

Enter and View Report:

Fresh Springs Dental Practice

40-42 Toynbee St, London E1 7NE

Contents

Contents.....1

1. Visit Background.....2

2. About This Visit.....3

3. Summary of Findings.....5

4. Interviews.....8

5. Conclusion11

5. Appendix.....15

Visit Details	
Service Visited:	Fresh Springs Dental Practice
Address:	40-42 Toynbee St, London E1 7NE
Service Manager:	Dr Funmi Sulaiman
Date & Time of Visit:	23 rd April 2025
Status of Visit:	Announced
Authorised Representatives:	Shreya Mandal, Macauley, Sneha Das, Khushi Bhagat
Lead Authorised Representative:	Shreya Mandal

1. Visit Background

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets is your **local, independent health and social care champion**. We help local people to voice their **views and opinions** about the services they use.



We **listen** to people and **collect their feedback** on health and social care services.



We **report on key findings** and **make recommendations** for improvement.



We **present these reports** to those involved in the planning and commissioning of the health and social care services.

What is Enter and View?

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, and pharmacies. We also interview management and staff regarding their views of the service provided. The aim is to get an impartial view of how the service is operated and being experienced.

Enter and View visits can be arranged if people tell us there's a problem with a service, but equally, they can also 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.

Following the visits, our official 'Enter and View Report', will be shared with the service provider, local

commissioners and regulators outlining what has worked well, and give recommendations on what could have worked better. All reports are available to view on our website.

Disclaimer

Please note, this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out. 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.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets would like to thank the service provider and service users for their contribution and hospitality in enabling this Enter and View visit to take place. We would also like to thank our volunteers Macauley Chukwuma, Sneha Das and our intern, Khushi Bhagat for their assistance.

2. About This Visit

Fresh Springs Dental Practice

On 23rd April 2025, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets visited Fresh Springs Dental Practice, located in Aldgate East, London. The dental practice provides NHS and private dental treatments to patients of all ages. The practice is open for all patients from Monday to Friday 9am – 6pm, and Saturday only for private patients. As of 11th June 2025, Fresh Springs was only accepting new NHS patients for routine dental care if they are aged 17 or under.

The practice facilities consisted of two treatment rooms, a reception/waiting area, decontamination room, a single accessible toilet, and a staff room with a microwave and sink.

We interviewed a total of 15 people, including 9 patients and 6 staff members



Online Feedback

The [Google Reviews](#) page contains 54 reviews, with a few dating back to 16 years ago. For the purpose of the visit, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets only examined reviews received between March 2020 – 2025, which totalled to 25 reviews with the average of 4.2 stars out of 5.

The reviews praised Fresh Springs Dental Practice on their kind and professional approach to patient care, with some patients returning to the practice for many years as a result.

A small number of patients expressed having a negative experience at the practice, sharing that they were treated poorly by reception staff, were dissatisfied with clinical treatment and long waits for appointments.

Focus of the Visit

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets faced some difficulty accessing the community dental practices within the borough, only receiving a response from Fresh Springs Dental Practice after emailing eight practices in total. Whilst the aim was to visit a community dental practice, Fresh Springs Dental Practice is a General

Dental Practice, holding a contract with the NHS to provide clinical care. The dentists are self-employed contractors, not NHS employees.

The rationale for conducting the Enter and View visit to Fresh Springs Dental was based on the data sourced from comments posted online (NHS Reviews and Google Reviews). The dental practice had a high volume of feedback which were mostly positive.

The main aim of the visit was to observe how Fresh Springs Dental Practice operates and how they have acquired positive feedback from their patients. We also wanted to observe the areas of concern that were raised in patient feedback, therefore questions for staff and patients were formulated in a way to address these concerns, alongside the standard Enter & View observations.

