

Mr. Steven Dick

Chislehurst Dental Care

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 14 January 2016 to ask the practice the following key questions; Are services safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led?

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

Chislehurst Dental Care is located in the London Borough of Bromley. The premises are situated in a parade of shops and consist of a ground floor and basement. There is a treatment room, decontamination room and reception area on the ground floor. There is a storage room and patient toilet in the basement.

The practice provides private services to adults and children. The practice offers a range of dental services including routine examinations and treatment, veneers and crowns and bridges.

The staff structure of the practice consists of a principal dentist, three dental nurses (one of whom also works as a receptionist) and a receptionist.

The practice opening hours are on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8.30am to 5.30pm, Wednesday from 8.30am to 6.00pm, and Friday from 8.30am to 5.00pm.

The principal dentist is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as an individual. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons 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 inspection took place over one day and was carried out by a CQC inspector and a dental specialist advisor.

Summary of findings

Fifty-one people provided feedback about the service. Patients were positive about the care they received from the practice. They were complimentary about the friendly and caring attitude of the dental staff.

Our key findings were:

- Patients' needs were assessed and care was planned in line with current guidance such as from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).
- There were effective systems in place to reduce and minimise the risk and spread of infection.
- The practice had effective safeguarding processes in place and staff understood their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children living in vulnerable circumstances.
- Staff reported incidents and kept records of these which the practice used for shared learning.
- Equipment, such as the air compressor, autoclave (steriliser), fire extinguishers, and X-ray equipment had all been checked for effectiveness and had been regularly serviced.
- Patients indicated that they felt they were listened to and that they received good care from a helpful and caring practice team.
- The practice ensured staff maintained the necessary skills and competence to support the needs of patients.
- The practice had implemented clear procedures for managing comments, concerns or complaints.
- The provider had a clear vision for the practice and staff told us they were well supported by the management team.
- Governance arrangements and audits were effective in improving the quality and safety of the services.

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 in place to minimise the risks associated with providing dental services. There was a safeguarding lead and staff understood their responsibilities in terms of identifying and reporting any potential abuse. There were systems in place for identifying, investigating and learning from incidents relating to the safety of patients and staff members. The practice had policies and protocols, which staff were following, for the management of infection control, medical emergencies and dental radiography. We found the equipment used in the practice was well maintained and checked for effectiveness.

Are services effective?

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

The practice provided evidence-based care in accordance with relevant, published guidance, for example, from the General Dental Council (GDC). The practice monitored patients' oral health and gave appropriate health promotion advice. Staff explained treatment options to ensure that patients could make informed decisions about any treatment. The practice worked well with other providers and followed up on the outcomes of referrals made to other providers.

Staff engaged in continuous professional development (CPD) and were meeting all of the training requirements of the General Dental Council (GDC). Staff had received appraisals within the past year to discuss their role and identify additional training needs.

Are services caring?

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

We received positive feedback from patients through comment cards and by speaking with patients on the day of the inspection. Patients felt that the staff were kind and caring; they told us that they were treated with dignity and respect at all times. We found that dental care records were stored securely and patient confidentiality was well maintained.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

Patients generally had good access to appointments, including emergency appointments, which were available on the same day.

There was a complaints policy in place; no complaints had been received in the past year. Patient feedback, through the use of ad hoc forms and an annual patient satisfaction survey, was used to improve the quality of the service provided.

The culture of the practice promoted equality of access for all. The needs of people with some visual or hearing difficulties had been considered and additional provision of information, for example, through the use of large print information leaflets, had been developed. A Disability Discrimination Act audit had been carried out.

Are services well-led?

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

Summary of findings

The practice had robust clinical governance and risk management structures in place. These were well maintained and disseminated effectively to all members of staff. A system of audits was used to monitor and improve performance.

Staff described an open and transparent culture where they were comfortable raising and discussing concerns with the principal dentist. They were confident in the abilities of the principal dentist to address any issues as they arose.

Chislehurst Dental Care

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the practice was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

We carried out an announced, comprehensive inspection on 14 January 2016. The inspection took place over one day and was carried out by a CQC inspector and a dental specialist advisor.

