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The Dental Centre

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced, comprehensive inspection on 25 March 2024 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 practice 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 advisor.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following 5 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:

- The dental clinic appeared clean and well-maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to manage risks for patients, staff, equipment and the premises.
- Safeguarding processes were in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- Clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect. Staff took care to protect patients' privacy and personal information.

Summary of findings

- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system worked efficiently to respond to patients' needs.
- The frequency of appointments was agreed between the dentist and the patient, giving due regard to National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.
- There was effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved, supported and worked as a team.
- Staff and patients were asked for feedback about the services provided.
- Complaints were dealt with positively and efficiently.
- The practice had information governance arrangements.

Background

The Dental Centre is in Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham and provides NHS and some private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

There is step free access to the practice for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. A passenger lift provides access to the first floor of the building. Car parking spaces, including dedicated parking for disabled people, are available near the practice. The practice has made reasonable adjustments to support patients with access requirements.

The dental team includes 5 dentists, including a foundation dentist, 8 dental nurses, including 4 trainee dental nurses, 1 dental therapist, and 1 receptionist. The head nurse also acts as the practice manager. The practice has 6 treatment rooms.

During the inspection we spoke with 2 dentists, including the provider, 4 dental nurses, including the head nurse and 1 receptionist. The head nurse and provider also assisted throughout the inspection. We looked at practice policies, procedures and other records to assess how the service is managed.

The practice is open: Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm.

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?	No action ✓
Are services effective?	No action ✓
Are services caring?	No action ✓
Are services responsive to people's needs?	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)

The practice had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. Information and guidance regarding safeguarding was easily accessible to staff at the practice.

The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance, although we identified some issues for action. We saw that local anaesthetic was not being stored in sterile blister packs in dental surgeries and in the stock cupboard. We were assured that these items would be stored appropriately going forward and following this inspection we were sent evidence to demonstrate that a discussion had been held with staff to reinforce the need to store local anaesthetic appropriately.

The practice had procedures to reduce the risk of Legionella, or other bacteria, developing in water systems, in line with a risk assessment carried out in October 2022.

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

The practice appeared clean and there was an effective schedule in place to ensure it was kept clean. Logs were available to demonstrate cleaning tasks completed.

The practice had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We were told that a new disclosure and barring service check would be completed for all staff upon employment at the practice.

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

The practice ensured equipment was safe to use, maintained and serviced according to manufacturers' instructions. The practice ensured the facilities were maintained in accordance with regulations. A passenger lift provided access from the ground to first floor of the practice. We saw that regular inspections were completed, and that six-monthly servicing had been scheduled in line with Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 regulations (LOLER)

A fire safety risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements. The management of fire safety was effective.

The practice had arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment and the required radiation protection information was available.

Risks to patients

The practice had implemented systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient and staff safety. This included sharps safety, sepsis awareness and lone working. We viewed risk assessments which covered a range of potential hazards in the practice and detailed control measures that had been put in place to reduce any risks.

Emergency equipment and medicines were available and checked in accordance with national guidance.

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

The practice had risk assessments to minimise the risk that could be caused from substances that are hazardous to health. Safety data information was available for all materials used including cleaning products.

Are services safe?

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Patient care records were complete, legible, kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

The practice had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national 2-week wait arrangements.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The practice had systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines. Antimicrobial prescribing audits were carried out.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The practice had systems to review and investigate incidents and accidents. The practice had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.

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.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

The practice provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.

Staff were aware of and involved with national oral health campaigns and local schemes which supported patients to live healthier lives, for example, local stop smoking services. They directed patients to these schemes when appropriate.

Patient records included details of advice given in relation to diet, oral hygiene instructions and guidance on the effects of alcohol consumption on oral health. Dentists discussed the effects of smoking on oral health with patients as necessary and directed patients to local stop smoking services when appropriate.

Oral health care products were on sale for patients such as dental floss, interdental brushes and mouthwash.

Consent to care and treatment

Staff obtained patients' consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance. They understood their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

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 patient care records in line with recognised guidance.