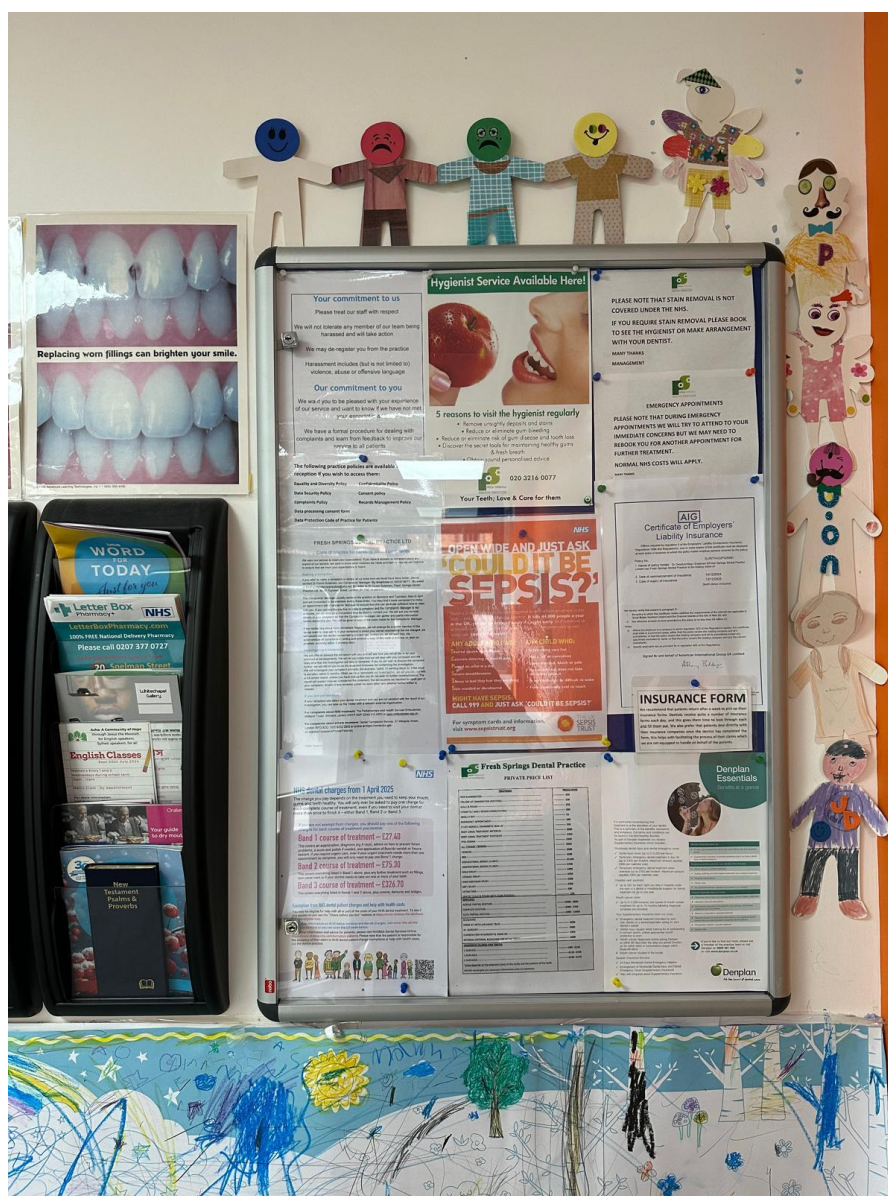


Figure 1: Noticeboard displaying a range of informative posters and policy documents, surrounded by artwork at Fresh Springs Dental Practice.

3. Summary of Findings

During the visit to Fresh Springs Dental Practice, the Authorised Representatives were allowed to explore the premises open for the public independently, taking photographs when appropriate.

There are seven categories of observation. These categories include: Outside and Entrance, Environment, Safety, Information Displayed, Accessibility, Reception and Waiting Area and Staff Conduct.

Fresh Springs Dental Practice is located quite close to two major tube stations, Aldgate East and Liverpool Street Station in East London, making it accessible via public transport such as the tube, bus, and even car. The area was quiet and did not have any traffic at the time of the visit.

What worked well?

- **Entrance:** The entrance felt secure, featuring doorbell and privacy screen covering the bottom half of the large windows. Whilst a ramp was not observed, the entrance was low to the ground, and no issues had been raised to the staff members (see figure 2).
- **Signage:** The external signage was clear and prominent. The opening times were clearly displayed. Internal signage was also clear, with a labelled accessible toilet and consultation rooms.
- **Reception and Waiting Area:** The reception area was small but welcoming. Patients were required to check-in at the reception. The waiting area was located opposite the reception, seating approximately 6 patients



Figure 2. The entrance of the dental practice was deemed accessible.

