

Stanmore Clinic Limited

The Northwood Surgery

Inspection report

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Ratings

Overall rating for this service

Good 

Are services safe?

Good 

Are services effective?

Good 

Are services caring?

Good 

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

Overall summary

This service is rated as Good overall.

The key questions are rated as:

Are services safe? – Good

Are services effective? – Good

Are services caring? – Good

Are services responsive? – Good

Are services well-led? – Good

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection at The Northwood Surgery as part of our inspection programme.

The surgery provides a private GP consultation service to adults and children.

The lead clinician is the registered manager. A registered manager is a person who is registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like

Summary of findings

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 service is run.

Thirty-two people provided feedback about the service by completing CQC comment cards. The feedback was consistently positive about the staff and the service provided. People reported that the surgery provided a friendly, professional and caring service.

Our key findings were:

- Feedback from people who had used the service was very positive with high praise for the service and staff.
- Effective safety systems and processes were in place.
- Clinicians provided care and treatment in line with current evidence-based guidance and adherence to the guidance was monitored.
- Staff were appropriately trained to carry out their roles.
- Feedback from people who had used the service was positive in relation to the caring and responsive aspects of the service.
- The premises were suitable for the services delivered.
- Effective systems were in place to support good governance.
- There was a clear vision and strategy to deliver high quality care.

The areas where the provider **should** make improvements are:

- Review safeguarding training requirements for non-clinical staff to ensure that it is in line with intercollegiate guidance.
- Continue to develop quality improvement activity.

Dr Rosie Benneyworth BM BS BMedSci MRCGP Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

The Northwood Surgery

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The Northwood Surgery is a small private GP clinic located in Northwood Hills in the London Borough of Hillingdon. The clinic offers a full range of services including long-term condition management, blood tests, child immunisations, sexual health and cervical screening.

The service is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 in respect of some, but not all, of the services it provides. For example, aesthetics/ non-surgical beauty treatments and medical acupuncture do not fall within the regulated activities for which the location is registered with CQC.

The service is registered with the CQC for the regulated activities; Diagnostic and Screening Procedures and Treatment of Disease, Disorder or Injury.

The clinical team consists of a female lead clinician and a male clinician who are supported by a team of three part-time reception/administration staff.

There is also a small number of specialist doctors who rent rooms from the provider and work under practising privileges (the granting of practising privileges is a well-established process within independent healthcare whereby a medical practitioner is granted permission to work in an independent hospital or clinic, in independent private practice, or within the provision of community services).

The service is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Wednesday, 9am to 12pm Thursday and Saturday and 9am to 3pm Friday. Appointments are available with the female clinician Tuesday and Wednesday 9am to 5pm, Thursday 9am to 3pm and Thursday 9am to 12pm. Appointments are available with the male clinician Monday 9-5pm. The service does not provide home visits. Patients are signposted to local out of hours providers when the service is closed.

The practice has approximately 270 registered patients who actively use the service and the clinicians provide up to 50 consultations a month.

The providers website can be found at;
www.northwoodsurgery.co.uk

How we inspected this service

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.

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector. The team included a CQC specialist adviser.

Are services safe?

Our findings

We rated safe as Good because:

- There was a system for reporting, investigating and learning from significant events and incidents.
- There were safety systems and processes in place including effective systems for safeguarding, infection control and medicine management.
- There were effective arrangements to respond to emergencies and major incidents.

Safety systems and processes

The service had clear systems to keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse.

- The provider conducted safety risk assessments. It had appropriate safety policies, which were regularly reviewed and communicated to staff. They outlined clearly who to go to for further guidance. Staff received safety information from the service as part of their induction and refresher training. The service had systems to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse.
- The service had systems in place to assure that an adult accompanying a child had parental authority.
- The provider carried out staff checks at the time of recruitment and on an ongoing basis where appropriate. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were undertaken where required. (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).
- Clinical staff had received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate to their role. They knew how to identify and report concerns. However, reception staff had not completed safeguarding children training to level 2 which is a requirement stated in the Intercollegiate safeguarding guidelines. Staff who acted as chaperones were trained for the role and had received a DBS check.
- There was an effective system to manage infection prevention and control and a Legionella risk assessment had been carried out.

