

Balcombe Practice Limited

The Balcombe Practice Limited

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 27 June 2018 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 a specialist dental adviser.

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

The Balcombe Practice Limited is in the London Borough of Enfield and provides NHS and private treatment to adults and children.

The dental team includes a principal dentist, three dentists, a periodontist an oral surgeon, an endodontist, three dental nurses, three hygienists and a receptionist

Summary of findings

The practice is owned by an organisation and as a condition of registration must have a person registered with the Care Quality Commission as the registered manager. 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 The Balcombe Practice limited was the principal dentist.

On the day of inspection, we collected 42 CQC comment cards filled in by patients.

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

The practice is open:

- Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm
- Saturdays 8am to 1pm

Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared 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 practice was providing preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system met patients' needs.
- The practice had effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked well as a team.
- The practice asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided.
- The practice dealt with complaints positively and efficiently.
- The practice had suitable information governance arrangements.

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.

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 dentist assessed patients' needs and provided care and treatment in line with recognised guidance. Patients described the treatment they received as outstanding, caring and professional. The dentist 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 42 people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were respectful, friendly and understanding

They said that they were given helpful, detailed and clear 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



Summary of findings

Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

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 and face to face interpreter services and 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.

No action



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 that were 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

Safety systems and processes (including staff recruitment, Equipment & premises and Radiography (X-rays))

The practice 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 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, including notification to the CQC. Details of the local reporting authority were readily available to all staff.

There was a system to highlight vulnerable patients in their records e.g. adults where there were safeguarding concerns, people with a learning disability or a mental health condition, or who required other support such as with mobility or communication.

The practice also had a system to identify adults that were in other vulnerable situations e.g. those who were known to have experienced modern day slavery or female genital mutilation.

The practice had a whistleblowing policy. Staff told us that they felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of reprimand.

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

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

The practice had a staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff; and had the appropriate checks in place for agency and locum staff. We looked at six staff recruitment records. These showed that the practice followed their recruitment procedure.

We noted that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover.

The practice ensured that facilities and equipment were safe and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including electrical and gas appliances. We saw records confirming the servicing, maintenance and regular checks of these appliances.

Records showed that fire detection equipment, such as smoke detectors and emergency lighting, were regularly tested and firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers, were regularly serviced.

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

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

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

Risks to patients

There were systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety.

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

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. The staff followed relevant safety regulation when using needles and other sharp dental items. A sharps risk assessment had been undertaken and was updated annually.

The provider had a system in place to ensure clinical staff had received appropriate vaccinations, including the vaccination to protect them against the Hepatitis B virus, and that the effectiveness of the vaccination was checked. Staff knew how to respond to a medical emergency and had completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support (BLS) every year.

Are services safe?

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.

A dental nurse worked with the dentist when they treated patients in line with GDC Standards for the Dental Team. A risk assessment was in place for when the dental hygienist worked without chairside support.

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

The practice 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 (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health. Staff completed infection prevention and control training and received updates as required.

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

The practice had in place systems and protocols to ensure that any dental laboratory work was disinfected prior to being sent to a dental laboratory and before the dental laboratory work was fitted in a patient's mouth.

The practice had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems, in line with a risk assessment. All recommendations had been actioned and records of water testing and dental unit water line management were in place.

We saw cleaning schedules for the premises. Cleaning staff attended daily and information was displayed in each surgery relating to what needed to be covered on each visit. The practice was clean when we inspected and patients confirmed that this was usual.

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

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

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 a sample of dental care records to confirm our findings and noted that individual records were written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. Dental care records we saw were accurate, complete, legible, kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 requirements

Patient referrals to other service providers contained specific information which allowed appropriate and timely referrals in line with practice protocols and current guidance.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

The dentist was aware of current guidance with regards to prescribing medicines.

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

Track record on safety

The practice had a good safety record.

There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues; these were updated regularly. The practice monitored and reviewed safety incidents. All incidents were investigated, documented and discussed with the rest of the dental practice team to prevent such occurrences happening again in the future. This helped it to understand risks that would lead to safety improvements.

In the previous 12 months there had been one safety incident.

The incident was investigated, documented and discussed with the rest of the dental practice team to prevent such occurrences happening again in the future.

Lessons learned and improvements

Are services safe?

The practice learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The practice learned and shared lessons, identified themes and took action to improve safety in the practice.

There was a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts. The practice learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw that the dentists assessed 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 a visiting specialist who had undergone appropriate post-graduate training in this speciality. The provision of dental implants was in accordance with national guidance.

The practice had access to a microscope to enhance the delivery of care. For example, one of the dentists was a specialist in endodontics (root canal therapy). The dentist used a specialised operating microscope to assist with carrying out root canal treatment. The dentist also provided advice and guidance on endodontics to the other dentists in the practice.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

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

The dentist told us that they prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them.