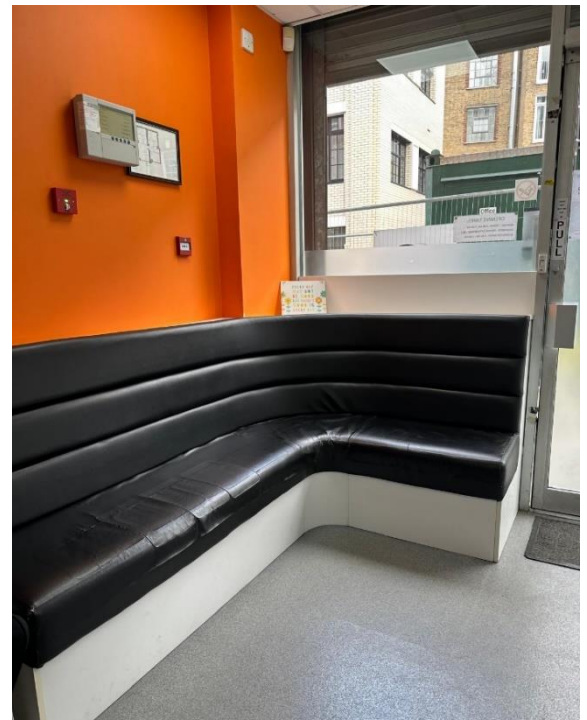


Figure 3. Whilst small and worn, the waiting area was bright and welcoming.

at a time (see figure 3). The walls were painted in vibrant colours and the artwork created by young patients were displayed throughout the premises, specifically positioned at their eye-level, which was a heart-warming detail (see figure 4).

- **Staff Conduct:** The staff conduct with patients was friendly and professional. Patients did not have to wait long to be seen by the receptionist and dentist, showcasing an efficient system.
- **Environment:** The practice was clean and bright, contributed to by the large windows and bright decor. The storage and other areas were tidy. There appeared to be good ventilation as no distinct odour was identified.
- **Fire Safety:** The fire exit and the assembly point was clearly indicated on several fire safety posters. We also spotted a few fire extinguishers in accessible areas. No clutter or obstructions were observed. The fire safety signage was properly monitored and maintained.
- **Information Displayed:** A large variety of informative posters were observed. There was a TV in the waiting area used for patient's education..
- **Accessibility:** The corridors were wide and featured an internal ramp leading to the consultation rooms. The public toilet was spacious. The toilet seat was also a different colour, which made it easily identifiable (see figure 5).

What could be improved?

- **Information Displayed:** A method for providing feedback was not identified even though a complaints procedure poster was observed (see figure 6). We did not observe any staff information displayed onsite. We



Figure 4: The walls at the practice featured numerous artworks created by young patients, mostly positioned at their eye-level.



Figure 5: Fresh Springs Dental Practice had an accessible toilet with the appropriate features mostly in place.

also observed leaflets for various training opportunities, however one from 2023-24 was spotted.

- **Privacy:** There was lack of privacy in the exchanges between patient and receptionist, and other waiting patients. However, it appeared that the practice had a one-in and one-out system for patients, with only one patient waiting in the waiting area at a time.
- **Consultation Room Décor:** The consultation rooms appeared cold and unwelcoming due to the lack of decorative elements.
- **Safety:** Although the toilet had many accessible features, the emergency alarm cord did not reach the floor which could be difficult to reach for anyone who has had a fall (see figure 5).

