

Herbrandston and Narberth Dental Health Practices



Giving back to the environment


implant a tree



Narberth & Herbrandston
Dental Health Practices



Dr Mark Boulcott with implant patient

Private dentistry, like that offered by Herbrandston and Narberth Dental Health Practices, is on the increase. Patient expectations are increasing with regard to customer service and care. In short, patients are demanding an experience worth paying for. Dr Mark Boulcott and the teams at both the Milford Haven (Herbrandston) and Narberth Dental Practices are expanding because of their ability to meet these expectations. The following article, written by Dr Mark Boulcott, elaborates on this.

Patient concerns

Dental practices can be intimidating for a number of reasons. Concerns often centre on:

Trust. "Can I trust them to do the work? Are they experienced enough? Do other people like and trust them too?"

Painlessness. "Will they hurt me?"

Access. "Are they easy to find? Can I park, and are they open at suitable times?"

Availability. "Can they see me quickly?"

Fees. "Do their fees seem about right?"

Choice. "Do they provide a wide choice of solutions, options and treatments?"

Nice people. "Are they the sort of people I want to take care of me?"

Standing out

The above might seem obvious, but do we actively allay these concerns? The simple fact of being near a patient's home no longer makes us the obvious clinic of their

FACTS ABOUT HERBRANDSTON AND NARBERTH DENTAL HEALTH PRACTICES

- » Principal dental surgeon: Dr Mark Boulcott
- » Established in 2004 and 2014, respectively
- » Based in west Wales
- » Services: Private dental care facilities offering special treatments for patients suffering anxieties or phobias – including sedation clinics
- » Treatment packages include the provision of Invisalign, and clear orthodontic treatments, dental implants (including grafting techniques and advanced prosthodontics as appropriate) and cosmetic dentistry
- » 6 full-time dentists with a broad range of expertise mean in-house multidisciplinary treatment planning is a reality for our patients
- » www.healthysmile.org.uk

“Patient loyalty: earned, never assumed”

choice. Patients – young and old – look to the internet: webpages of valuable content, social media likes and, above all, great reviews.

They’re looking for a practice to stand out in the marketplace, to appreciate their core values and to resonate with their aspirations in what they expect from a dentist. Often, these desires remain unmet and patients move between clinics; patient loyalty being something continually needing to be earned, never assumed.

Neither our Herbrandston practice (west of Milford Haven, within our Coastal National Park) nor our Narberth practice are easy to get to. They are particularly far west – indeed, further west than one might want to travel in the UK, and are within the county of Pembrokeshire. Both practices nevertheless have regular patients from all over south Wales, west England and beyond.

Why do patients choose us, having travelled past many other dental facilities on the way? Medical tourism for us is a reality: many arrive from throughout the UK, despite our competitor practices searching for more patients.

Although we excel at dentistry, it is in customer service that we primarily excel. Everything we do is centred on attracting new patients and in keeping existing ones happy.

Best practice

To do this requires imagination, empathy, friendliness and charm. The dental profession often lacks these attributes, which is why we are so highly rated by our patients via ongoing testimonials, online reviews and – most of all – friend and family recommendations. Fundamentally, we are successful because our patients believe we are great.

We work hard to produce positive outcomes in regard to patient expectations, acknowledging that these vary between patients. This includes acknowledging that, although we cannot be great at everything, we nonetheless ensure that the best dentist carries out specific treatments. Patients are therefore referred internally as appropriate. We understand patients are generally happy to see other dentists within the practice, knowing they will be receiving the best, most convenient treatment.

We recognise that clinical expertise is valued differently by patients than by the profession: we deliver on the promise of pain-free dentistry, we coordinate a range of all-encompassing treatments and address the actual “wants” of the patient while simultaneously addressing their needs.

We do not fear peer criticism. Practice dentists confidently talk about treatment planning with each other, with experienced dentists mentoring. Patients respect second opinions, and see it as appropriate if their case is complex. We also make sure we talk in language designed to facilitate patient understanding.

It’s also important to us that we invest in technology such as CBCT 3D imagery, intra-oral scanners, intra-oral cameras, digital radiography and the like to improve patient experience and diagnosis. Moreover, we offer

Ethical selling of
treatments



treatments under sedation, advance the science of animal-assisted behavioural modification and always present a friendly, unhurried and caring atmosphere that is enhanced by all our quality staff.

We focus our attention on attracting those patients who see no or little value in attending the dentist unless they are in pain. A recent local survey conducted by us in Narberth showed that, of those who would come to our practice, the two largest factors putting them off were cost (43 per cent) and fear (48 per cent). Patient anxiety, it seems, is the greatest obstacle to access.

Alleviating fears

We successfully counter these fears through various strategies:

1. Clinical surroundings. Glass, ceramic, metals, hard edges and sanitary surfaces are the mainstay of dental architecture and they incite fear in most patients. A softer feel, a homelier environment, is far more appreciated. To this end, we offer the option, among others, of a sausage dog on your lap while recovering from surgery post-sedation. This is an option at Narberth that's greatly appreciated by many, including the dogs. To allay fears, the Health Inspectorate approved this measure after reviewing our cross-infection control protocols. The same applies to feeding the horses or pigs at Herbrandston, and local schools end their investigatory visit to the dentist by petting the emus. Our animals build trust and eliminate frightening stereotypes.

2. Interactive surgeries. Helping patients visualise their problems and better understand what can be done to rectify them – including how it's done – can greatly instil confidence in the procedure and the dentist. Having chatty, humorous and interesting dialogue relaxes and encourages



Animal-assisted behavioural therapy

acceptance and trust. All are helped by means of intra-oral cameras and multimedia presentations. These are features of all six surgeries within the two practices, and are seen as important aids to ethical selling.

3. Behavioural techniques. "Animal-assisted therapy", a unique form of behavioural and cognitive therapy devised and utilised by me – the practice principal – for over 12 years, has seen some spectacular success stories. I use animals (ferrets, pigs, horses) to break the cycle of mistrust often created by historical care. By taking anxious or mistrustful patients (child or adult) out of the surgery to see the animals, with suitable dialogue, bonds of trust can be created. At the very least, we are not seen as the same as the previous care-provider. It is communication at a level understood by the patient and also fun.

4. Being of the community. The practice, sponsored by Megagen Implant Systems and utilising land at Bunkers Hill Farm in Camrose, will be running the unique "Implant a Tree" scheme. As part of an environmental project, practice patients receiving dental implant treatments will be able to have a tree planted on their behalf.

“Medical tourism for us is a reality”