We reviewed information received from the provider prior to the inspection. During our inspection we reviewed policy documents and spoke with three members of staff. We conducted a tour of the practice and looked at the storage arrangements for emergency medicines and equipment. One of the dental nurses demonstrated how they carried out decontamination procedures of dental instruments.

Fifty-one people provided feedback about the service. Patients were positive about the care they received from the practice. They were complimentary about the friendly and caring attitude of the dental staff.

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 therefore formed the framework for the areas we looked at during the inspection.

Are services safe?

Our findings

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

There was an effective system in place for reporting and learning from incidents. Thirteen incidents had been recorded in the past year including faulty equipment, damage to the premises, concerns about laboratory work, as well as incidents involving patients directly. There was a practice policy for staff to follow for the reporting of incidents, which had been followed in these cases.

We found that incidents had been appropriately investigated. Actions taken at the time and any lessons that could be learnt to prevent a recurrence were noted and discussed at the next available staff meeting. Learning points were also shared at staff meetings. For example, there had been a flood in the basement in the past year due to a blocked storm drain. Staff had discussed this at a meeting and agreed that they would now pro-actively check the drain during heavy rain in order to ensure that it was cleared before it became blocked.

Staff understood the process for accident reporting, including the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). There had not been any such incidents in the past 12 months.

The principal dentist was aware of the Duty of Candour. They told us they were committed to operating in an open and transparent manner; they would always inform patients if anything had gone wrong and offer an apology in relation to this. [Duty of candour is a requirement under The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 on a registered person who must act in an open and transparent way with relevant persons in relation to care and treatment provided to service users in carrying on a regulated activity].

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

The principal dentist was the named practice lead for child and adult safeguarding. They were able to describe the types of behaviour a child might display that would alert them to possible signs of abuse or neglect. They also had a good awareness of the issues around vulnerable elderly patients who presented with dementia.

The practice had a well-designed safeguarding policy which referred to national guidance. Information about the

local authority contacts for safeguarding concerns was held in a file with the safeguarding policy. The staff we spoke with were aware of the location of this file and located it promptly. There was evidence in staff files showing that staff had been trained in safeguarding adults and children to an appropriate level.

The practice had carried out a range of risk assessments and implemented policies and protocols with a view to keeping staff and patients safe. For example, we asked staff about the prevention of needle stick injuries. Following administration of a local anaesthetic to a patient, needles were not resheathed using the hands but instead a 'safer sharps' device was used to minimise needle stick injuries. The staff we spoke with demonstrated a clear understanding of the practice policy and protocol with respect to handling sharps and needle stick injuries. There was also a written risk assessment, in line with Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013.

The practice followed other national guidelines on patient safety. For example, the practice used rubber dam for root canal treatments in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society. (A rubber dam is a thin, rectangular sheet, usually latex rubber, used in dentistry to isolate the operative site from the rest of the mouth).

Medical emergencies

The practice had arrangements in place to deal with medical emergencies. The practice had an automated external defibrillator (AED), oxygen and other related items, such as manual breathing aids and portable suction in line with the Resuscitation Council UK guidelines (An AED is a portable electronic device that analyses life threatening irregularities of the heart and delivers an electrical shock to attempt to restore a normal heart rhythm).

The practice held emergency medicines in line with guidance issued by the British National Formulary for dealing with common medical emergencies in a dental practice. The emergency medicines were all in date and stored securely with emergency oxygen in a location known to all staff. Staff received annual training in using the emergency equipment. The staff we spoke with were all aware of the location of the emergency equipment.

Staff recruitment

Are services safe?

The staff structure of the practice consists of a principal dentist, three dental nurses (one of whom also works as a receptionist) and a receptionist.

All of the staff had been working at the practice for over ten years. There was a recruitment policy in place which stated that all relevant checks would be carried out to confirm that any person being recruited was suitable for the role. This included the use of an application form, interview, review of employment history, evidence of relevant qualifications, the checking of references and a check of registration with the General Dental Council.

It was practice policy to carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for all members of staff prior to employment and periodically thereafter. We saw evidence that all members of staff had a DBS check between 2010 and 2012 (The DBS checks identify whether a person has a criminal record or is on an official list of people barred from working in roles where they may have contact with children or adults who may be vulnerable).

Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

There were arrangements in place to deal with foreseeable emergencies. We saw that there was a health and safety policy in place. The practice had been assessed for risk of fire and there were documents showing that fire extinguishers had been recently serviced.

There were arrangements in place to meet the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002 (COSHH) regulations. There was a COSHH file where risks to patients, staff and visitors associated with hazardous substances were identified. Actions were described to minimise identified risks. COSHH products were securely stored. Staff were aware of the COSHH file and of the strategies in place to minimise the risks associated with these products.

The practice had a system in place to respond promptly to Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) advice. MHRA alerts, and alerts from other agencies, were received by the principal dentist via email. These were disseminated at staff meetings, where appropriate.

There was a business continuity plan in place. There was an arrangement in place to use another practice for emergency appointments in the event that the practice's

own premises became unfit for use. Key contacts in the local area were displayed in the staff room for prompt access in the event that a maintenance problem occurred at the premises.

Infection control

There were effective systems in place to reduce the risk and spread of infection within the practice. The principal dentist and one of the dental nurses were the infection control leads. There was an infection control policy which included the decontamination of dental instruments, hand hygiene, use of protective equipment, and the segregation and disposal of clinical waste. The practice had carried out practice-wide infection control audits every six months and found high standards throughout the practice. We noted that the last audit had been completed in December 2015.

We observed that the premises appeared clean and tidy. Clear zoning demarked clean from dirty areas in all of the treatment rooms. Hand-washing facilities were available, including wall-mounted liquid soap, hand gels and paper towels in the treatment room, decontamination room and toilet. Hand-washing protocols were also displayed appropriately in various areas of the practice.

We asked one of the dental nurses to describe to us the end-to-end process of infection control procedures at the practice. The protocols described demonstrated that the practice had followed the guidance on decontamination and infection control issued by the Department of Health, namely 'Health Technical Memorandum 01-05 - Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM 01-05)'.

The dental nurse explained the decontamination of the general treatment room environment following the treatment of a patient. We saw that there were written guidelines for staff to follow for ensuring that the working surfaces, dental unit and dental chair were decontaminated. This included the treatment of the dental water lines.

We checked the contents of the drawers in the treatment rooms. These were well stocked, clean, ordered and free from clutter. All of the instruments were pouched. It was obvious which items were for single use and these items were clearly new. The treatment room had the appropriate personal protective equipment, such as gloves and aprons, available for staff and patient use.

Are services safe?

The dental water lines were maintained to prevent the growth and spread of Legionella bacteria (Legionella is a term for particular bacteria which can contaminate water systems in buildings). The practice manager described the method they used which was in line with current HTM 01-05 guidelines. A Legionella risk assessment had been carried out by an external contractor in 2015. The practice was following recommendations to reduce the risk of Legionella, for example, through the regular testing of the water temperatures. A record had been kept of the outcome of these checks on a monthly basis.

The practice used a decontamination room for instrument processing. In accordance with HTM 01-05 guidance, an instrument transportation system had been implemented to ensure the safe movement of instruments between treatment rooms and the decontamination room which ensured the risk of infection spread was minimised. The process of cleaning, inspection, sterilisation, packaging and storage of instruments followed a well-defined system of zoning from dirty through to clean.

Instruments were placed in washer disinfectant prior to inspection under a light magnification device. Items were then placed in an autoclave (steriliser). When instruments had been sterilized, they were pouched and stored appropriately, until required. All pouches we checked had a date of sterilisation and an expiry date.

We saw that there were systems in place to ensure that the autoclaves and washer disinfectant were working effectively. These included, for example, the automatic control test and steam penetration test for the autoclave. It was observed that the data sheets used to record the essential daily validation checks of the sterilisation cycles, as well as weekly and monthly tests for the washer disinfectant, were complete and up to date.

The segregation and storage of dental waste was in line with current guidelines laid down by the Department of Health. We observed that sharps containers, clinical waste bags and municipal waste were properly maintained. The practice used a contractor to remove dental waste from the practice. Waste was stored in a separate, locked location within the practice prior to collection by the contractor. Waste consignment notices were available for inspection.