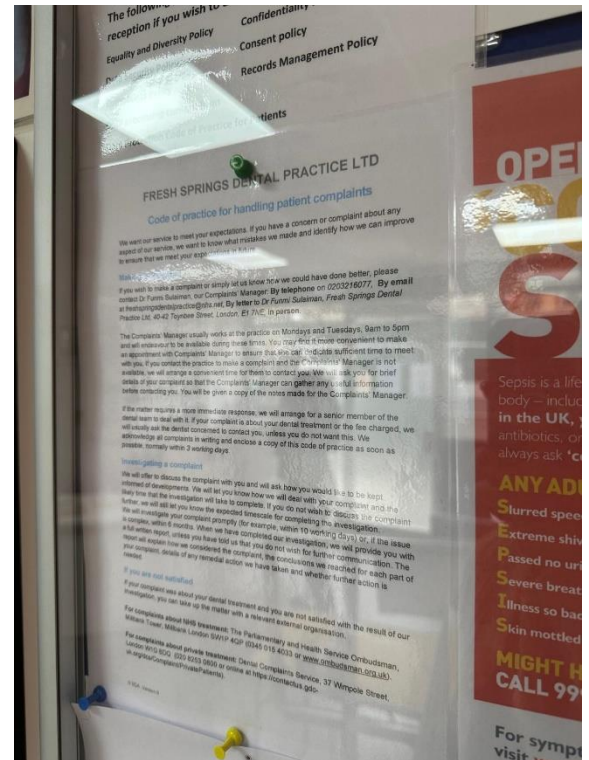


Figure 6: The patient complaints policy was observed at the practice.

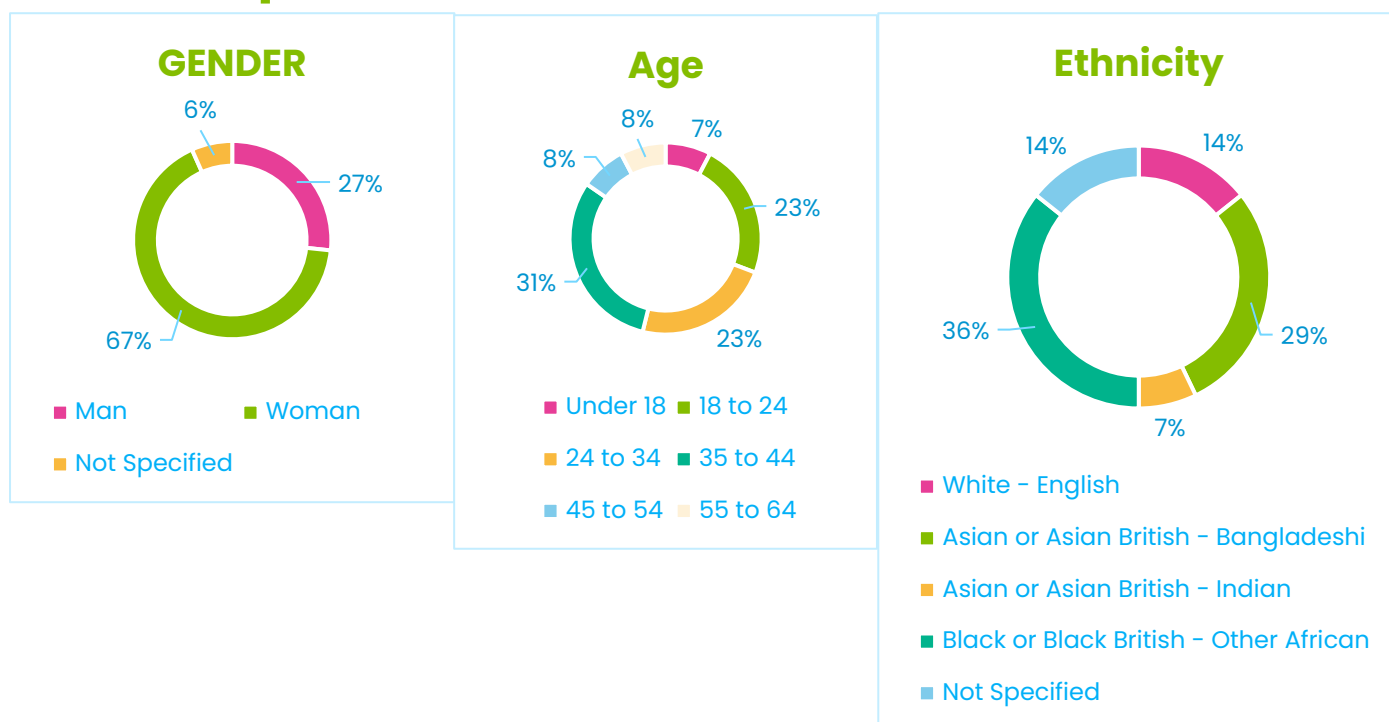
Summary of recommendations:

1. Safety features in the accessible toilets
2. Robust, well-promoted patient feedback
3. Display more informative posters within the consultation rooms
4. Improve privacy of interactions between receptionists and patients
5. Increasing availability of appointments reserved for children during term time

4. Interviews

During the visit on 25th April 2025, we interviewed 9 patients and 6 staff members, along with the practice manager at Fresh Springs Dental Practice. We asked a total of 23-27 questions on various topics such as Appointment Booking and Access, Environment, Staff and Communication, Treatment and Care, and General Experience.

