

DISABILITY PROTOCOL AND CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

This document provides the basis for the Practice in assessing the needs of its disabled patients, or those with mobility or other requirements to ensure that their access to services is, as far as practicable, maximised.

New Patients

The Practice website will contain a section for those patients with a disability outlining the facilities available at the Practice and their ease of access to the building based on the findings of the Access Audit (below).

Disabled patients will be advised on new registration that they are able to telephone the Practice from outside on arrival if they require any assistance in accessing the building or its services. Staff will be trained in the appropriate way to help with wheelchairs, partially or non-sighted patients, or those with other special needs.

Clinical staff will assist patients attending for a New Patient Visit including collecting them from the waiting area and escorting them to their consultation as appropriate. Patients benefiting from this will have a major alert message placed on the clinical system record.

Guide dogs will be welcomed into the surgery with any patients that have these.

The surgery also has a fully serviced wheelchair for patients' use if necessary.

Disabled patients will not be booked appointments in the four new consulting rooms in the extension.

Patient Facilities

The Practice will:

- Provide two clearly marked and wider disabled parking bays at the front of the surgery
- Provide a safe access into the surgery via a ramp plus have an alternative ramp fitted outside room 5 for emergency exits. There is also a DDA compliant ramp to be used in and out of the new extension although disabled patients are not to use the non-DDA compliant ramp to access the new rooms and reception are aware of this.
- The extension added in July 2021 has a fully compliant disabled ramp to enter/exit the building however, patients with disabilities will not be invited to use these 4 rooms due to the non-compliant indoor ramp. All consulting rooms in the lower, original

building will be used. Outside ramp will be used for entrance and exit if other doors are out of action.

- The ramp will be reviewed for safety on an annual basis and gripper and handrails have been fitted.
- Offer private room facilities for patients who may have communication, reading, or writing difficulties whenever possible
- Allow disabled patients to make appointments by unusual methods, e.g. text messages, on line booking, or letter. The Practice will respond to these requests using the method most appropriate to the needs of the patient. Some patients with disabilities will also be provided with a priority booking card
- Deaf patients will be provided with mobile phone numbers at the surgery in which they can text any urgent requests or appointment requests
- We also have a hearing loop available on reception
- Electronic doors were added to the surgery's main entrance in May 22
- There will be copies of the surgery brochure available in large font
- Other leaflets will be available in large font and a variety of the most spoken languages of our patients, in the waiting room once Covid restrictions for Infection Control have been lifted
- Patients with Learning Disabilities will be offered annual reviews at the practice and will be sent invites approved by the Purple Star Strategy teams
- We will work hard to support our LD patients with the aim of retaining our Purple Star status and providing adequate help to all.
- New handrails have now been added to the clinical corridor.
- We offer a language line for any translation requirements and also interpreters for face to face when we have our BSL patients attending for appointments etc.

Checking and Recording

The Practice will audit its facilities on an annual basis or at significant changes to the premises (see below).

The results will be recorded within a file maintained for the purpose along with any action plans or other documentation required. The file will maintain a summary report of the access facilities available to disabled patients as detailed above.

The Practice will seek to establish contact with appropriate disabled patients with a view to an annual consultation with them regarding disability access, at which time the file will be provided to them for assessment and comments.

Access Checklist: Questions below based on an affirmative answer being the desired situation

Name of Practice	Spring House Medical Centre - Y02639
Type of Building	Porter Cabin
Address	Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 4HL
Other Occupants	Surgery staff only plus invited visitors who all sign in
Inspected by:	Natalie Cox
Inspection date:	23 rd May 2026

Parking

Is there a patient car park?	Yes, there is a large, free car-park
Total parking spaces	35
Total Designated Disabled Spaces	2 at the front of the surgery next to the ramp
Are designated spaces at least 5% of the total spaces?	Yes
Are designated spaces at least 2.5m wide plus 1.2m adjacent space (which may be shared with the next bay)	Yes
Is the route from the designated space to the building obstacle free?	Yes there are no obstacles in the car park at all
Does the route to the building have dropped curbs?	Yes there is easy access but a small step up on one side of the entrance. We also now have a ramp to and from the new extension and an additional ramp outside room 5.
Is the route to the building at least 1200mm wide?	Yes
Additional Comments relating to Parking	The car park is large and has plenty of spaces. It is easily accessible from the main road and clearly sign-posted. The zebra crossing has now been repainted. A bollard was damaged in July 24 by a patient's car and was repaired by NHS property services in July 24 after a second car then drove over the already damaged bollard.