Environmental cleaning was carried out using cleaning equipment in accordance with the national colour coding scheme. The effectiveness of the environmental cleaning was assessed through the use of an audit; the last audit of the cleaning arrangements had taken place in March 2015.

Staff files showed that staff regularly attended training courses in infection control. Clinical staff were also required to produce evidence to show that they had been effectively vaccinated against Hepatitis B to prevent the spread of infection between staff and patients. (People who are likely to come into contact with blood products, or are at increased risk of needle-stick injuries should receive these vaccinations to minimise risks of blood borne infections.)

Equipment and medicines

We found that the equipment used at the practice was regularly serviced and well maintained. For example, we saw documents showing that the air compressor, fire equipment and X-ray equipment had all been inspected and serviced. Portable appliance testing (PAT) had been completed in accordance with good practice guidance in June 2015. PAT is the name of a process during which electrical appliances are routinely checked for safety.

The expiry dates of medicines, oxygen and equipment were monitored using weekly and monthly check sheets which enabled the staff to replace out-of-date drugs and equipment promptly. Dental care products requiring refrigeration, such as items used for teeth whitening, were stored in a fridge in line with the manufacturer's guidance. The practice monitored the temperature of the fridge daily to ensure that these items were stored at the correct temperature.

Radiography (X-rays)

There was a well-maintained radiation protection file in line with the Ionising Radiation Regulations (IRR) 1999 and Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000 (IRMER). This file contained the names of the Radiation Protection Advisor and the Radiation Protection Supervisor as well as the necessary documentation pertaining to the maintenance of the X-ray equipment. Included in the file were the critical examination packs for the X-ray set along with the three-yearly maintenance logs and a copy of the local rules. We also saw evidence that staff had completed radiation training. Audits on X-ray quality were undertaken at regular intervals.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The principal dentist carried out consultations, assessments and treatment in line with recognised general professional guidelines and General Dental Council (GDC) guidelines. The principal dentist described to us how they carried out their assessment. The assessment began with the patient completing a medical history questionnaire covering any health conditions, medicines being taken and any allergies suffered. We saw evidence that the medical history was updated at subsequent visits. This was followed by an examination covering the condition of a patient's teeth, gums and soft tissues and the signs of mouth cancer. Patients were made aware of the condition of their oral health and whether it had changed since the last appointment.

The patient's dental care record was updated with the proposed treatment after discussing options with the patient. A treatment plan was then given to each patient and this included details of the costs involved. Patients were monitored through follow-up appointments and these were scheduled in line with their individual requirements.

We checked a sample of dental care records to confirm the findings. These showed that the findings of the assessment and details of the treatment carried out were recorded appropriately. We saw details of the condition of the gums were noted using the basic periodontal examination (BPE) scores and soft tissues lining the mouth. (The BPE is a simple and rapid screening tool that is used to indicate the level of examination needed and to provide basic guidance on treatment need). These were carried out, where appropriate, during a dental health assessment.

Health promotion & prevention

The practice promoted the maintenance of good oral health through the use of health promotion and disease prevention strategies. The principal dentist told us they discussed oral health with their patients, for example, effective tooth brushing or dietary advice. They were aware of the need to discuss a general preventive agenda with their patients and referred to the advice supplied in the Department of Health publication 'Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention'. (This is an evidence-based toolkit used by dental teams for the

prevention of dental disease in a primary and secondary care setting). They told us they held discussion with their patients, where appropriate, around smoking cessation, sensible alcohol use and dietary advice. The principal dentist also carried out examinations to check for the early signs of oral cancer.

We observed that there were health promotion materials displayed in the waiting area and treatment room. These could be used to support patient's understanding of how to prevent gum disease and how to maintain their teeth in good condition. We also noted that the information available included material aimed at engaging children in good dental hygiene practices and availability of smoking cessation services in the local area.

Staffing

Staff told us they received appropriate professional development and training. We checked three staff files and saw that this was the case. The training covered all of the mandatory requirements for registration issued by the General Dental Council. This included responding to emergencies, safeguarding, infection control and X-ray training.

Although all of the staff had been employed at the practice for over ten years, there was a written induction programme for new staff to follow and evidence in the staff files that this had been used at the time of their employment.