Who we spoke to



4.1 Registration, Appointment Booking and Accessibility

Methods of booking appointments consist of walk-ins, calling to book, emergency slots, via the NHS directory or NHS 111. There are emergency slots in the morning and afternoon. No e-consultation or online forms were mentioned.

Patients were happy with the booking system in place, not having to wait too long and the process itself being quite quick and easy. Patients also thought that the location of the dental practice was accessible.

Staff members shared that there is a good booking system in place and all patients are welcomed if there are appointment available, regardless of whether it's NHS-funded or private. After the course of treatment, patients are encouraged to book their next appointment which would take place within 2-6 months. In case of no availability, patients are placed on a waiting list and allocated an appointment in case of cancellations.

Interpretation services are offered if needed. However, multilingual staff usually assist and/or patients are encouraged to contact their family members for translation purposes first.

4.2 Environment at the Fresh Springs Dental Practice

The waiting area was perceived to be comfortable, with only one patient sharing that it is quite small. All patients shared that the practice was clean and well-maintained, and their privacy was appropriately respected.

Whilst most patients shared that the signage and information available at the dental practice were clear, one patient observed some clutter and dated displays. They also found the wait time following the arrival for an appointment to be unclear, suggesting that a screen displaying appointment and approximate wait times could be useful rather than a TV screen.

4.3 Practice Operations and Procedures

Staff shared that upon arrival, patients receive a medical history and patient declaration form to complete. After their consultation with the dentist, they return to the reception to make a payment or book a follow-up appointment.

Most patients were unsure about the feedback and complaints procedure at the dental practice. Some elaborated and shared that they haven't needed to use the service or believe the process doesn't exist.

Staff members mentioned that they have a policy for handling complaints or concerns. All complaints are handled urgently. The receptionist and principal dentist respond to all complaints and advise patients accordingly.

According to staff interviews, to gather patient feedback, Google review links are shared via text after every appointment. A survey is also distributed. Feedback is analysed and prioritised and used to inform the practice.

4.4 Staffing, Training and Communication

Most patient stated that the staff at Fresh Springs Dental Practice seemed very friendly and helpful. However, one patient thought that staff seemed overworked and seem frustrated if you had additional needs.

We found that 87% of patients felt that dentists and other staff listened to their concerns and they had enough time to ask questions. Whilst most patients agreed, it was shared that sometimes staff members do not provide explanations when asked.

During staff interviews, it was understood that they felt that the dental practice was sufficiently staffed, especially since they are not a big practice.

Staff can take continuous professional development training via Agilo Training, a platform paid for by the principal dentist. Minimum training is required every year that is mandatory. There is in-house training as well as team training.

Annual appraisals and daily assessments are set up to assess staff competency. All staff members spoke very positively about the team work at the practice, sharing that it is the strength of the practice.

4.5 Patient Treatment and Experience

Most patients were generally happy with the quality of care they received – sharing that their pain was managed effectively. They were provided with information about how to care for their teeth or oral health care following any treatment. Most patients felt that they were treated with respect and dignity.

Staff ask patients if there is anything they should be aware of when they book appointments. To ensure patients feel at ease for their appointment, they are reassured by the receptionist beforehand. During consultations, dentists build a cordial rapport with patients. Good communication between receptionists and dentists help to identify patients who may be particularly nervous or anxious.

4.6 Policy and Regulations

Fresh Springs Dental Practice follows the Health Technical Memorandum 01-05 ([HTM 01-05](#)) standard – the UK Department of Health's essential guidance document for decontamination in primary care dental practices, ensuring that services meet legal obligations under the Health and Social Care Act. Audits are conducted every 6 months. Staff are regularly trained on infection control.

The regulations are communicated through team meetings, emails, clinical platforms and training sessions. Staff are also registered to various newsletters from the NHS, British Dental Association (BDA) and relevant bodies like HMRC.

