

Dr. Indra Rampersad

# Berwick Smile Dental Care

## Inspection report

57-63 West End  
Tweedmouth  
Berwick Upon Tweed  
TD15 2HE  
Tel: 01289305205  
[www.berwicksmile.co.uk](http://www.berwicksmile.co.uk)

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### Overall summary

We carried out this announced focussed inspection on 5 August 2021 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 Care Quality Commission, (CQC), inspector who was supported by a specialist dental adviser.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we asked the following three questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- 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 this practice was providing safe care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

##### **Are services effective?**

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

##### **Are services well-led?**

# Summary of findings

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

## Background

Berwick Smile Dental Care is in Berwick Upon Tweed and provides private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

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

The dental team includes three dentists, six dental nurses, one dental hygienist and a communication coordinator. The practice has three treatment rooms.

The practice is owned by an individual who is the principal dentist there. They have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations about how the practice is run.

During the inspection we spoke with one dentist and two dental nurses. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm

## Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared to be visibly clean and well-maintained.
- The provider had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- Improvements could be made to the process for managing the risks associated with fire and the use of radiation.
- The system for ensuring equipment is maintained appropriately was not working effectively.
- The provider had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The provider had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
- The provider had effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked as a team.
- The provider asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided.
- The provider had information governance arrangements.

There were areas where the provider could make improvements. They should:

- Take action to ensure ongoing fire safety management is effective.
- Improve the practice's protocols and procedures for the use of X-ray equipment in compliance with The Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 and Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 and taking into account HPA-CRCE-010 Guidance on the Safe Use of Dental Cone Beam (Computed Tomography).

# Summary of findings

- Improve the practice's systems for checking and monitoring equipment taking into account relevant guidance and ensure that all equipment is well maintained. In particular, the system for ensuring equipment is maintained according to manufacturer's guidance and the relevant regulation.

# Summary of findings

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We asked the following question(s).

Are services safe?	No action	✓
Are services effective?	No action	✓
Are services well-led?	No action	✓

# Are services safe?

## Our findings

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

### **Safety systems and processes, including staff recruitment, equipment and premises and radiography (X-rays)**

Staff had clear systems to keep patients safe.

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 provider had safeguarding policies and procedures to provide staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. We saw evidence that staff had received safeguarding training. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns, including notification to the CQC.

The provider had a system to highlight vulnerable patients and patients who required other support such as with mobility or communication, within dental care records.

The provider had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures. They followed guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices, (HTM 01-05), published by the Department of Health and Social Care. Staff completed infection prevention and control training and received updates as required.

The provider had arrangements for transporting, cleaning, checking, sterilising and storing instruments in line with HTM 01-05. The records showed equipment used by staff for cleaning and sterilising instruments was validated, maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance. *The provider had suitable numbers of dental instruments available for the clinical staff and measures were in place to ensure they were decontaminated and sterilised appropriately.*

The provider had implemented standard operating procedures in line with national guidance on COVID-19. Screening and triaging were undertaken prior to patients attending the premises and immediately upon arrival to identify COVID-19 positive individuals and those who may have been exposed to the virus.

The staff had systems in place to ensure that patient-specific dental appliances were disinfected prior to being sent to a dental laboratory and before treatment was completed.

We saw staff had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems, in line with a risk assessment. We saw evidence hot and cold-water temperature testing was being carried out and dental unit water line management was carried out.

We saw effective cleaning schedules to ensure the practice was kept clean. When we inspected, we saw the practice was visibly clean.

The provider had policies and procedures in place to ensure clinical waste was segregated and stored appropriately in line with guidance.

The infection control lead carried out infection prevention and control audits. The latest audit showed the practice was meeting the required standards.

The provider had a Speak-Up policy. Staff felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

The dentists used dental dam in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment. In instances where dental dam was not used, such as for example refusal by the patient, and where other methods were used to protect the airway, we saw this was documented in the dental care record and a risk assessment completed.

# Are services safe?

The provider had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff and had checks in place for agency and locum staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at two staff recruitment records. These showed the provider followed their recruitment procedure.

We observed that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council and had professional indemnity cover.

There was a system in place to help staff ensure facilities and equipment were safe, and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including electrical and gas appliances. However, we noted the compressor was now overdue its routine pressure vessel examination. This was due to be completed in November 2019. We were told that this had been scheduled on 24 August 2021 as it was due to be carried out in July 2021 but had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. We were told the process for ensuring equipment was maintained appropriately would be reviewed to ensure it covers all equipment.

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements. We saw there were fire extinguishers and fire detection systems throughout the building and fire exits were kept clear. We noted the fire extinguishers and emergency lighting was not regularly checked by staff. We discussed the need to carry out these checks and we were told this would be implemented.

The practice maintained a radiation protection folder with information about how they managed the risks associated with the use of the X-ray equipment. We noted the intra-oral X-ray equipment had been maintained according to the relevant regulations. The practice had a cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) X-ray machine. This had been installed in February 2018 and we saw evidence of the acceptance test and critical examination. We asked if this machine had been subject to a routine test since the installation and we were told it had not. We saw that it had been subject to a service in February 2021.

We saw evidence the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The provider carried out radiography audits every year following current guidance and legislation.

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

## **Risks to patients**

The provider had implemented systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety.

The practice's health and safety policies, procedures and risk assessments were reviewed regularly to help manage potential risk. The provider had current employer's liability insurance.

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. The staff followed the relevant safety regulation when using needles and other sharp dental items. A sharps risk assessment had been undertaken and was updated annually. We noted this risk assessment did not cover the risks associated with the use of matrix bands. We were told this would be updated to include the use of matrix bands.

