

Experdental Ltd

Hilltop Dental

Inspection Report

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Date of inspection visit: 25 October 2017
Date of publication: 20/11/2017

Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 25 October 2017 under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. We planned the inspection to check whether the registered provider was meeting the legal requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations. The inspection was led by a CQC inspector who was supported by two specialist dental advisers.

We told the NHS England area team that we were inspecting the practice. They did not provide any information.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following five questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our findings were:

Are services safe?

We found that this practice was providing safe care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Are services effective?

We found that this practice was providing effective care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Are services caring?

We found that this practice was providing caring services in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Are services responsive?

We found that this practice was providing responsive care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Are services well-led?

We found that this practice was providing well-led care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Background

Hilltop Dental is in Hatfield and provides NHS (96%) and some private treatment to patients of all ages.

There is level access for people who use wheelchairs and pushchairs. Car parking spaces are available near the practice.

The dental team includes six dentists, three dental nurses including one trainee dental nurse, one dental hygienist, three receptionists and a practice manager. The practice has three treatment rooms.

The practice is owned by a company and as a condition of registration must have a person registered with the Care Quality Commission as the registered manager.

Summary of findings

Registered managers have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations about how the practice is run. The registered manager at Hilltop Dental was the principal dentist.

On the day of inspection we collected 33 CQC comment cards filled in by patients and spoke with five other patients. This information gave us a positive view of the practice.

During the inspection we spoke with three dentists, three dental nurses, two receptionists and the practice manager. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open: Monday to Friday 8.45am to 5.45pm. Alternative Saturdays from 10am to 2pm.

Our key findings were:

- The practice was clean and well maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk.
- The practice had suitable safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children.
- The practice had thorough staff recruitment procedures.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Staff treated patients with dignity and respect and took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- The appointment system met patients' needs.
- The practice had effective leadership. Appraisals had not been undertaken. Staff told us they felt involved and supported and worked well as a team and the practice asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided.
- The practice dealt with complaints positively and efficiently quickly and constructively

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Are services safe?

We found that this practice was providing safe care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

The practice had systems and processes to provide safe care and treatment. They used learning from incidents and complaints to help them improve.

Staff received training in safeguarding and knew how to recognise the signs of abuse and how to report concerns.

Staff were qualified for their roles and the practice completed essential recruitment checks.

Premises and equipment were clean and properly maintained. The practice followed national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments.

The practice had suitable arrangements for dealing with medical and other emergencies.

No action



Are services effective?

We found that this practice was providing effective care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

The dentists assessed patients' needs and provided care and treatment in line with recognised guidance. Patients described the treatment they received as professional, caring and a good experience. The dentists discussed treatment with patients so they could give informed consent and recorded this in their records.

The practice had clear arrangements when patients needed to be referred to other dental or health care professionals.

The practice supported staff to complete training relevant to their roles and had systems to help them monitor this.

No action



Are services caring?

We found that this practice was providing caring services in accordance with the relevant regulations.

We received feedback about the practice from 38 people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff treated them with dignity, were caring and helpful and it was always a positive experience. They said that they were given informative, helpful and honest explanations about dental treatment, and said their dentist listened to them. Patients commented that they made them feel at ease, especially when they were anxious about visiting the dentist.

We saw that staff protected patients' privacy and were aware of the importance of confidentiality. Patients said staff treated them with dignity and respect.

No action



Are services responsive to people's needs?

We found that this practice was providing responsive care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

No action



Summary of findings

The practice's appointment system was efficient and met patients' needs. Patients could get an appointment quickly if in pain.

Staff considered patients' different needs. This included providing facilities for disabled patients and families with children. The practice had access to telephone interpreter services, several staff spoke other languages and they had arrangements to help patients with sight or hearing loss.

The practice took patients views seriously. They valued compliments from patients and responded to concerns and complaints quickly and constructively.

Are services well-led?

We found that this practice was providing well-led care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

The practice had arrangements to ensure the smooth running of the service. These included systems for the practice team to discuss the quality and safety of the care and treatment provided. There was a clearly defined management structure and staff felt supported and appreciated.

The practice team kept complete patient dental care records which were, clearly written or typed and stored securely.

The practice monitored clinical and non-clinical areas of their work to help them improve and learn. This included asking for and listening to the views of patients and staff.

No action



Are services safe?

Our findings

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

The practice had policies and procedures to report, investigate, respond and learn from accidents, incidents and significant events. Staff knew about these and understood their role in the process.

The practice recorded, responded to and discussed all incidents to reduce risk and support future learning. The practice manager understood the formal reporting pathways required following serious untoward incidents as detailed in the Reporting of Injuries Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

The practice received national patient safety and medicines alerts from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA). Relevant alerts were discussed with staff, acted on and stored for future reference.

