

Top Medical Clinic LLP

Inspection report

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This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

Ratings

Overall rating for this location

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 service had previously been inspected on 27 March 2019, and prior to that on 17 January 2018. That report was unrated, but at the latest inspection in 2019 the service was found to be in breach of regulation 17 of HSCA (RA) 2014, and a requirement notice was issued. The specific issues found which breached regulation 17 were in regards to significant event and complaint management, a lack of business continuity and health and safety plans, insufficient clinical audits and medicines management.

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection of Top Medical Clinic LLP on 10 and 14 June 2021. We are mindful of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on our regulatory function. We will continue to discharge our regulatory enforcement functions required to keep people safe and to hold providers to account where it is necessary for us to do so. We found that all of the breaches of regulation from the previous inspection had been addressed. Following this inspection, the key questions are rated as:

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

Our key findings were:

- The service provided care in a way that kept patients safe and protected them from avoidable harm.
- Patients received effective care and treatment that met their needs.
- Staff dealt with patients with kindness and respect and involved them in decisions about their care.
- The service organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs. Patients could access care and treatment in a timely way.
- The way the service was led and managed promoted the delivery of high-quality, person-centre care.

The area where the provider **should** make improvements is:

- The service should consider reviewing the use of two separate databases, one for clinical notes and the other for test results.
- The service should consider undertaking focussed medicines audits to better understand compliance against the protocols in place at the site.

Dr Rosie Benneyworth BM BS BMedSci MRCGP

Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector. The team included a member of the CQC medicines team and a GP specialist adviser.

Background to Top Medical Clinic LLP

Top Medical Clinic is an independent provider of medical services and treats adults and children at 1B Church Road, Croydon CR0 1SG. The service also has a satellite site based at Unit 1 Colmore House, Frazer Nash Close, Isleworth, London, TW7 5FR.

The provider offers specialist services including general practice, aesthetic medicine, cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, endocrinology, gynaecology, internal medicine, neurology, orthopaedics, paediatrics and psychology. We did not inspect the dental element of the service in this inspection. The service is aimed at Polish patients, although other patients are seen at the clinic. Services are available to people on a pre-bookable appointment basis.

The service employs 10 administrative staff including receptionists. All of the clinical staff who work in the clinic are self-employed; however, they have a contract with the provider.

The main clinic has four floors with a reception and waiting area and nine consulting rooms. The property is owned by the provider; the clinic has no lift, the second, third and fourth floor consulting rooms are not accessible to people who use a wheelchair or other mobility aids and there is no accessible toilet. The clinic is open between 9am and 8pm Monday to Saturday and from 9am to 6pm on a Sunday. The satellite clinic is accessible to all and is based on a single floor and has six clinical rooms. The clinic is open between 10am and 8pm Monday to Saturday and from 10am to 5pm on a Sunday.

Top Medical Clinic LLP is registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide the regulated activities diagnostic and screening procedures, family planning, maternity and midwifery services, surgical procedures and treatment of disease, disorder or injury.

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?

We rated safe as Good because:

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 10 and 14 June 2021. We had previously carried out an announced comprehensive inspection in March 2019. At the time of the first inspection the service was not providing safe services. We found the following:

- Staff were not trained in safeguarding of children.
- The provider had not completed a health and safety risk assessment of the premises.
- There was no business continuity plan in place.

At the time of the inspection visit on 10 and 14 June 2021, these issues had been addressed.

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 including locums. 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 service worked with other agencies to support patients and protect them from neglect and abuse. Staff took steps to protect patients from abuse, neglect, harassment, discrimination and breaches of their dignity and respect. The service provided an example where safeguarding concerns had been identified. A referral was made as appropriate, and the service reviewed the incident to ensure that it was placed to identify further possible concerns in the future.
- 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).
- All staff received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate to their role. They knew how to identify and report concerns. 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. The service had risk assessed infection control at both sites as part of an annual audit, and Legionella risk assessments had taken place, with updated risk assessments scheduled.
- 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.

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. The service had flexed its staffing to meet fluctuations of demand during the COVID 19 pandemic.
- There was an effective induction system for agency staff tailored to their role.
- 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.
- There were appropriate indemnity arrangements in place at the practice. Clinical staff at the service were required to provide their own indemnity, and this was in place in staff records that we reviewed.

Are services safe?

- There were suitable medicines and equipment to deal with medical emergencies which were stored appropriately and checked regularly at both sites.

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 records of clinical appointments and prescribing and blood tests were stored on separate databases. On the basis of 30 records that we reviewed, the split database did not have a detrimental impact on patient care, but did make audit and review of the patient record more difficult. Representatives of the service said they were reviewing whether a unitary database might be preferable.
- 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.