Staff told us they were engaged in an appraisal process on a yearly basis. This reviewed their performance and identified their training and development needs. We reviewed some of the notes kept from these meetings and saw that each member of staff had the opportunity to put a development plan in place.

Working with other services

The practice had suitable arrangements in place for working with other health professionals to ensure quality of care for their patients.

The principal dentist and reception staff explained how they worked with other services, when required. The dentist was able to refer patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care if the treatment required was not provided by the practice. For example, the practice made referrals to other specialists for implants and more complicated extractions.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

We reviewed the systems for referring patients to specialist consultants in secondary care. A referral letter was prepared and sent to the hospital with full details of the dentist's findings and a copy was stored on the practices' records system. When the patient had received their treatment they were discharged back to the practice. Their treatment was then monitored after being referred back to the practice to ensure patients had received a satisfactory outcome and all necessary post-procedure care. A copy of the referral letter was always available to the patient if they wanted this for their records.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice ensured valid consent was obtained for all care and treatment. We spoke to the principal dentist about their understanding of consent issues. They explained that individual treatment options, risks, benefits and costs were discussed with each patient and then documented in a written treatment plan. They stressed the importance of communication skills when explaining care

and treatment to patients to help ensure they had an understanding of their treatment options. Patients were asked to sign formal written consent forms for specific treatments.

The practice had also carried out an audit of consent processes in February 2015 to review whether informed and valid consent had been consistently obtained. This demonstrated that systems were working well, but minor improvements to the wording of the treatment plan had been implemented in order to provide further clarity.

All of the staff were aware of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. (The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for health and care professionals to act and make decisions on behalf of adults who lack the capacity to make particular decisions for themselves). The staff had all completed formal training in relation to the MCA in 2015. The principal dentist could describe scenarios for how they would manage a patient who lacked the capacity to consent to dental treatment. They noted that they would involve the patient's family, along with social workers and other professionals involved in the care of the patient, to ensure that the best interests of the patient were met.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion & empathy

The comments cards we received, and the patients we spoke with, all made positive remarks about the staff's caring and helpful attitude. Patients indicated that they felt comfortable and relaxed with their dentist and that they were made to feel at ease during consultations and treatments. A number of patients commented that they had been treated at the practice for a long period of time and had always been satisfied with their care. Patients who were nervous about dental treatment indicated that the principal dentist was calm, worked with them, listened to their concerns, and gave them reassurance throughout the processes of the dental treatments. We also observed staff were welcoming and helpful when patients arrived for their appointment or made enquiries over the phone.

Staff were aware of the importance of protecting patients' privacy and dignity. The treatment room was situated away from the main waiting area and we saw that the door was closed at all times when patients were having treatment. Conversations between patients and the dentist could not be heard from outside the rooms, which protected patient's privacy.

Staff understood the importance of data protection and confidentiality and had received training in information governance. Patients' dental care records were stored in a paper format in locked filing cabinets.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The practice displayed information in the waiting area and on its website which gave details of the private dental charges or fees. This information was also displayed on a notice board in the waiting area and on the practice's website.

We spoke with the principal dentist, a dental nurse and a receptionist on the day of our inspection. All of the staff told us they worked towards providing clear explanations about treatment and prevention strategies. We saw evidence in the records that the dentist recorded the information they had provided to patients about their treatment and the options open to them.

The patient feedback we received via comments cards, and through speaking with patients on the day of the inspection, confirmed that patients felt appropriately involved in the planning of their treatment and were satisfied with the descriptions given by staff.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

The practice had a system in place to schedule enough time to assess and meet patients' dental needs. The principal dentist decided on the length of time needed for their patient's consultation and treatment. The feedback we received from patients indicated that they felt they had enough time with the dentist and were not rushed.

Staff told that patients could book an appointment in good time to see the dentist. The feedback we received from patients confirmed that they could get an appointment when they needed one, and that this included good access to emergency appointments on the day that they needed to be seen.

During our inspection we looked at examples of information available to people. We saw that the practice waiting area displayed a variety of information including opening hours, practice policy documents, and the outcome of satisfaction surveys and audits. The practice had a website which reinforced this information. New patients were given a practice leaflet which included advice about appointments, opening hours and the types of services that were on offer.

