

Details of visit

Service Provider:	GHB Dental Care
Service address:	177 Hemper Lane, Sheffield, S8 7FB
Date:	16th November 2015
Authorised Representatives:	Tony Blackburn and Chris Sterry
Contact details:	Healthwatch Sheffield, The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield, S1 4FW

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Sheffield would like to thank the service provider, service users and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View programme.

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.

**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. 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 service 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.



Purpose of the visit

- To gather information to inform us about how the practice addresses access issues in general and with reference to those with particular needs.
- To identify examples of good working practice.
- To observe the environment and processes in the public areas during a surgery session.
- To identify any areas for improvement and make suggestions if appropriate.

Strategic drivers

- Citywide reporting of difficulty accessing Primary Care in a timely manner
- Healthwatch Sheffield's focus on access for excluded groups
- To explore ways of improving responses to the Friends of Family Test

Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View visit.

The visit was arranged via the Practice Management team. We were given access to the reception and waiting areas and the Practice ensured there was a private area available for confidential discussion if required. The visit was advertised by a poster in the waiting room area. The time agreed coincided with a normal clinic with discussions taking place with staff over the lunchtime period.

The Practice Manager and the receptionist talked to us about how the Practice was run. We were also joined by one of the Dentists who then gave us a tour of the practice. We also spoke to four patients on the day.

Summary of findings

Authorised Representatives were impressed with the standard of care on offer

The practice is located near local shops and amenities and on a bus route. The premises are a large converted house, with the back garden converted into parking.

The practice deals with mainly private patients (only NHS patients are under 18)

New patients are given a welcome pack before any treatment commences

Patients told us that they were extremely satisfied with the service and felt it provided a very high standard of care.

The practice is actively acting on patient feedback and the recommendations we made in this report

Findings of our visit.

Parking and Access

- On first approaching the building we found that the car parking was for staff and visitors and had only 9 places on 2 rows. On street parking is available but very busy.
- Entrance to the building is via a slope and a step. We were informed that wheelchair access was via the front door.
- On entering you come into a small reception area. The waiting room along a narrow corridor is quite adequate with plenty of chairs.
- Because this is a large converted house it makes it very hard to navigate for patients not familiar with it.
- There are 2 treatment rooms downstairs and 2 upstairs.
- One of the downstairs treatment rooms is a spare normally used for the hygienist or for patients unable to get upstairs as the stairways are steep, which could cause difficulties for persons with mobility difficulties. The room is booked when the appointment is made, and the dentist comes downstairs for it.

Waiting/Environment

- In the waiting area there is a TV showing the BBC News Channel. There is also a very small TV displaying information, but it has small fonts which are not easy to read from the other side of the room. It also scrolls too fast for the amount of information on each page so you have to wait until it comes round again by which time you have gone into your appointment. The manager told us that following our observations they are exploring avenues to resolve these problems as soon as possible - See final section "Service Provider Response" for details.
- There is a stand with information on, although we did not find any Healthwatch Sheffield information.
- Magazines and children toys also available.
- Downstairs is a sterile room used for autoclave the instruments. This is classed as a clean room and the instruments are on a type of conveyer system, put in a bag dated and numbered and recorded so that a trace can be done if required. They are also put in a box labelled with the relevant treatment room.

Opening Times/Appointments

- Emergencies are normally seen the same day if a patient is registered. Non-registered patients can be seen in an emergency for a fixed fee. Others are passed on to 111 or NHS Choices.
- Opening times are 9.00am - 5.30pm, with late night Tuesday until 6.30pm. The staff are normally there by 8.30am, so if an emergency comes in they could see them at 8.45 am.
- The DNA figure was 28, approximately 18 of which were under 18 year olds. The usual DNA system is patients are struck off after 3 missed appointments.
- Each dentist sees the same patient all the time so that there is continuity and the patient and dentist get to know each other.
- There is no reminder system for check-ups for patients.

Staff

- The practice has 3 Dentists, 1 Hygienist, 4 dental nurses plus the manager and two receptionists.
- The staff and dentists are long term employees, and one person has been there 20 yrs.
- Training of the staff is ongoing with updating as required, including safeguarding.