4.7 General Experience

Patients had an overall positive experience of the dental practice, commenting on the professionalism of the staff and how well they follow up on treatments. When enquired about possible improvements, the topic of privacy and sensitivity was raised, along with increasing the availability of appointments for children during term time.

Most patients were more than happy to recommend this dental practice to others due to the positive nature of their experience.

All staff members spoke positively about the working environment at the dental practice. They felt supported by management, have friendly colleagues, and believe that everyone puts in their best effort.

When asked about any challenges at Fresh Springs Dental Practice, staff shared the following: physical capacity to meet demands, ensuring that patients take responsibility for their oral health and patients not attending appointments. The rising costs of NHS dental charges were also mentioned.

5. Conclusion

Overall, our visit to Fresh Springs Dental Practice was positive with some areas for improvement identified. We have highlighted our recommendations for improvement based on the observations and the feedback received from both staff and patients.

Summary of recommendations:

1. Safety features in the accessible toilets
2. Robust, well-promoted patient feedback
3. Display more informative posters within the consultation rooms
4. Improve privacy of interactions between receptionists and patients
5. Increasing availability of appointments reserved for children during term time

Recommendations

The Practice Manager at Fresh Springs Dental Practice was requested to respond to the following recommendations:

1. Improve Maintenance of Safety Features in the Accessible Toilets

Although the toilet had many accessible features, the emergency alarm cord did not reach the floor. This could be difficult to reach for anyone who has had a fall and was raised as a concern.

We recommend regularly monitoring the safety features implemented throughout the facilities to ensure that they are appropriately positioned for accessible use.

Practice Response:

The emergency alarm cord originally went all the way to the floor, but the practice experienced frequent false alarms from patients (often children) and to prevent these disruptive episodes the cords were tied up. However, we have re-assessed the risks and returned the cord to its original length.

2. Build a Robust, Well-Promoted Patient Feedback System

A method for providing feedback was not identified even though a complaints procedure poster was observed. Patients were also unaware of the feedback and complaints procedure at the dental practice, highlighting that there is room for improvement in this area.

We recommend either building a robust patient feedback system or increase the promotion of an existing feedback system to maximise patient awareness. Most of the patient feedback received during the Enter and View visit was highly positive so it would benefit the practice to have an internal record of this.

Practice Response:

To gather robust and transparent feedback, we encourage patients to leave reviews online. To increase the promotion of this feedback system we have created a Google review barcode for patients to scan. We also have a complaint/compliment book at reception, and we encourage patients to complete the NHS Feedback surveys before leaving the dental practice.

Our patient's complaint policy is available in the notice board in the waiting room. We also ensure that patient's complaints are dealt with as soon as they are raised (either while patient is physically present, or if raised over the phone or by email).

3. Display Informative Posters in Both Consultation Rooms

The consultation rooms appeared cold and unwelcoming due to the lack of decorative elements and informative posters. It was not consistent with the décor throughout the practice which increased the contrast. We did not observe any staff information displayed onsite, and some outdated leaflets were identified.

We understand that there may be limitations to décor within consultation rooms due to their clinical nature but where possible, do display colourful, informative posters, including ones displaying staff information. We also recommend regularly checking the leaflet stock to make sure that everything is up to date.

Practice Response:

The consultation rooms have the necessary posters required to comply with regulatory standards (CQC), health and safety legislation, and NHS contractual requirements. Since the COVID pandemic, to reduce the surface transmission of viruses, we have strived to be clutter-free and to only put up posters that can easily be cleaned and disinfected. Also, as we have observed over the years, patients rarely focus on posters while on a dental chair, and in past surveys

patients have noted that posters inside the clinical rooms can create an impersonal atmosphere rather than a calming one – which is why we made our reception and waiting area the focus for information.

Staff information are available in our patient leaflets which are placed at reception. This information has now also been displayed on the notice board at reception.

4. Improve the Privacy of Interactions Between Receptionists and Patients at the Joint Reception and Waiting area

We observed a lack of privacy in the interaction between patient and receptionist, and other waiting patients. This may be a concern for patients who are anxious prior to their appointment and do not feel comfortable sharing potentially confidential information publicly. At the time of the visit, the practice did appear to have a one-in and one-out system for patients, with only one patient waiting in the waiting area at a time.

Whilst the one-in and one-out patient system may be working well; it may not be the most efficient use of the two consultation rooms at the site. We encourage Fresh Springs Dental Practice to explore ways in which privacy could be improved at the practice.

