

Oral Health and Dental Services report

The Hive and Healthwatch have been working in partnership to gain an insight from the learning disabled community about Oral Health and Dental Services.

Their views have been obtained through focus group events and surveys.

Two focus group events were held at The Hive drop-in. This gave contributors an opportunity to answer questions face to face and discuss issues in more detail. The first focus group event was on 31st August at an evening drop-in and the second event was held at an afternoon drop-in session on 6th September.

The Hive Members Forum developed an Easy Read survey, these surveys were made available to members, their families and carers between 15th August and 21st September 2016. A prize draw was conducted as an incentive for members to complete the surveys.



Mike Clothier, one of the winners of the vouchers, presented by Liz Cooke CEO The Hive.

Oral Health and Dental Services Focus Group Findings
31st August - 7 contributors

Do you know how to keep your teeth and mouth healthy?

All contributors said yes and they talked about brushing teeth, attending dentist regularly and eating and drinking healthy food.

Have you ever been told how to clean your teeth?

Five contributors stated parents, support staff and dentists have shown them how to clean their teeth. One didn't know.

One contributor stated that she was told by the dentist to buy an electric toothbrush as she wasn't cleaning her teeth properly. When asked whether she was shown how to brush her teeth using an electric toothbrush she stated no but this didn't matter as the electric toothbrush does all the work. Other contributors who had electric tooth brushes demonstrated how they brush their teeth.

None of the contributors flossed and had never been told, to or knew how to.

All contributors knew about mouthwash with four out of seven using it regularly.

All contributors knew they should brush for two minutes, but some stated this was a long time and admitted they didn't brush for that long even though they knew they should.

Do you know what food and drink are bad for your teeth?

All contributors stated that they knew what food and drink were bad for their teeth and they gave obvious examples of these. However, after further discussion contributors were very surprised to hear about food and drink with hidden sugars, such as fruit juice, milkshake, cooking sauces and processed food.

Do you book your own appointments with the dentist?

Two stated that they book their own appointments as they rebook an appointment at the reception desk face to face.

Five stated they didn't book themselves - two stated it is too confusing. One stated he can't be bothered, and the others stated that it is easier for their parents and support staff to do it.

All contributors were happy with these arrangements.

Do your dentists and nurses speak to you in a way you understand?

All contributors stated their dentist were nice. On further discussion, two stated that they don't always get told what the dentist is doing. They said they would rather not know as it may frighten them more.

Do they listen to what you have to say?

All contributors stated that they are listened to by dentists and nurses.

Who gets documents in a way they understand?

Two out of seven people said they did.

None of them had ever received an easy read version of a letter. They got someone else to read the letters because they didn't understand them.

Are you worried about going to the dentist?

One person stated he was happy to go to the dentist

Six contributors had concerns, and as a result took someone to the dentist with them.

Comments

"I had a bad time once so it frightens me".

"I don't like people getting too close to me so when the dentist gets close I get really worried".

"I don't like the bright light".

"I hate injections, they hurt".

"I see all of the things he uses and get scared".

I don't like the strange noises when I'm waiting".

One contributor, a nineteen year old, stated that she had been to the dentist for the first time the previous week. She said it was much better than she had expected; her teeth were all fine but her gums were swollen. She stated that she needed to go back again to have treatment for her gums but she said she was not worried about doing this.

Improvements to dentists?

All contributors stated that they get free NHS treatment as they are on benefits and therefore the cost was not an issue.

Waiting times were an issue raised by three contributors.

A number of contributors stated they would like more things to do in the waiting room to take their mind off what was going to happen; ideas such as magazines and TV were raised.

One contributor stated that if they played music in the waiting room he wouldn't hear the noises which worry him.

Visits to Bristol Dental Hospital

No contributors had been to the Dental Hospital

Oral Health and Dental Services Focus Group Findings

6th September - 8 contributors

Do you know how to keep your teeth and mouth healthy?

All contributors said they understood about brushing their teeth, using mouthwash, attending the dentist regularly, and eating and drinking healthy food. One stated that exercise would also help keep teeth healthy.

Have you ever been told how to clean your teeth?

Seven contributors stated that parents, support staff and dentists have shown them how to clean their teeth. One didn't know how to clean their teeth.

Only one of the contributors flossed, the others had never been told to, or knew how to.