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

Staff knew their responsibilities if they had concerns about the safety of children, young people and adults who were vulnerable due to their circumstances. The practice had safeguarding policies and procedures to provide staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. We saw evidence that staff received safeguarding training. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns. The practice had a whistleblowing policy. Staff told us they felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. These included risk assessments which staff reviewed every year. For example risk assessments into the safer use of sharps and other dental. The practice followed relevant safety laws when using needles and other sharp dental items. The dentists used rubber dams in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment.

The practice had a business continuity plan describing how the practice would deal with events which could disrupt the normal running of the practice.

Medical emergencies

Staff knew what to do in a medical emergency and completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year.

Emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in recognised guidance. Staff kept records of their checks to make sure these were available, within their expiry date, and in working order.

Staff recruitment

The practice had a staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. This reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at ten staff recruitment files. These showed the practice followed their recruitment procedure.

Clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover.

Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

The practice's health and safety policies and risk assessments were up to date and reviewed to help manage potential risk. These covered general workplace and specific dental topics. The practice had current employer's liability insurance and checked each year that the clinicians' professional indemnity insurance was up to date.

A dental nurse worked with the dentists when they treated patients.

Infection control

The practice had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures to keep patients safe. They followed guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health. Staff completed infection prevention and control training every year.

The practice had suitable arrangements for transporting, cleaning, checking, sterilising and storing instruments in line with HTM01-05. The records showed equipment staff used for cleaning and sterilising instruments was maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance.

Are services safe?

The practice carried out an infection prevention and control audit twice a year. The latest audit undertaken in October 2017 and the previous audit in May 2017 showed the practice was meeting the required standards.

The practice had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems, in line with a risk assessment undertaken in September 2017.

We saw cleaning schedules for the premises. The practice was clean when we inspected and patients confirmed this was usual.

Equipment and medicines

We saw servicing documentation for the equipment used. Staff carried out checks in line with the manufacturers' recommendations.

The practice had suitable systems for prescribing and storing medicines.

The practice stored and kept records of NHS prescriptions as described in current guidance.

Radiography (X-rays)

The practice had suitable arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment. They met current radiation regulations and had the required information in their radiation protection file.

We saw evidence that the dentists justified, graded and reported on the X-rays they took. The practice carried out X-ray audits every year following current guidance and legislation.

Clinical staff completed continuous professional development in respect of dental radiography.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The practice kept detailed dental care records containing information about the patients' current dental needs, past treatment and medical histories. The dentists assessed patients' treatment needs in line with recognised guidance.

We saw that the practice audited patients' dental care records to check that the dentists recorded the necessary information.

The practice did not provide sedation services; patients who required sedation were referred elsewhere.

Health promotion & prevention

The practice believed in preventative care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health in line with the Delivering Better Oral Health toolkit. The hygienist provided practical support and advice around good oral hygiene to patients.

The dentists told us they prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them. They used fluoride varnish for children based on an assessment of the risk of tooth decay for each child.

The dentists told us they discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and diet with patients during appointments. The practice had a selection of dental products for sale and provided health promotion leaflets to help patients with their oral health.

Staffing

We were told staff new to the practice had a period of induction based on a structured induction programme. We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuous professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

The practice manager had been in post for two months and confirmed appraisals had not been recorded. We saw evidence of the process being introduced at the practice which would support staff training needs and development.

Working with other services

Dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide. This included referring patients for sedation services and patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two week wait arrangements. This was initiated by NICE in 2005 to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist. The practice monitored urgent referrals to make sure they were dealt with promptly.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice team understood the importance of obtaining and recording patients' consent to treatment. The dentists told us they gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these so they could make informed decisions. Patients confirmed their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment.

The practice's consent policy included information about the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The team understood their responsibilities under the act when treating adults who may not be able to make informed decisions. The policy also referred to Gillick competence and the dentists and dental nurses were aware of the need to consider this when treating young people under 16. Staff described how they involved patients' relatives or carers when appropriate and made sure they had enough time to explain treatment options clearly.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion and empathy

Staff we spoke with were aware of their responsibility to respect people's diversity and human rights.

Patients commented positively that staff were caring, and treated them with respect and dignity. We saw that staff treated patients with kindness and were supportive and friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

Nervous patients said staff were compassionate and understanding. Patients could choose whether they saw a male or female dentist.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. However the layout of reception and the combined waiting area meant that privacy was challenging to maintain when reception staff were dealing with patients both face to face and on the telephone. We saw that staff were careful not to mention patients' names or discuss patient information in this area. Staff told us that if a patient asked for more privacy they would take them into another room. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave personal information where other patients might see it.

Staff password protected patients' electronic care records and backed these up to secure storage. They stored paper records securely.

