, anxiety and self harms)

"The telephone system could be improved. It takes you through to the Blackpool Dental Access Team. Plus I was told off for phoning at 9am."

"I'm not always seen on time."

"Receptionists are great and they always help you out. I can't think of anything that could be done better. There is nothing that could have been done any quicker."

"No, I phoned up yesterday due to an infection. I was told to come in at 8am the next day. I was fifth in the queue but I was still given an appointment at 11am. I couldn't ask for more."

"No, it's fantastic - every time I have a tooth out he says well done."

12. We asked: 'Do you feel more comfortable by accessing this dental service over others?'

The majority of those who responded answered "Yes" and provided their reasoning:

"Yes, I feel more secure."

"They always listen to me and explain everything to me. They always wait for the anaesthetic to fully work. They always give me plenty of time. I really trust them. I wouldn't go anywhere else."

"She doesn't take to strangers so familiarity of the dentist is really important. If she needed treatment she would need to be sedated." – in relation to a relative.

"I would know, as a carer, if she had tooth ache." – in relation to a relative.

"They give us time - treatment is split into two which really helps. I don't think they would give this much time elsewhere. My son struggles to keep his mouth open for a long time so it is much better for him for it to be split in two."

"I'm afraid of the dentist so it's better here - they are friendly and caring and give more time to me. I had a really bad experience at the dentist when I was a bit younger. I explained it here and he was really understanding."

"I'm trying to get my husband to come here because he is petrified of the dentist and won't go. He will hopefully come soon, he has a tooth hanging out after a motorbike accident but he won't go to the dentist."

"Much more comfortable due to work commitments and underlying health conditions."

"They are so nice here, from receptionists to dentists (he explains everything). It makes me more likely to come to this dentist. I am given more time in appointments."

"Fantastic service. My dentists are lovely. All the staff are sweet and kind."

"This is my dentist now. I have epileptic seizures and this caused problems with my teeth shifting when having the seizures. I'm having plates fit."

Additional comments

We asked people to share their story and experiences with us. Here are some additional comments we gathered from the visit:

"We have had problem with equipment breaking at Ashton Road Dentist and also showing up to appointments that have been cancelled. They can't do the surgery here in Morecambe. They do sedation but it's not strong enough. The waiting list is long for sedation as well. It took us one year to get it."

"The dentist here is lovely. For medical reasons I need sedation and they don't do it at my private dentist. My previous NHS dentist put me in hospital a few times. I almost lost my teeth. I'm having things redone properly now. I got a choice of where to have the sedation and chose here."

"I've been here for three years. My old dentist referred me years ago. It is very good, can't be improved. I have check ups as well as treatment. The familiarity and patience of the staff is very important, because I can get nervous at the dentist. The dentist here is very good, patient and kind, so I have always had my appointments here. I'm not very scared anymore."

"English is my second language but they took their time to explain everything to me to make sure I understood and showed me diagrams to make it clear. I was a bit scared when I came in but they made it so easy for me. Because it was an emergency I had to come in with my young child of three years. She was a bit scared seeing me lying there and with what she thought was a children's bib around my neck. The staff were great with her. They explained everything to her so it was a really good experience for her which I was pleased about because I was worried it might make her frightened and put her off ever wanting to come to a dentist."

"It's great. The dentist helped with advice for oral hygiene. But I'm surprised she hasn't had a referral back to an NHS dentist. It's quite a trek to get here so it would be better if she was registered at another. There's no reason for her to come here. (During the appointment patient was very nervous as she thought she was having a drill - carer was asked to come to the treatment room) After carer said - I explained it to her that it was not a drill and she would be better having it now as it might be gum disease plus she would worry if she didn't have it today and then we would have to come back."

"I needed to come here from Lancaster because of the type of treatment I needed. It is almost impossible for wheel chair users to access some facilities in Lancaster. Even getting into the dentist chair can be difficult."

Healthwatch Lancashire summary of findings

Here are the main findings from the visit to Morecambe Dental Access Centre, provided by Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust:

- 95% of service users, relatives and carers said that their experience of being referred to the service was easy. Nobody said that the referral process was difficult.
- More people said that they accessed the service as a result of a personal request rather than a referral.
- Everyone we spoke to said that the service was open at convenient times.
- More than 94% of people said that they were happy with using the service.
- Just less than half of people said that they had struggled to access dental services in the past with many stating this is a result of not being able to access NHS dental services quickly enough.
- Service users said that their experience of using the waiting area could be improved with comments stating that the area was not large enough, the lights were too bright, the area was too noisy. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives observed that there did not appear to be sufficient seating.
- A number of service users raised concerns about the telephone system and not getting through to the correct number.
- There was an inconsistency in people's experiences of getting an appointment or being referred for an appointment. Some people stated that it took them up to four months to get an appointment.

Response from provider

This report was sent to Kathryn Bain from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who provided the following response.

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Twitter: @HW_Lancashire
Facebook: facebook.com/lancshealthwatch

Action Statement

No.	Issues raised by patients	Response or action from provider	To be addressed by	Name of manager responsible
1.	Insufficient seating in waiting area.	The waiting area is small and does get crowded when the clinics are at full capacity. There is a small area we might be able to extend into and we are going to find out if this will be possible. However there will be a significant financial cost to this and unlikely to be approved. We may also consider moving one of clinics to another day to take the pressure off Wednesdays.	September 2016	Kathryn Bain
2.	Patients complained that they waited two-three days in pain before being given an emergency appointment.	Emergency appointments are allocated by a triage service which is not operated by the clinic and therefore we have no control over the waiting time for these patients. However I can feedback the comments to the service providers of the triage service.	31 st July 2016	Kathryn Bain
3.	Long waiting times for appointments	Unfortunately some of our clinicians are very busy and clinics are booked some weeks in advance. We do operate a short notice cancellation list and so sometimes are able to bring appointments forward.		
4.	Long waiting time between referral and first appointment.	See above – unfortunately this is unavoidable at the moment due to clinics being very busy but we will be discussing how we may ease this situation by modifying our booking system if possible.	August 2016	Kathryn Bain
5.	Bright lights and noise in the waiting room.	We are glad to receive this feedback from patients and are looking at ways to improve – one idea might be to book certain groups of patients on quieter days.	September 2016	Clinicians group

Additional questions:

1. Is the report factually accurate? If not, please state what needs to be changed and why.

More or less yes. I think the picture was slightly confused by the fact that there were a mixture of Special Care and Emergency patients but we deliberately picked a day when the majority were special care so I think overall it was a good representation.

2. Have you learnt anything new about the experiences of the patients at your surgery as a result of this exercise?

Definitely. Comments about the waiting room and waiting times for appointments were enlightening and given us a focus for improvement.

3. What was your impression of Healthwatch Lancashire during this exercise? Do you think they could have done anything better?

I hardly knew they were there – everyone had positive feedback – no disruption at all.