Processes

- New patients are given a welcome pack before any treatments are commenced.
- The practice is classed as private and only has an NHS licence for under 18 year olds. They don't have an adult NHS licence as Mr. Bird, the principal dentist at the time and who is still with the practice, made an elective decision to withdraw from seeing NHS adult patients. He felt that the new NHS contract was hugely restrictive and could not offer the level of care that the practice strives to deliver. Having voluntarily withdrawn from that contract for adult patients, the NHS introduced a block to all new dental contracts post-2006. Subsequently, the practice could have a new adult NHS contract back now if they wanted one, but they do not currently wish to. NHS dental treatment has three charge bands, dependent upon what treatment is required. The practice's opinion is that some treatments are far too expensive for the patient relative to what they receive (and the practice independent prices are cheaper than NHS equivalents) but also some treatments are far too cheap for what the patient receives (and the practice independent prices are subsequently higher than NHS charges). Being independent from the NHS for adults has given the practice the freedom to charge fairly and provide value, and the patient feedback shows that they are hopefully succeeding in this respect.
- Adults wanting NHS treatment are signposted to 111 or NHS choices.
- A dental plan is available which costs £8.70 per month.

Friends & Family Test/Feedback from Patients

- The "Friends & Family test" (FFT) is implemented for NHS patients (under 18s)
- It was found that with the FFT, although used, only part of the information was required by the NHS and the rest by the practice, it was felt that a more comprehensive form with more information would be better.
- Adult (private) patients are given feedback forms covering different aspects:-
 1. Cleanliness of outside of building, reception area, waiting area, toilets and surgery area (Options Very good, good, average or poor)
 2. Opinions relating to treatment; were the options fully explained, choices supported, given a treatment plan and would you recommend practice to others
 3. Opinions relating to staff; was dentist approachable, treated in a respectful manner, were reception staff helpful and polite and would you recommend practice to others
 4. Opinions relating to fees; were the relevant fees explained, receive a treatment plan detailing fees, are payment options adequate and would you recommend practice to others
 5. Opinions relating to; treated with dignity and respect, enough information given re treatment, relevant fees explained and would you be happy to recommend this practice to others

Patient Comments

4 patients were available to speak to us on the day. Their comments were as follows:

“Staff are friendly... I see same dentist... good appointments system and seen on time”.

“I’m a long standing patient, now moved out of Sheffield. I still maintain registration at practice. I see same dentist and the staff are excellent”.

“All the family have been coming for many years... can obtain same day appointments... but feel car park could be bigger”.

“I welcome having a ground floor treatment room”.

General Observations

- The website is very good and displays complaints and compliments most of which are positive. This is due to the fact that the majority of patients are long term and whole family as the practice was formed in the 1950’s. There is also plenty of information on the website about the pricing, the staff and services.

Recommendations

Authorised Representatives were impressed with the standard of care on offer

The display intervals on the slideshows on the TV in reception to be slowed and font increased so patients can read it

Review parking arrangements due to potential problem of patients vehicles being blocked in (if they don’t have a long appointment. There is adequate parking near the surgery could parking at the front be disabled only.

To examine further with patients the potential need for a downstairs treatment area.

Service Provider Response

The Practice Manager’s comments about the TVs in the waiting area:

“The large TV in the waiting room was provided as a result of patient feedback requesting it. It has two main purposes. Firstly, it is a great distraction for nervous patients awaiting their appointment. Secondly, it provides volume such that patients in the waiting room cannot overhear conversations at the reception desk, which aids with patient confidentiality.

The slideshow for patient information is unfortunately on its slowest setting already. I am exploring avenues, following your feedback, to make



it slower, such as having the same slide showing twice in succession. I hope to have resolved this issue within days.

We have asked our patients both yesterday and today whether they preferred the idea of switching the content of the two screens, and the feedback was negative from our regular patients. We are therefore exploring the avenue of adding some of that information to the new patient packs that are provided to new patients of the practice.”