Music was played in the treatment rooms. The practice provided drinking water if requested.

Information folders were available for patients to read.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The practice gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices. Patients confirmed that staff listened to them, did not rush them and discussed options for treatment with them. A dentist described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options.

Patients told us staff were kind and helpful when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

The practice's website provided patients with information about the range of treatments available at the practice. These included general dentistry, treatments for gum disease and more complex treatments.

Each treatment room had a screen so the dentists could show patients photographs and X-ray images when they discussed treatment options.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

Patients described high levels of satisfaction with the responsive service provided by the practice.

The practice had an efficient appointment system to respond to patients' needs. Staff told us that patients who requested an urgent appointment were seen the same day. Patients told us they had enough time during their appointment and did not feel rushed. Appointments ran smoothly on the day of the inspection and patients were not kept waiting.

We saw evidence of how staff supported patients who were nervous and for whom they needed to make adjustments to enable them to receive treatment. The team were aware and kept this in mind to make sure the patient was put at ease and the dentist could see them as soon as possible after they arrived.

Staff told us that they telephoned some older and more vulnerable patients to make sure they could get to the practice.

The practice provided a domiciliary service which included provision of treatment for some patients in local care or nursing homes and in their own homes. One dentist and a dental nurse provided assessment and treatment where required on referral for patients who were unable to attend the practice.

There were protocols and processes in place for the provision of this service. The dental team carried out a risk assessment at every initial visit for patient and staff safety. They carried emergency drugs, equipment and oxygen for each visit.

Promoting equality

The practice made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. These included step free access to the three treatment rooms.

Staff said they had access to interpreter services. Some staff were able to speak other languages. There was no hearing loop at the practice. The practice had risk assessments in place to review the need for a hearing loop.

Access to the service

The practice displayed its opening hours in the premises, their information leaflet and on their website. We confirmed the practice kept waiting times and cancellations to a minimum.

The practice was committed to seeing patients experiencing pain on the same day and kept appointments free with each dentist for same day appointments and where the practice was not able to offer an urgent appointment would refer them to the sister practice. The website, information leaflet and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open. Patients confirmed they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment.

Concerns & complaints

The practice had a complaints policy providing guidance to staff on how to handle a complaint. The practice information leaflet explained how to make a complaint. The practice manager was responsible for dealing with these. Staff told us they would tell the practice manager about any formal or informal comments or concerns straight away so patients received a quick response.

The practice manager told us they aimed to settle complaints in-house and invited patients to speak with them in person to discuss these. Information was available about organisations patients could contact if not satisfied with the way the practice dealt with their concerns.

We looked at comments and complaints the practice received from 2013. These showed the practice responded to concerns appropriately and discussed outcomes with staff to share learning and improve the service. We saw they had an ethos which valued comments from patients and a protocol to respond to concerns and complaints quickly and constructively.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

The principal dentist had overall responsibility for the management and clinical leadership of the practice. The practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the service. Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities.

The practice had policies, procedures and risk assessments to support the management of the service and to protect patients and staff. These included arrangements to monitor the quality of the service and make improvements.

The practice had information governance arrangements and staff were aware of the importance of these in protecting patients' personal information.

Leadership, openness and transparency

Staff were aware of the duty of candour requirements to be open, honest and apologetic to patients if anything went wrong.

Staff told us there was an open, no blame culture at the practice. They said the principal dentist and the practice manager encouraged them to raise any issues and felt confident they could do this. They knew who to raise any issues with and told us both the principal dentist and the practice manager were approachable, would listen to their concerns and act appropriately. The principal dentist discussed concerns at staff meetings and it was clear the practice worked as a team and dealt with issues professionally.

The practice held meetings where staff could raise any concerns and discuss clinical and non-clinical updates. Immediate discussions were arranged to share urgent information.

Learning and improvement

The practice had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included audits of dental care records, X-rays and infection prevention and control. They had clear records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.

The principal dentist and the practice manager showed a commitment to learning and improvement and valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff. The practice had not undertaken staff appraisals. Staff told us they were able to discuss any learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development with the practice management team. The practice manager confirmed discussions with staff had not been recorded. We saw evidence of the process due to be introduced at the practice, which included the development of personal development plans for all staff and appraisals which would support staff training needs, well-being and development.

Staff told us they completed mandatory training, including medical emergencies and basic life support, each year. The General Dental Council requires clinical staff to complete continuous professional development. Staff told us the practice provided support and encouragement for them to do so.

Practice seeks and acts on feedback from its patients, the public and staff

The practice used patient surveys and verbal comments to obtain staff and patients' views about the service. Patients were encouraged to complete the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT). This is a national programme to allow patients to provide feedback on NHS services they have used. We saw that the results from both the 2016 and 2017 patient satisfaction survey were positive.