- The provider ensured that facilities and equipment were safe, and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions. There were systems for safely managing healthcare waste.
- The provider carried out appropriate environmental risk assessments, which considered the profile of people using the service and those who may be accompanying them.

Risks to patients

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

- There were arrangements for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention. They knew how to identify and manage patients with severe infections, for example sepsis.
- All staff had received annual basic life support training.
- When there were changes to services or staff the service assessed and monitored the impact on safety.
- There were appropriate indemnity arrangements in place to cover all potential liabilities.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

- Individual care records were written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. The care records we saw showed that information needed to deliver safe care and treatment was available to relevant staff in an accessible way.
- The service had systems for sharing information with staff and other agencies to enable them to deliver safe care and treatment.
- The service had a system in place to retain medical records in line with Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) guidance in the event that they cease trading.
- Clinicians made appropriate and timely referrals in line with protocols and up to date evidence-based guidance.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The service had reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

Are services safe?

- The systems and arrangements for managing medicines, including vaccines, controlled drugs, emergency medicines and equipment minimised risks. The service kept prescription stationery securely and monitored its use.
- The service carried out regular medicines audit to ensure prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing.
- Staff prescribed, administered or supplied medicines to patients and gave advice on medicines in line with legal requirements and current national guidance. Processes were in place for checking medicines and staff kept accurate records of medicines. Where there was a different approach taken from national guidance there was a clear rationale for this that protected patient safety.
- There were effective protocols for verifying the identity of patients including children.

Track record on safety and incidents

The service had a good safety record.

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues.
- The service monitored and reviewed activity. This helped it to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture that led to safety improvements.

Lessons learned and improvements made

The service learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

- There was a system for recording and acting on significant events. Staff understood their duty to raise concerns and report incidents and near misses. Leaders and managers supported them when they did so.
- There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The service learned and shared lessons identified themes and took action to improve safety in the service. There was evidence that the provider had made improvements to the service following investigation and analysis of significant events. For example, the provider had ensured all vaccine and medicine orders were placed in writing to avoid any delivery errors and they had ensured all prescription requests were made in writing or via email (no telephone requests accepted) to prevent communication errors.

The provider was aware of and complied with the requirements of the Duty of Candour. The provider encouraged a culture of openness and honesty. The service had systems in place for knowing about notifiable safety incidents

When there were unexpected or unintended safety incidents:

- The service gave affected people reasonable support, truthful information and a verbal and written apology.
- They kept written records of verbal interactions as well as written correspondence.
- The service acted on and learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts. The service had an effective mechanism in place to disseminate alerts to all members of the team.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

We rated effective as Good because:

- Clinicians used current evidence-based guidance to provide patients with effective care.
- Staff had completed the necessary training to carry out their roles.
- The provider audited and reviewed patient care to ensure it was delivered appropriately.
- Consent to care and treatment was obtained in line with legislation and guidance.

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The provider had systems to keep clinicians up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw evidence that clinicians assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance (relevant to their service).

- The provider assessed needs and delivered care in line with relevant and current evidence-based guidance and standards such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) best practice guidelines.
- Patients' immediate and ongoing needs were fully assessed and where appropriate this included their clinical needs and their mental and physical wellbeing.
- Clinicians had enough information to make or confirm a diagnosis.
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- Staff assessed and managed patients' pain where appropriate.

Monitoring care and treatment

The service was actively involved in quality improvement activity.

- The service used information about care and treatment to make improvements. The service made improvements using audits and reviews. For example, the provider had reviewed patients with hypertension and those with diabetes to ensure they were managed in line with NICE guidance. The provider had reviewed antibiotic prescribing for patients with sore throats and respiratory tract infections to ensure prescribing was in line with current guidance and diazepam prescribing had been reviewed.