Building Entry

Is the approach flat without a step, or ramped?	There is a ramped approach on one side next to the disabled parking spaces. There is also now an additional ramp for access out of room 5 if required.
Is the door width at least 750mm	Yes
Is there an automatic opening facility on the door or the means to call for assistance?	We have now had electronic doors fitted to the main entrance to support all our less able patients have good access to our surgery. Pts can also be easily seen on the CCTV screens and receptionists would quickly run to help any patients requiring help with access
Is there a sign in clear print to identify the building?	Yes there is as we have now had a new sign that is visible from the road that identifies us and specifies that we are a GP surgery. This was replaced in June 2022
Does any ramp have: • a non-slip surface • width at least 1metre • top and bottom landing with at least 1.2m clear length • raised kerbs at least 100mm high • a continuous handrail on both sides if the ramp exceeds 2m long • a handrail 900mm above the ramp and 1m above the landing • handrail with a closed end(s)	The ramp has a non-slip surface and is over a 1m width. The surface has also been improved as the original one kept splitting and could be a trip hazard. There is a handrail on both sides of the ramp. We also have an exit ramp at the end of the clinical corridor for when we had social distancing and one-way access for all patients Also, in January 2022 NHS property services repaired and fixed most of the outside parts of the building including the gully in the car-park (Nov 2021) In August 22 and June 24, the wooden ramps into the building were replaced after a slat became slightly loose and a patient tripped up. These are now smooth with an anti-slip finish. NHS property services are now responsible for the outer building and ramps etc.
Does the entry door have: • 800mm clear opening width • 300mm leading edge clearance • Vision panel from 900mm to 1500mm height • A level threshold • A door control 1m above the floor • Revolving doors? • A lobby between double doors with clear wheelchair space	Entrance doors have clear opening widths and level thresholds and we had them changed and improved to electronic doors in May 2022. We also installed new handrails along the clinical corridor in May 2022. There is plenty of clear space for wheel chairs/push chairs etc and the wheelchair is serviced annually

Does signage have: • Clear contrasting colours • The name of the building and / or services • Have a clear font • Have mixed upper and lower case characters • Use characters at least 60mm high (capitals) • Sufficient illumination (natural or otherwise) • Suitable location (e.g. not too high up)	Yes. All the signage is very clear. We paid for a new outdoor sign to be visible from the road it was fitted in June 2022. It was agreed not to have the opening times on this as it was a distraction to the name. Times of opening are displayed on the entrance doors. It is now easier to identify that we are a surgery.
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External Steps

Are there external steps to the building?	No. Just one step on one side of the entrance on the opposite side to the disabled access ramp.
If YES do they have: • None slip surfaces • Minimum width 1 metre • Minimum 1.2m between landings • Landings clear of swinging doors • A uniform rise in the steps • A handrail on both sides if more than 2 steps	Yes there are rails to support this step up.
Are there Handrails?	Yes
If YES do they have: • A height of 900mm above the step surface • A height of 1m above the landing surface • A handrail which extends 300mm beyond the top and bottom of the steps • A handrail which has closed ends • A handrail of 45 – 50mm in diameter • A handrail which projects 45mm from the wall	Yes

Reception Area

Is there a reception sign? Is it in clear font and visible to wheelchair users?	Yes, our reception is low, and is easily visible and attainable for all patients. We now have a screen but with the addition of intercoms for the hard of hearing. We installed an intercom system when the screens were making it difficult to hear some patients.
Does the reception desk have a surface < 800 high?	Our reception desk was designed for friendly, visible and easy access for all pts and low enough for wheelchair users
Is there an induction loop? Are Loop signs clearly displayed?	Yes
Is there a portable induction loop?	Yes
Is the lowest part of the desk at least 900mm wide?	Yes

Building Accessibility

Are doors 750mm wide minimum?	Yes all doors are fitted to the acceptable standards
Is a lift or ramp available where the building is not on one level?	All of our building is on one, easily accessible level.
Is any ramp $\leq 1:12$ gradient? Does it comply with the requirements above?	The gradient of the ramp is suitably low as the building is only on one level apart from the internal ramp into the extension but all staff are aware that no disabled patients ever need to use these rooms and will be seen downstairs.

Is there a lift?	NO
If yes, does it: • Have a clear 1500 x 1500 landing in front of the doors? • Have doors with a clear opening width of 800mm • Have a car space of min. 1100 wide x 1400 long? • Have a control panel < 1200mm high? • Have a control panel >400mm from the front wall? • Identify which floor the car is on? • Have a min. 5 second delay on the door opening to closing? • Give a min. 5 second warning that the lift is arriving?	

Toilets

If there are public toilets: Is there a disabled toilet or one which; • Has a min size of 1400 x 1750mm? • Have a door of >750mm width? • Have grab rails for side or forward weight transfer? • Are the grab rails secure?	Yes, there are 3 public toilets off the waiting room plus and additional sluice/sample toilet in the Clinical corridor which became our isolation toilet during Covid crisis There is a specific disabled toilet with the necessary handrails present. These are all secure and have been checked

Items Required Attention / Recommendations

The outside of the building is now in the best state it has been for a long time. The roof has been fixed by a full replacement. The outdoor has been painted and repaired. We also had a roof inspection in June 23 following the earlier repairs. The guttering has been replaced in July 2023 following this inspection. The roof is now inspected annually with the most recent inspection on 4th July 2026.

Audit completed by Natalie Cox