Practice Response:

Patients are encouraged to write confidential information at reception. We have introduced the use of clinipads to reduce the passing of information verbally between patients and reception. Patients who wish to discuss an issue further are usually taken into a consultation room if the waiting area is occupied.

As observed, we do tend to book the patients in a manner that ensures the waiting area is never overcrowded. This allows patient to have uninterrupted time with reception and the dentist. This, however, has no bearing on the efficient use of the consultation rooms as we do not book patients based on availability of consultation rooms but based on our allocated NHS contracted Units of Dental Activity.

Also, the number of patients we see per day vary depending on the complexity of treatments – as patients with high complexity needs require more time than those attending for check-ups.

5. Increasing the Availability of Appointments Reserved for Children During Term Time

During interviews with patients at Fresh Springs Dental Practice, increasing the availability of appointments reserved for children, specifically during term time, was suggested as a possible improvement to the otherwise high-quality experience at the practice.

Where possible, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets recognises that this may be difficult to implement due to the limitation of resources encourages the dental practice to accommodate for young patients even during term-time.

Practice Response:

Fresh Springs Dental Practice has always placed emphasis on dental care for children and young adults. We have been involved in fluoride programmes and health talks in primary schools in Tower Hamlets. We visit primary schools, creche, faith schools, schools not part of normal curriculum and after-school clubs annually with colourful and informative flyers to encourage parents to register their children at the dental practice.

During term-time, end of day appointments is usually reserved for children to accommodate children who can only attend after-school appointments. We run extra clinic during half-term.

We also encourage parents to book in advance but this does not stop us from seeing them for emergency which is prioritised for children.

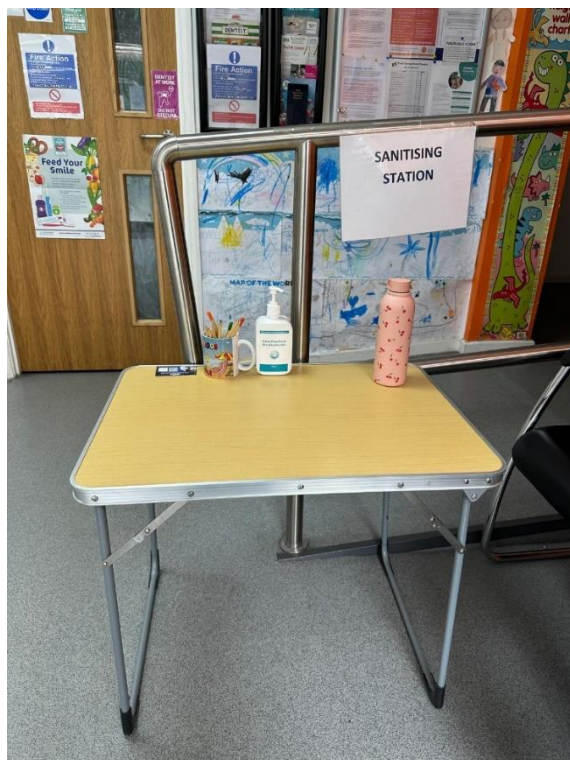
We would like to extend a thank you to Fresh Spring Dental Practice for welcoming Healthwatch Tower Hamlets and contributing to the report.