All contributors knew about mouth wash with six out of eight using it regularly

Six contributors knew they should brush for two minutes. One person thought it was five minutes, and one stated that it was ok to just use mouthwash if you didn't have time to brush. A couple of contributors corrected him and a full discussion was held.

Do you know what food and drink are bad for your teeth?

All contributors informed me that they knew what food and drink were bad for their teeth and they gave examples of these. The issue of food and drink with hidden sugars was raised. All but one were very surprised to hear that fruit juice, milkshake, cooking sauces and processed food had hidden sugar. One asked "Why would they put sugar in pasta sauce? It should be just tomatoes".

Do you book your own appointments with the dentist?

None of the eight booked their own appointments. Reasons for this ranged from;

"I won't be able to remember what they say".

"My support have to take me so they ring".

"I don't always understand what they're saying".

"I don't use the phone".

"My Mum books her appointment and mine together as she drives there".

Do your dentists and nurses speak to you in a way you understand?

Six stated their dentist speak to them in a way they understand.

One stated his dentist was nice but he was not from England and he was difficult to understand.

One stated that his dentist speaks to his support worker not him as he sometimes doesn't get his words out right. He stated that he didn't like this.

Do they listen to what you have to say?

All contributors stated that they are listened to by dentists and nurses.

Who gets documents in a way they understand?

One person stated that they did. The others commented that they got someone else to read the letters because they didn't understand them. None of them could remember ever receiving an Easy Read version of a letter.

Are you worried about going to the dentist?

Two contributors stated they were happy to go to the dentist; the others all had concerns.

Comments

"I don't mind it really but if I'm getting a filling I want my mum with me".

"I had an x-ray once, I had to open my mouth wide for a long time it gave me a head ache".

"No one likes the dentist".

"I hate the noise of the drill and the sucking thing".

"I don't like the way it smells and the lights are bright".

One contributor stated that he was told by his dentist he grinds his teeth and needed a mouth guard. He was told he would have to pay £50. He thought this was expensive and also made the comment that he pays for his treatment as he has a part time job, and checkups cost him £18' "I'm not surprised people don't go to the dentist if it costs that much"

Improvements to dentists?

- All but one stated that they get free NHS treatment as they receive benefits. The one who pays stated the cost of check ups and treatment was too much and should be lower or free.
- Waiting times were an issue raised by six contributors.
- Suggestions of having more things to do in the waiting room to take their mind off waiting and what was going to happen - such as magazines and TV in the waiting room.
- One contributor stated that they should have a TV where the light is, above the dentist chair or they put music in your ears and glasses on, "So you can't hear and see what the dentist is doing".

Visits to Bristol Dental Hospital

One contributor stated that he had been to the Dental Hospital, but it was a long time ago so he doesn't remember much about it.



A few participants of the focus group and surveys

Oral Health and Dental Services Survey Findings

- Thirty six Easy Read surveys were completed by Hive members, their families and carers across South Gloucestershire and Bristol. Two surveys were from a visit by Healthwatch South Gloucestershire Enter and View volunteers to a care home for adults with learning disabilities.
- Fourteen respondents are from South Gloucestershire; Twenty one are from Bristol.
- Twenty respondents are female and sixteen respondents are male.
- The age range of respondents was between nineteen and seventy seven years.
- Where the figures do not add up to thirty eight, this is because some questions have not been answered, or more than one answer has been given to a question.

Do you know how to keep your teeth and mouth healthy?

Yes	32
Not sure	2
No	1

Have you ever been told how to clean your teeth?

Yes	35
Not sure	1
No	3 (Support workers clean the participants' teeth as he is unable to do so himself)

If yes, who told you?

Dentist	17
Mum	12
Staff	11
Dad	5
College staff	1
Friend	1

Most respondents were told by both the dentist and a parent or carer how to keep their teeth and mouth healthy.

Do you know what food and drink are bad for your teeth?

Yes	32
Not sure	2
No	3

When do you clean your teeth?

Once a day	11
Twice a day	25
Sometimes	2
Never	1 (teeth have been removed)

When do you visit the dentist?

Once a year	11
Twice a year	18
Sometimes	1
Never	3

Do you book your own visit to the dentist?

Yes	7
No	23

Who books your appointments?