- 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 had not carried out specific medicines audits for higher risk medicines to ensure prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing. However, regular audits of all clinicians' records were carried out by a clinical lead at the service, and our review of 30 clinical records showed that prescribing was in line with the formulary used by the service, and national guidelines. Following the inspection, the service provided updated protocols for specific medicines.
- The service does not prescribe Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs (medicines that have the highest level of control due to their risk of misuse and dependence). Neither did they prescribe schedule 4 or 5 controlled drugs.
- 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.

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.
- There was a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.

Lessons learned and improvements made

The service learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

Are services safe?

- 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 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 including sessional and agency staff.

Are services effective?

We rated effective as Good because:

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 10 and 14 June 2021. We had previously carried out an announced comprehensive inspection in March 2019. At the time of the first inspection the service was not providing effective services. We found the following:

- The provider did not have effective systems to keep clinicians up to date with current evidence-based practice. The clinicians assessed needs of patients; however, they did not always deliver care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance.
- The service had not completed audits.

At the time of the inspection visit on 10 and 14 June 2021, these issues had been addressed.

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)

- Patients' immediate and ongoing needs were fully assessed. 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. They had undertaken clinical audits which included those for specific issues, as well as regular notes audits of all clinicians at the service which were undertaken by a clinical lead on a monthly basis.
- We reviewed 30 sets of clinical notes as part of the inspection. We saw that management of long term conditions and prescribing of medicines that were higher risk was in line with relevant national guidance, and the service's protocols and procedures for managing long term conditions and prescribing.
- The practice was in the process of changing its clinical notes system so that medicines and management audits would be easier to arrange. The current system did not allow for searches without requesting them from the database developer.

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 (medical and nursing) were registered with the General Medical Council (GMC)/ Nursing and Midwifery Council and were up to date with revalidation

Are services effective?

- 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.
- 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. We saw examples of patients being signposted to more suitable sources of treatment where this information was not available to ensure safe care and treatment.
- 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 a policy to cover where patients refused to share this information.
- 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. Where patients agreed to share their information, we saw evidence of letters sent to their registered GP in line with GMC guidance.
- 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. There were clear and effective arrangements for following up on people who had been referred to other services.
- The service monitored the process for seeking consent appropriately.

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.
- 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.

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.

Are services caring?

We rated caring as Good because:

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- The service sought feedback on the quality of clinical care patients received via feedback on its website and social media platforms.
- 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.

- Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language, although staff told us that they were rarely used as over 90% of patients were Polish speakers, and all staff spoke Polish.
- Information leaflets were available in easy read formats in English and Polish, to help patients be involved in decisions about their care.
- 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?

We rated responsive as Good because:

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.
- Access to the Croydon clinic was not suitable for people with limited mobility and those who used a wheelchair. The provider informed us patients with limited mobility are usually seen in the ground floor consulting room and patients were informed that the clinic had limited access when they book an appointment. Alternatively, they could use the Isleworth site which was fully accessible.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.
- The service had a website which could be accessed both in English and Polish.
- All patients attending the service referred themselves for treatment; none were referred from the NHS services. The provider informed us they referred patients to other services when appropriate.

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

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

- 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 learned lessons from individual concerns, complaints and from analysis of trends. It acted as a result to improve the quality of care.

Are services well-led?

We rated well-led as Good because:

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 10 and 14 June 2021. We had previously carried out an announced comprehensive inspection in March 2019. At the time of the first inspection the service was not providing effective services. We found the following:

- Structures, processes and systems to support good governance and management required improvement

At the time of the inspection visit on 10 and 14 June 2021, these issues had been addressed.

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 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.
- Staff were aware of and understood the vision, values and strategy and their role in achieving them

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 and complaints. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the duty of candour.
- 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. Clinical staff, including nurses, were considered valued members of the team. They were given protected time for professional time for professional development and evaluation of their clinical work.
- 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 had received equality and diversity training. Staff felt they were treated equally.
- There were positive relationships between staff and teams.

Are services well-led?

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

Managing risks, issues and performance

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. Performance of clinical staff could be demonstrated through audit of their consultations, prescribing and referral decisions. Leaders had oversight of safety alerts, incidents, and complaints.
- Clinical audit had a positive impact on quality of care and outcomes for patients.
- 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.
- The service used performance information which was reported and monitored and management and staff were held to account

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

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

- The patients' and staff views and concerns were encouraged, heard and acted on to shape services and culture. For example, the provider collected feedback from patients after each consultation.
- The service was transparent, collaborative and open with stakeholders about performance.

Continuous improvement and innovation

Are services well-led?

There were systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement.
- The service made use of internal and external reviews of incidents and complaints. 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.