1. Appendix

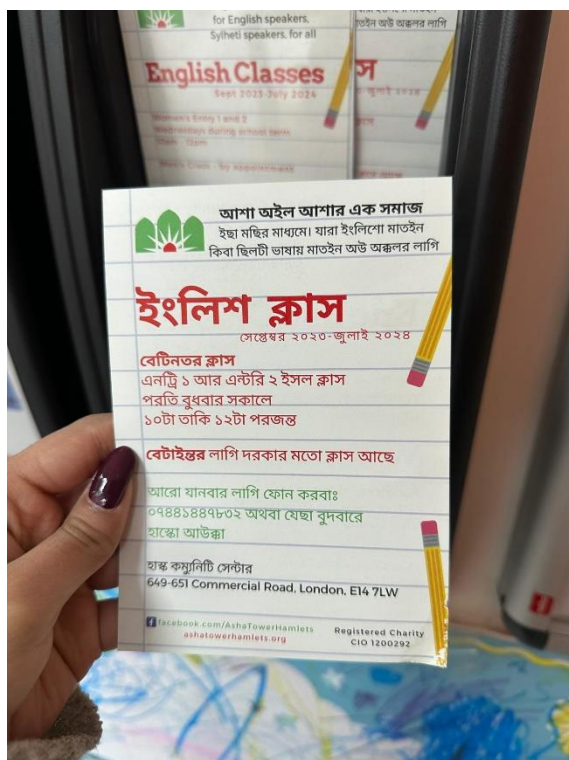
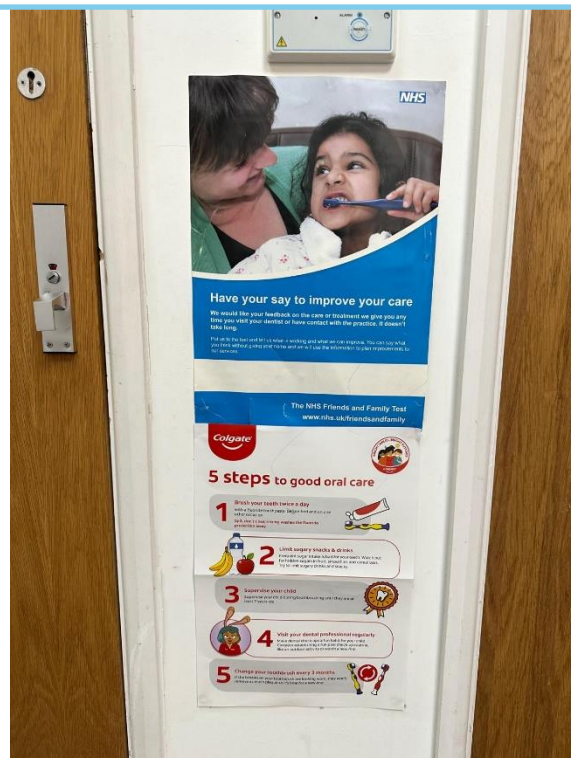
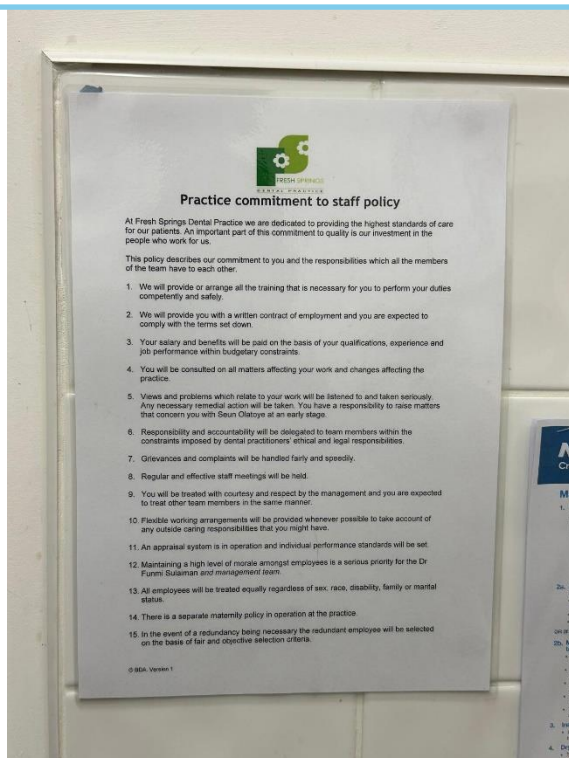
This section displays additional photos taken during the Enter and View Visit to Fresh Springs Dental Practice on 23rd April 2025.



Appendix A: Several fire extinguishers were observed around the facilities.



Appendix B: Fresh Springs Dental Practice had a sanitising station located opposite the entrance and besides the waiting area.



Appendix A: Example of informative posters and leaflets available at the dental practice. Some leaflets were available in Bengali, making the material accessible to the local community.



Healthwatch Tower Hamlets
Pill Box
115 Coventry Road
Unit 104
London
E2 6GG

www.Healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk
t: 0800 145 5343
e: info@Healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk
🐦 [@HWTowerHamlets](https://twitter.com/HWTowerHamlets)
📘 Facebook.com/HealthwatchTowerHamlets