Book your own appointment	0
Staff / carers	8
Mum / Dad	7

Comments

I'm not sure, I just turn up.

The person that takes me deals with the appointment bookings.

When I speak on the phone I get worried I won't understand and get confused.

I cannot communicate well enough to do this.

I don't know what to do.

I never go to the dentist.

How do you feel about going to the dentist?

Happy	11
Ok	13
Worried	10

Positive comments

I feel happy as they (staff) are friendly.

I go to a dentist in Yate and they are good

The dentist makes me feel relaxed and comfortable

I don't mind it but it hurts when I get fillings.

Because I want to keep my teeth nice.

Because they polish my teeth

I had to have a filling, all went ok.

Okay when the dentist polishes his teeth. He doesn't like it but the dentist is very good. (Carers' response)

I respect what health professionals say to me. I follow instructions from dentists very well.

Happy, because he gives me an x-ray

I like going to the dentist

Okay because my dentist is a nice man

I am alright there

Okay they tell me what to do to keep my mouth healthy

Good, no fillings and help to clean my teeth.

Worried Comments

Too expensive

I don't want all my teeth pulled out.

I feel worried in case they take my teeth out.

I am worried what they will do – I don't like people getting close to me. I'm worried about how much it costs.

They may hurt me. Waiting in the waiting room makes me very nervous.

I don't like waiting in the waiting room, I hear what is happening to other people. I have a fear of lying down. My new dentist knows this so it's good he doesn't lie me down.

Sometimes they don't tell me what they are doing. I don't like the electric things they use.

I'm worried it will hurt again. When they did a filling last time it really hurt. I'm worried my gums will bleed.

I get worried about what they might do, I think it's going to hurt. I don't like injections.

I'm not sure what they are going to do and if it might hurt.

Do dentists and nurses speak to you in a way you understand?

Yes	26
Not sure	2
No	3

Comments

When people talk quietly I don't understand them.

(I understand) most of the time.

Do dentists and nurses listen to you?

Yes	30
Not sure	1
No	1

Do you get letters and information from your dentist in a way you can understand?

Yes	19
Not sure	5
No	7

Please tell us about your last visit to the dentist. Was it good or bad and why?

Positive comments

It was good as I didn't need any fillings.

Good. The dentist sorted my bad tooth and it is alright now.

Good. I had an extraction.

Because my teeth were good.

The care home is registered with the dentist in Yate who visits residents at the care home.

It was good now as I have changed to the community dentist (Southmead Health Centre). The mainstream dentist was not good and did not understand and meet (my) needs.

It was ok. I was worried I needed a filling. This time I didn't wait long in the waiting room.

It was good, they didn't do anything.

He gets on well with his dentist.

The dentist visits the unit. R sits in her chair and the carer holds her head for the dentist to examine her.

It was ok, my teeth only needed a quick clean by the dentist.

They didn't understand me and what I'm trying to say.

I had two fillings.

Good because the dentist was nice.

Good. The dentist checked my teeth.

Alright – they did a check-up and a clean

I was getting worried. He polished my teeth.

I supported to the dentist with my care staff. I was very calm and listened throughout.

I saw the hygienist who cleaned and polished my teeth.

Negative comments

It was bad. I had an abscess on my tooth. I had some injections. They had to take my tooth out.

The last dentist was difficult to understand.

Did the dentist explain to you what they were doing?

Yes	28
Not sure	1
No	4

What could your dentist do to make your visit better?

Nine commentators wanted shorter waiting times for appointments. "It's always busy at the dentist".

Three commentators wanted music playing in the dentists' room and TV to be available during appointments.

Six commentators are happy with their dentist.

Two commentators wanted free things; toothpaste and chocolate

I get worried when the chair goes up and down

They should try and communicate with S, rather than just support workers

They should tell you what the things cost to do before they do it.

Go to the dentist and GP together, in the same place.

Eye masks so you can't see what they are doing.

Make me feel more comfortable, not waiting too long. They can tell me what the different things are and what they do.

My dentist did a good job

Make your teeth clean.

Have you been to the Bristol Dental Hospital? If so, can you tell us what it was like?

Six commentators had been to the dental hospital.

Comments

They took my tooth out. It didn't hurt, I was really brave.

I went there so they could take some teeth out and treat my gums.