Effective staffing

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

- All staff were appropriately qualified. The provider had an induction programme for all newly appointed staff.
- Relevant professionals were registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) and were up to date with revalidation.
- The provider understood the learning needs of staff and provided protected time and training to meet them. Up to date records of skills, qualifications and training were maintained. Staff were encouraged and given opportunities to develop.
- Staff whose role included immunisation and reviews of patients with long term conditions had received specific training and could demonstrate how they stayed up to date.

Coordinating patient care and information sharing

Staff worked together, and worked well with other organisations, to deliver effective care and treatment.

- Patients received coordinated and person-centred care. Staff referred to, and communicated effectively with, other services when appropriate. For example, when referring patients to other private healthcare providers.
- Before providing treatment, doctors at the service ensured they had adequate knowledge of the patient's health, any relevant test results and their medicines history.
- All patients were asked for consent to share details of their consultation and any medicines prescribed with their registered GP on each occasion they used the service.
- The provider had risk assessed the treatments they offered. They had identified medicines that were not suitable for prescribing if the patient did not give their consent to share information with their GP, or they were not registered with a GP. For example, medicines liable to abuse or misuse, and those for the treatment of long-term conditions such as asthma. Where patients agreed to share their information, we saw evidence of letters sent to their registered GP in line with GMC guidance.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

- Patient information was shared appropriately (this included when patients moved to other professional services), and the information needed to plan and deliver care and treatment was available to relevant staff in a timely and accessible way.

Supporting patients to live healthier lives

Staff were consistent and proactive in empowering patients and supporting them to manage their own health and maximise their independence.

- Where appropriate, staff gave people advice, so they could self-care. For example, by providing health information leaflets.
- Risk factors were identified, highlighted to patients and where appropriate highlighted to their normal care provider for additional support.

- Where patients needs could not be met by the service, staff redirected them to the appropriate service for their needs. For example, patients had been referred to a clinical psychologist and a dietician when appropriate.

Consent to care and treatment

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

- Staff understood the requirements of legislation and guidance when considering consent and decision making.
- Staff supported patients to make decisions. Where appropriate, they assessed and recorded a patient's mental capacity to make a decision.
- The service monitored the process for seeking consent appropriately.

Are services caring?

Our findings

We rated caring as Good because:

- Feedback from patients was very positive in relation to the caring aspects of the service.
- Patients reported that staff treated them with dignity and respect and that they were involved in decisions about care and treatment.

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- Feedback from patients was positive about the way staff treat people.
- Staff understood patients' personal, cultural, social and religious needs. They displayed an understanding and non-judgmental attitude to all patients.
- The service gave patients timely support and information.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about care and treatment.

- Access to online interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language.
- Patients told us through comment cards, that they felt listened to and supported by staff and had sufficient time during consultations to make an informed decision about the choice of treatment available to them.
- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.

Privacy and Dignity

The service respected patients' privacy and dignity.

- Staff recognised the importance of people's dignity and respect.
- Staff knew that if patients wanted to discuss sensitive issues or appeared distressed they could offer them a private room to discuss their needs.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

We rated responsive as Good because:

- Feedback from patients was very positive in relation to the responsiveness of the service.
- Information about the service was readily available.
- There was a system on place for handling complaints and information on the complaints procedure was available.

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The service organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs. It took account of patient needs and preferences.

- The provider understood the needs of their patients and improved services in response to those needs.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.
- Reasonable adjustments had been made so that people in vulnerable circumstances could access and use services on an equal basis to others. For example, a lift was installed so patients with mobility issues could access the clinic.

Timely access to the service

Patients were able to access care and treatment from the service within an appropriate timescale for their needs.