The dentist told us that where applicable 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.

The dentist and hygienist described to us the procedures they used to improve the outcome of periodontal treatment. This involved preventative advice, taking plaque and gum bleeding scores and detailed charts of the patient's gum condition. Patients with more severe gum disease were recalled at more frequent intervals to review their compliance and to reinforce home care preventative advice or referred to the inhouse periodontist.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice 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 dentists told us that they gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these so that they could make informed decisions. Patients confirmed that 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, by which a child under the age of 16 years of age can consent for themselves. The staff were aware of the need to consider this when treating young people under 16 years of age.

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 dentist assessed patients' treatment needs in line with recognised guidance.

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

Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles. Staff new to the practice had a period of induction based on a structured induction programme. We confirmed that clinical staff completed the continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

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Staff told us they discussed training needs at annual appraisals and one to one meetings. We saw evidence of completed appraisals and how the practice addressed the training requirements of staff.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

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

The principal dentist confirmed that they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide.

The practice had systems and processes to identify, manage, follow up and where required refer patients for specialist care when presenting with bacterial infections.

The practice also had systems and processes for referring 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 all referrals to make sure they were dealt with promptly.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

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

Patients commented positively that staff were, caring and warm. We saw that staff treated patients respectfully, appropriately and kindly and were friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

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

Privacy and dignity

The practice respected and promoted patients' privacy and dignity.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. The layout of reception and waiting areas provided privacy when reception staff were dealing with patients. 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 patients' 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.

They stored paper records securely.

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients be involved in decisions about their care and were aware of the

Accessible Information Standards (a requirement to make sure that patients and their carers can access and understand the information they are given):

- Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language. Patients were also told about multi-lingual staff that might be able to support them.
- Staff communicated with patients in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.

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.

The practice's website and information leaflet provided patients with information about the range of treatments available at the practice.

The dentist we spoke with described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included for example, pictures, models and X-ray images,

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice took account of patients' needs and preferences and organised and delivered its services to meet their needs.

Staff were clear on the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care.

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

The practice had made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. These included step free access and a hearing loop,

Timely access to services

Patients could access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs.

The practice displayed its opening hours in the premises and in the practice leaflet.

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. Patient's feedback indicated that 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.

They took part in an emergency on-call arrangement with 111 out of hour's service.

The practice website, information leaflet, answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open. Patients comment cards confirmed that they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice took complaints and concerns seriously and responded to them appropriately to improve the quality of care.

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 principal dentist was responsible for dealing with these, any formal or informal comments or concerns were dealt with straight away so that patients received a quick response.

The principal dentist told us that they aimed to settle complaints in-house and invited patients to speak with them in person to discuss these. A copy of the complaints procedure and information about organisations patients could contact if not satisfied with the way the practice dealt with their concerns, was displayed in the patient waiting area.

We looked at comments, compliments and complaints the practice received in the past 12 months. These showed that the practice responded to concerns appropriately and discussed outcomes with staff to share learning and improve the service.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Leadership capacity and capability

The principal dentist had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care. They were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services.

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

Vision and strategy

There was a clear vision and set of values. The practice had a realistic strategy and supporting business plans to achieve priorities. The plan outlined planned areas of development including additional services for patients and increasing staffing for existing services already provided.

The strategy was in line with health and social priorities across the region. The practice planned its services to meet the needs of the practice population.

Culture

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

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

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

Governance and management

There were clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

The principal dentist had overall responsibility for the management, clinical leadership of the practice and the practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the service. Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities. Staff held lead roles included fire safety, infection control, health and safety and first aid.

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.

There were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

Appropriate and accurate information

The practice acted on appropriate and accurate information.

Quality and operational information was used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.

The practice 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

The practice involved patients, the public, staff and external partners to support high-quality sustainable services.

The practice used patient surveys, comment cards and verbal comments to obtain staff and patients' views about the service. We saw examples of suggestions from patients and staff the practice had acted on.

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. The results were displayed every month in the waiting area for patients to review.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings, surveys, 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

There were systems and processes for learning and continuous improvement.

The practice had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included

Are services well-led?

audits of dental care records, radiographs 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 showed a commitment to learning and improvement and valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff.

All staff had annual appraisals. They discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development. We saw evidence of completed appraisals in the staff folders.

Staff told us they completed 'highly recommended' training as per General Dental Council professional standards. This included undertaking in-house medical emergencies and basic life support training annually.

The General Dental Council also requires clinical staff to complete continuing professional development (CPD). Staff told us the practice provided support and encouragement for them to do so.