The provider had a system in place to ensure clinical staff had received appropriate vaccinations, including vaccination to protect them against the Hepatitis B virus, and that the effectiveness of the vaccination was checked.

Staff had an awareness of the risks associated with sepsis. Sepsis prompts for staff and patient information posters were displayed throughout the practice. This helped ensure staff made triage appointments effectively to manage patients who present with dental infection and where necessary refer patients for specialist care.

Staff knew how to respond to a medical emergency and had completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year.

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

# Are services safe?

A dental nurse worked with the dentists and the dental hygienist when they treated patients in line with General Dental Council Standards for the Dental Team.

The provider had risk assessments to minimise the risk that can be caused from substances that are hazardous to health.

## **Information to deliver safe care and treatment**

Staff had the information they needed to deliver safe care and treatment to patients.

We discussed with the dentist how information to deliver safe care and treatment was handled and recorded. We looked at dental care records with clinicians to confirm our findings and observed that individual records were typed and managed in a way that kept patients safe. Dental care records we saw were complete, legible, were kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

The provider had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two-week wait arrangements. These arrangements were initiated by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist.

## **Safe and appropriate use of medicines**

The provider had systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

There was a stock control system of medicines which were held on site. This ensured that medicines did not pass their expiry date and enough medicines were available if required.

The dentists were aware of current guidance with regards to prescribing medicines.

Antimicrobial prescribing audits were carried out. The most recent audit indicated the dentists were following current guidelines.

## **Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements**

The provider had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues. Staff monitored and reviewed incidents. This helped staff to understand risks which led to effective risk management systems in the practice as well as safety improvements.

Where there had been a safety incident, we saw this was investigated, documented and discussed with the rest of the dental practice team to prevent such occurrences happening again.

The provider had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts. Staff learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts. We saw they were shared with the team and acted upon if required.

# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

## Our findings

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

### **Effective needs assessment, care and treatment**

The practice had systems to keep dental professionals up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw clinicians assessed patients' needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

The practice offered dental implants. These were placed by two of the dentists at the practice who had undergone appropriate post-graduate training in the provision of dental implants. We saw the provision of dental implants was in accordance with national guidance.

### **Helping patients to live healthier lives**

The practice provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health in line with the Delivering Better Oral Health toolkit.

The dentists prescribed high concentration fluoride products if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them.

The clinicians where applicable, discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and diet with patients during appointments. The practice had a selection of dental products for sale and provided leaflets to help patients with their oral health.

The dentist described to us the procedures they used to improve the outcomes for patients with gum disease. This involved providing patients with preventative advice and recording detailed charts of the patient's gum condition.

Records showed patients with severe gum disease were recalled at more frequent intervals for review and to reinforce home care preventative advice.

### **Consent to care and treatment**

Staff obtained consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance.

The practice team understood the importance of obtaining and recording patients' consent to treatment. The staff were aware of the need to obtain proof of legal guardianship or Power of Attorney for patients who lacked capacity or for children who are looked after. The dentists gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these, so they could make informed decisions. We saw this documented in patients' records. 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 might not be able to make informed decisions. The policy also referred to Gillick competence, by which a child under the age of 16 years of age may give consent for themselves in certain circumstances. Staff were aware of the need to consider this when treating young people under 16 years of age.

Staff described how they involved patients' relatives or carers when appropriate and made sure they had enough time to explain treatment options clearly.

### **Monitoring care and treatment**

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.



# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

The provider had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. Staff kept records of the results of these audits, the resulting action plans and improvements.

## **Effective staffing**

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles.

Staff new to the practice had a structured induction programme. We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

## **Co-ordinating care and treatment**

Staff worked together and with other health and social care professionals to deliver effective care and treatment.

The dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care for treatment the practice did not provide.

# Are services well-led?

## Our findings

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

### **Leadership capacity and capability**

We found leaders had the capacity, values and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

Leaders were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of the service. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.

Leaders at all levels were visible and approachable. Staff told us they worked closely with them to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.

We saw the provider had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the practice.

### **Culture**

The practice had a culture of high-quality sustainable care.

Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice.

Staff discussed their training needs at appraisals. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development. We saw evidence of completed appraisals in the staff folders.

The staff focused on the needs of patients.

We saw the provider had systems in place to deal with staff poor performance.

Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated when responding to incidents. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Duty of Candour.

Staff could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so, and they had confidence that these would be addressed.

### **Governance and management**

Staff had clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

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

The provider had a system of clinical governance in place which included policies, protocols and procedures that were accessible to all members of staff and were reviewed on a regular basis.

We saw there were processes for managing risks, issues and performance. However, the system for ensuring equipment is serviced and maintained according to the relevant regulations could be improved. This was highlighted by the fact that the compressor and CBCT machine were overdue their routine test examinations.

### **Appropriate and accurate information**

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

Quality and operational information, for example surveys, audits, external body reviews were used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.

# Are services well-led?

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

## **Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners**

Staff involved patients, the public, staff and external partners to support the service.

The provider used patient surveys and online feedback to obtain patients' views about the service. We reviewed a selection of this feedback and it was all very positive about the care and treatment which had been provided.

The provider gathered feedback from staff through meetings and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on.

## **Continuous improvement and innovation**

The provider had systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

The provider had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included audits of dental care records, radiographs and infection prevention and control. Staff kept records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.

The principal dentist showed a commitment to learning and improvement and valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff.

Staff completed 'highly recommended' training as per General Dental Council professional standards. The provider supported and encouraged staff to complete continuing professional development.