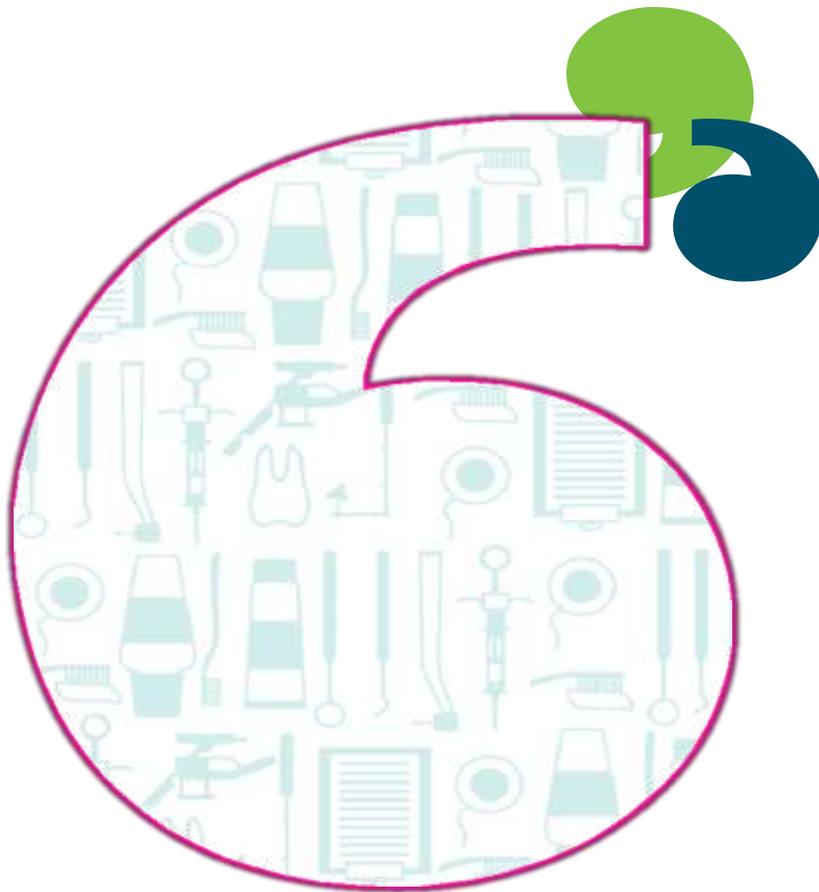


Access to NHS Dental Services in Hertfordshire Enter and View visit report



Beehive Dental Practice

27 Beehive Lane, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 4BH

Welwyn and Hatfield District

Premises visited: Beehive Dental Practice
Date and Time of Visit: 21.02.17 11:30
Visit Conducted By: Keith Shephard and Sally Gale
NHS Contract Holder: Mr Hurst and Mr Chauhan

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the staff who we spoke to on the visit.

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. 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 and the Central Region Inspection Manager - Dentistry at the Care Quality Commission.

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

Beehive Dental Practice is situated in a residential area in the south east of Welwyn Garden City on Beehive Lane. It is a long-established dental practice, having been in existence for over 50 years. There are three dentists and a hygienist practicing, as well as four dental nurses, two receptionists, and a practice manager.

Transport links to the practice are ample. Parking is available on the road in front of the building but as a practice located in a residential area, it is served only by the 403 bus just outside on the road; this route travels from the east of Welwyn Garden City to Digswell to the north. However, bust stop B for the New QEII is only a 5 minute walk away which has much a much wider variety of bus links, though this is up a slight incline.

2. Environment

2.1 Signage

The practice was easy to find as a result of being well signposted, but also as the practice's website provides an embedded Google Maps link. At the time of our visit the sign was in the process of being replaced as one of the partners has left. They intend to write the new partner onto a new sign.

2.2 Car Parking

It was easy to park on the road outside the building, however there was no clear provision for blue badge holders or people with a disability.

2.3 Visible External Information

Although there was a sign to say it was a dental practice, there was no indication outside that NHS treatment is offered in the building. The out of hours number, 111, was on the outside of the building, but written in small writing.