Tackling inequity and promoting equality

The practice had recognised the needs of different groups in the planning of its service. Staff told us they treated everybody equally and welcomed patients from a range of different backgrounds, cultures and religions. Reception staff showed us they had access to a translation service and that they could provide written information for people who were hard of hearing and use large print documents for patients with some visual impairment.

The practice was not fully wheelchair accessible as there was a step to the front entrance and the patient toilet was situated in the basement and only accessible via the stairs.

The practice had carried out a Disability Discrimination Act audit to consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to the premises to allow greater access. They considered that no further action was needed as their existing patients who used wheelchairs were able to manage the front step to access the service.

Access to the service

The practice opening hours are on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8.30am to 5.30pm, Wednesday from 8.30am to 6.00pm, and Friday from 8.30am to 5.00pm. The practice displayed its opening hours on their premises, on the practice website and in the practice information leaflet available in the waiting area.

We asked the practice manager about access to the service in an emergency or outside of normal opening hours. They told us the answer phone message gave details about how to access out-of-hours emergency treatment.

The reception staff told us that patients, who needed to be seen urgently, for example, because they were experiencing dental pain, were seen on the same day that they alerted the practice to their concerns. The feedback we received via comments cards confirmed that patients had good access to the dentist in the event of needing emergency treatment.

Concerns & complaints

Information about how to make a complaint was displayed in the reception area. There was a formal complaints policy describing how the practice handled formal and informal complaints from patients. There had not been any complaints recorded in the past year.

Patients were also invited to give feedback through an annual patient satisfaction survey, a suggestions box in the waiting area, and through the distribution of ad hoc patient feedback forms throughout the year. The information received demonstrated that patients were highly satisfied with the care they received.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

The governance arrangements for this location were robust. There was a comprehensive system of policies, protocols and procedures in place covering all of the clinical governance criteria expected in a dental practice. The systems and processes were maintained in an orderly fashion with files that were regularly reviewed and completed. Records, including those related to patient care and treatments, as well as staff employment, were kept accurately.

The staff fully understood all of the governance systems because there was a clear line of communication running through the practice. This was evidenced through the effective use of staff meetings where relevant information was shared and recorded, and through the high level of knowledge about systems and processes which staff were able to demonstrate to us via our discussions on the day of the inspection.

Leadership, openness and transparency

The staff we spoke with described a transparent culture which encouraged candour, openness and honesty. Staff said that they felt comfortable about raising concerns with the principal dentist. They felt they were listened to and responded to when they did so.

We found staff to be hard working, caring and committed to their work and overall there was a strong sense that staff worked together as a team. There was a system of yearly staff appraisals to support staff in carrying out their roles to a high standard. Notes from these appraisals also demonstrated that they identified staff's training and career goals.

Learning and improvement

The practice had a programme of clinical audit that was used as part of the process for learning and improvement.

These included audits for infection control, clinical record keeping, waiting times, consent processes and X-ray quality. Audits were repeated at appropriate intervals to evaluate whether or not quality had been maintained or if improvements had been made

The auditing system demonstrated a generally high standard of work with only small improvements required. We saw notes from meetings which showed that results of audits were discussed in order to share achievements or action plans for improving performance.

The provider had a clear vision for the practice and described plans for improving the premises over the coming year. For example, this included replacing chairs in the treatment room and waiting area in response to patient feedback.

All staff were supported to pursue development opportunities. We saw evidence that staff were working towards completing the required number of CPD hours to maintain their professional development in line with requirements set by the General Dental Council (GDC).

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

The practice gathered feedback from patients through the use of a patient satisfaction survey, a suggestions box and feedback forms. The majority of feedback had been positive. However, we noted that the practice acted on feedback from patients where they could. For example, some people had made a suggestion regarding the provision of chairs in the waiting area. The principal dentist had taken action by ordering new chairs for this area.

Staff told us that the principal dentist was open to feedback regarding the quality of the care. They had also been engaged in a staff survey during the past year. The appraisal system and staff meetings also provided appropriate forums for staff to give their feedback.