

### **Dental Surgery Layout Design**

On average, dentists in the UK spend 2,500 hours per year working in their dental surgery. That's nearly 30% of the entire year!

Designing your dental room around how you work is essential. Dentists tell us the main benefits are:

1. Efficient working conditions, with less user movement needed to access commonly used areas. This means that more patients can be seen without compromising clinical or patient communication time.
2. Less fatigue and elimination of back problems.
3. Patients feel at ease when instruments are hidden and the chair is easy to access. This makes it more appealing for elderly and private patients.
4. Effortless and professional face-to-face contact with the patient, which makes it easier to discuss treatment options.

Dental surgeries can be designed in so many different ways. With a wide range of dental equipment packages available, items such as operating lights, delivery units and spittoons are all detachable and can be mounted from the ceiling, walls or cabinets. With every practice unique in size, orientation and layout, there are endless combinations of surgery design available! So how do you achieve the best surgery plan for you?



### Why is it important?

Poorly designed surgeries affect several stakeholders of a dental practice. Dentists frequently suffer with musculoskeletal pain because of poor room design. Regularly twisting and bending between the computer, instruments and the patient, can cause pain and long-term health implications and turn associate dentists away. In addition, poor room lighting will often cause eye strain and can induce headaches.

Poor surgery design can also adversely affect patients.. The visibility of tools and equipment can make patients nervous. Poor access to the chair makes welcoming the patient difficult and embarrassing. If the chair is facing a door, patients may feel that their privacy is not being respected. Disabled patients may not be able to use the surgery unless there is sufficient space for wheelchairs, wide doorways and a knee-break chair.

If the surgery lacks storage or workspace, the environment becomes cluttered, unorganised and stressful for the nurse. Inadequate room on the nurse's side of the chair will make access in and out of the surgery difficult and inefficient.

Most dental design companies start with the equipment and configure the surgery design around it, according to a few basic principles. In our opinion, **this is wrong**. There's so much more to consider besides the equipment!



### So how do I do it?

The company designing your dental room must take the time to consider specifically how the users work, as every dentist works in a different position and is used to different layouts. Allowing a design expert to observe you working with patients will identify existing pain points and allow them to consider your working methods.

A designer should work to a comprehensive checklist, rather than re-using a generic plan. This ensures that all aspects of the surgery are considered in the process.

A checklist should include:

- Easy patient entry to the chair, without needing to walk around the chair unit or spittoon.
- Dentist facing the patient upon room entry.
- Consultation area. Either a small desk or ensuring the dentist can converse with patients easily whilst they're in the chair.
- Natural day light with chair orientated towards it if possible.
- Comfortable working position, so the dentist can maintain a good posture and ensure they don't need to twist to access instruments, the patient and the equipment controls.
- Disabled and wheelchair access.
- Seating for chaperone/guardian.
- Desk area and computer stations that are easily accessible by dentist.
- Bespoke cabinetry layout according to type of dentistry being carried out. Either straight run, L-series or U-set considerations.
- Detailed cabinetry specifications considered, for example drawer inserts, storage cupboards, sinks and large work-surface areas.
- Clearly defined dentist and nurse working areas with minimum of 650mm from chair head to cabinetry in all directions.
- Proximity to decontamination room.
- Availability and storage for mobile drawer units for specialists such as oral surgeons.
- X-ray arm mounting and reach to chair.
- X-ray exposure switch and timer locations.
- Storage for auxiliary equipment items such as microscope, cerec machines, mobile suction etc.
- Ambidextrous consideration.
- Overall surgery lighting ambience above 5,000 lumens.



Seeing other practices in use will increase your understanding of the importance of room design. Your dental company can show you around other practices they have designed and introduce you to their clinical staff, allowing you to discuss the benefits of room design with other users.

### **Know why you are re-designing your room...**

It is important to work with an experienced company who have the expertise to understand the reasons why you are refurbishing or creating a surgery. Whether you aim to improve the appeal to private patients, make the surgery more attractive for a specialist or simply help retain an associate, understanding your motive will be vital for the focus of all involved.. It will also allow the experts to provide advice across other areas of the practice to support the rationale for the upgrade. Experts have access to many other dental practices and can usually use their knowledge and experience to offer a host of suggestions.





### **Summing it all up**

When faced with surgery design, dentists and designers sometimes form layout ideas based on generic templates. These surgeries provide a mediocre use of space and efficiency, and overlook an important opportunity to maximise the surgery layout.

Don't assume your designs consider all necessary aspects and don't need to be improved! Taking your room design through a detailed, analytical process ensures every aspect is discussed and achieves the best possible solution for you. Important requirements that users did not previously consider are often discovered during the design process.

Achieving the optimum surgery design will provide long-lasting benefits and satisfaction to users every day.

Get in touch today to view other practices and request a free design assessment with Anglian Dental!

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