2.4 First Impressions

They were in the process of refurbishing the whole premises at the time of our visit; this meant that the waiting area was in a state of flux. Despite this, the staff and practice created a professional, welcoming environment to walk into, and the noticeboards were tidy and easy to read in the waiting room.

3. Physical Access

3.1 Facilities

All the surgeries are downstairs so as to make it more accessible. But there is an issue with space which presents a problem in making the toilet completely accessible.

Although the practice had an open reception, no hearing loop was visible and some of the print on the noticeboard was quite small.

4. Information Access

4.1 NHS Charges

The NHS Bandings for treatment cost were on display and up to date, clearly visible in the reception area.

When asked about how the cost of treatment would be explained to patients, the practice manager stated that the cost of treatment would always be discussed with the dentist before any work began.

The practice manager was asked about the FP17DC form, but explained that they use an electronic system in order to calculate costs.

4.2 Complaints

The complaints policy was on display in the practice, along with a CQC Poster. The practice manager stated that this is on show so patients will be aware of the policy; however, they will be told about it if they asked about it too. The practice is happy to deal with a complaint made to them in any format. The complaints policy does not appear on the website.

In the practice, there was also a feedback questionnaire available for patients to fill out, and then place in a feedback box. The questionnaire addressed a number of topics, including how welcome the patient felt, whether treatment options were explained effectively, and how clean the patients felt the practice was on their visit.

As well as this, there was a display on a noticeboard of how comments made to the practice had been acted upon.

However, the complaints policy could not be found on the website, and the practice did not present us with a copy along with its questionnaire.

4.3 Promoting oral health

The contents of one noticeboard included a display to raise awareness of the sugar content of some drinks and snacks, in addition to posters giving information on oral care for children.

4.4 Dental Practice and NHS Choices web site

Until recently, NHS Choices displayed information on the practice's services from 2011, which appeared correct and matched the information that the practice was providing on their website. 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.

The information on NHS Choices around the facilities available at the practice in terms of accessibility also appears to match what we have observed. It seems that NHS Choices and the practice are working well together here, though an update to NHS Choices for what services are offered is needed.

The Practice's own website is basic, but navigable, and provides up to date information. However, the complaints policy could not be found on the website, though independent reviews and contact forms are provided.

5. Supporting Patients

5.1 Communication

Confidential interviews are offered in a separate room as the reception area is completely open.

Further information has not been included as the practice did not return its questionnaire.

5.2 Patients with specific requirements

This has been left blank as the clinic did not return its questionnaire.

5.3 Medical Emergencies

The practice manager told us that everyone in the practice is trained for a medical emergency, is aware of where the medical equipment is, and that they all know how to use it.

The practice has its own defibrillator on site.

They do not have a designated first aider; however everyone is trained on an annual basis.

Further information has not been included as the practice did not return its questionnaire.

6. Summary of Findings

Patient feedback to the practice could not be included as they did not return their questionnaire.

There are some areas of good practice. We found the following areas to be noted:

- 1. Although the staff were in a building currently undergoing refurbishment, they created a friendly, welcoming and professional environment for patients.*
- 2. Oral health is well promoted in the waiting area.*
- 3. Genuine interest in hearing what patients think of the practice and what could be improved.*
- 4. Information on the outside of the building is full and helpful.*
- 5. Offering confidential interviews in a separate room.*
- 6. Training all staff as first aiders.*

We also found the following areas for improvement:

- 1. Bearing in mind that the refurbishments are partly for the purpose of improving accessibility in the practice, accessibility should be a priority for improvement.*
- 2. Provision for blue badge holders outside the practice.*
- 3. Ensuring communication with patients meets all communication needs.*
- 4. The practice's website's display of information.*

7. Recommendations

- 1. Create a disabled parking space outside the practice for blue badge holders.*
- 2. Consider installing a hearing loop for the hearing impaired.*
- 3. Improve the accessibility of the toilet in the practice as much as possible.*
- 4. Ensure that there is always a designated first aider from day to day; this could be done via a rota system as all staff have the correct training.*
- 5. Include the complaints policy on the practice website.*
- 6. Ensure that the patient always has a copy of their treatment plan available to them.*
- 7. Ensure 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.