- Patients had timely access to initial assessment, test results, diagnosis and treatment.
- Waiting times, delays and cancellations were minimal and managed appropriately.
- Patients with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.
- Patients reported that the appointment system was easy to use.
- Referrals and transfers to other services were undertaken in a timely way.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

- Information about how to make a complaint or raise concerns was available. Staff treated patients who made complaints compassionately.
- The service informed patients of any further action that may be available to them should they not be satisfied with the response to their complaint.
- The service had complaint policy and procedures in place. The service had a system to learn lessons from individual concerns and complaints. However, we were unable to assess the effectiveness of the system as no complaints had been received.

Are services well-led?

Good 

(for example, are they well-managed and do senior leaders listen, learn and take appropriate action?)

Our findings

We rated well-led as Good because:

- The provider had a clear vision and strategy to deliver high quality care.
- Effective systems were in place to support good governance.
- Processes were in place to gather feedback from both patients and staff.

Leadership capacity and capability;

Leaders had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

- Leaders were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.
- Leaders at all levels were visible and approachable. They worked closely with staff and others to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.
- The provider had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the service.

Vision and strategy

The service had a clear vision and credible strategy to deliver high quality care and promote good outcomes for patients.

- There was a clear vision and set of values. The service had a realistic strategy and supporting business plans to achieve priorities.
- The service developed its vision, values and strategy jointly with staff.
- Staff were aware of and understood the vision, values and strategy and their role in achieving them.
- The service monitored progress against delivery of the strategy.

Culture

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

- Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work for the service.

- The service focused on the needs of patients.
- Leaders and managers acted on behaviour and performance inconsistent with the vision and values.
- 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 told us they could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they need. This included appraisal and career development conversations. All staff received regular annual appraisals in the last year. Staff were supported to meet the requirements of professional revalidation where necessary.
- There was a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of all staff.
- The service actively promoted equality and diversity. It identified and addressed the causes of any workforce inequality. Staff felt they were treated equally.
- There were positive relationships between staff and teams.

Governance arrangements

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

- Structures, processes and systems to support good governance and management were clearly set out, understood and effective. The governance and management of partnerships, joint working arrangements and shared services promoted interactive and co-ordinated person-centred care.
- Staff were clear on their roles and accountabilities.
- Leaders had established proper policies, procedures and activities to ensure safety and assured themselves that they were operating as intended.

Managing risks, issues and performance

Are services well-led?

Good 

(for example, are they well-managed and do senior leaders listen, learn and take appropriate action?)

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

- There was an effective, process to identify, understand, monitor and address current and future risks including risks to patient safety.
- The service had processes to manage current and future performance. Leaders had oversight of safety alerts, incidents, and complaints.
- Clinical audit had a positive impact on quality of care and outcomes for patients. There was clear evidence of action to change services to improve quality.
- The provider had plans in place and had trained staff for major incidents.

Appropriate and accurate information

The service 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.
- Quality and sustainability were discussed in relevant meetings where all staff had sufficient access to information.
- The service used performance information which was reported and monitored and management and staff were held to account.
- The information used to monitor performance and the delivery of quality care was accurate and useful. There were plans to address any identified weaknesses.
- The service submitted data or notifications to external organisations as required.

- There were robust arrangements in line with data security standards for the availability, integrity and confidentiality of patient identifiable data, records and data management systems.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

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

- The service encouraged and heard views and concerns from the public, patients and staff and acted on them to shape services and culture. For example, the service encouraged patients to give online reviews and provide feedback through comment forms available at the reception desk. We found feedback from patients was consistently positive.
- Staff could describe to us the systems in place to give feedback. For example, through annual appraisal and staff meetings. We saw evidence of feedback opportunities for staff and how the findings were fed back to staff. We also saw staff engagement in responding to these findings.

Continuous improvement and innovation

There was evidence of systems and processes for learning and continuous improvement.

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement.
- The service made use of internal and external reviews of incidents. Learning was shared and used to make improvements.
- Leaders and managers encouraged staff to take time out to review individual and team objectives, processes and performance.