Staff conveyed an understanding of supporting more vulnerable members of society such as patients living with dementia or adults and children with a learning disability. Although staff had not undertaken training in autism and learning disability awareness to improve their understanding of patients living with these conditions. Following this inspection, we were sent evidence to demonstrate that staff had completed this training.

We saw evidence the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits 6-monthly following current guidance.

Effective staffing

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

Newly appointed staff told us that they had a structured induction which included shadowing another member of staff, training and familiarising themselves with the practice's policies and procedures and we saw documentation for some staff to demonstrate this. Staff were given a copy of the practice handbook.

Clinical staff completed 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.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

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

Are services caring?

Our findings

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

Kindness, respect and compassion

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

On the day of inspection, we reviewed a range of patient feedback. We looked at practice surveys and online reviews. All feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction with the treatment and service received at The Dental Centre. The results of satisfaction surveys were discussed with staff during practice meetings.

Staff were observed to be friendly, caring and helpful to patients when speaking with them in person and over the telephone.

Privacy and dignity

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Computer screens were not visible to the public at reception and there was an area available away from reception where patients could have a private discussion if requested.

The practice had installed closed-circuit television to improve security for patients and staff. Relevant policies and protocols were in place.

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

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about their care and gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment.

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

The dentists explained the methods they used to help patients understand their treatment options. These included, photographs, study models, videos and X-ray images.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Our findings

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

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs and preferences.

Staff were clear about the importance of providing emotional support to patients when delivering care. We were told that reception staff would chat to patients to make them feel at ease. A note would be put on patient records to inform the dentist that the patient was nervous. Nervous patients could be offered appointments at a quieter time of the day.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments, including level access to the ground floor with a passenger lift to gain access to the dental practice reception, waiting room and treatment rooms which were located on the first floor. Staff had carried out a disability access audit and had formulated an action plan to continually improve access for patients.

Timely access to services

The practice displayed its opening hours and provided information on their website and patient information leaflet.

Patients could access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs. The practice had an appointment system to respond to patients' needs. The frequency of appointments was agreed between the dentist and the patient, giving due regard to NICE guidelines. Patients had enough time during their appointment and did not feel rushed.

The practice's 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 who needed an urgent appointment were offered one in a timely manner. Patients with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice responded to concerns and complaints appropriately. Staff discussed outcomes to share learning and improve the service. Information on how to make a complaint was available to patients in the waiting room.

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

The provider and practice staff demonstrated a transparent and open culture in relation to people's safety.

There was strong leadership with emphasis on people's safety and continually striving to improve.

Systems and processes were embedded, and staff worked together in such a way that the inspection did not highlight any significant issues or omissions.

The information and evidence presented during the inspection process was clear and well documented.

We saw the practice had effective processes to support and develop staff with additional roles and responsibilities, staff were delegated an area of responsibility within their capability.

Culture

Staff could show how they ensured high-quality sustainable services and demonstrated improvements over time.

Staff stated they felt respected and supported. Staff spoke positively about the supportive management, effective teamworking and said that the provider and management were approachable, helpful and understanding, they felt valued and happy in their work.

Staff discussed their training needs during annual appraisals. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development.

The practice had arrangements to ensure staff training was up-to-date and reviewed at the required intervals although there was some scope for improvement. Staff completed training regarding learning disability and autism awareness following this inspection.

Governance and management

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

The practice had a governance system 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 clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

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

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

Staff gathered feedback from patients and demonstrated a commitment to acting on feedback. Patients were able to complete the Friends and Family Test and patient feedback forms, anonymously if required and left in the practice suggestions box in the waiting room. The results of the most recent patient satisfaction survey recorded positive comments.

Are services well-led?

Feedback from staff was obtained through meetings and informal discussions. Staff said that there was a very open culture at the practice and confirmed that they were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on where appropriate.

The practice was also a member of a good practice certification scheme.

Continuous improvement and innovation

The practice had systems and processes for learning, quality assurance and continuous improvement. These included audits of patient care records, disability access, radiographs, antimicrobial prescribing, and infection prevention and control. Staff kept records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.