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Louise Southworth Dental Practice

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 9 November 2022 under section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. We planned the inspection to check whether the registered practice was meeting the legal requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations. The inspection was led by a Care Quality Commission, (CQC), inspector who was supported by a dental adviser.

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

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our findings were:

- Recent refurbishments and improvements had been made to the premises. The dental clinic was visibly clean and well-maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff.

Summary of findings

- Safeguarding processes were in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect and staff took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
- There was effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked as a team.
- Staff and patients were asked for feedback about the services provided.
- Complaints were dealt with positively and efficiently.
- The dental clinic had information governance arrangements.

Background

The provider has 37 practices and this report is about Louise Southworth Dental Practice.

Louise Southworth Dental Practice is in Blackburn and provides NHS and private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

There are steps to access the practice. Wheelchair users are directed to another of the provider's accessible dental practices nearby. Car parking spaces, including dedicated parking for disabled people, are available near the practice.

The dental team includes 5 dentists, 6 dental nurses (including 2 trainees), 1 dental therapist, 2 patient coordinators and a practice manager. The practice has 5 treatment rooms.

During the inspection we spoke with 3 dentists, 2 dental nurses, 2 patient coordinators, the practice manager and the company's clinical director. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5:30pm

The practice had taken steps to improve environmental sustainability:

- The practice had taken steps to improve the sustainability and longevity of equipment. Staff were provided with dedicated training to ensure they understood the equipment, and how incorrect cleaning, maintenance and care could impair the function and lifespan of these devices. This was followed up with onsite training sessions to reinforce this learning and ensure staff understood and followed the correct procedures.

There were areas where the provider could make improvements. They should:

- Improve the practice's waste handling protocols to ensure waste is segregated and disposed of in compliance with the relevant regulations and taking into account the guidance issued in the Health Technical Memorandum 07-01.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Are services safe?	No action ✓
Are services effective?	No action ✓
Are services caring?	No action ✓
Are services responsive to people's needs?	No action ✓
Are services well-led?	No action ✓

Are services safe?

Our findings

Safety systems and processes, including staff recruitment, equipment and premises and radiography (X-rays)

The practice had safeguarding processes, staff had completed training and knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.

The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.

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

The practice had policies and procedures in place to ensure clinical waste was segregated and stored appropriately in line with guidance. We noted gypsum waste in the cellar. The manager confirmed this would be removed.

We saw the practice was visibly clean and there was an effective cleaning schedule to ensure the practice was kept clean. Additional cleaning was carried out during the period of refurbishment.

The practice had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff and had checks in place for agency and locum staff. These reflected the relevant legislation.

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

The practice ensured equipment was safe to use and maintained and serviced according to manufacturers' instructions. New dental equipment had recently been installed. The contractors onsite confirmed that staff received dedicated training in the cleaning, maintenance and ongoing care of this, with additional training sessions being provided in the practice as necessary.

The practice ensured the facilities were maintained in accordance with regulations. The provider was unsure when the most recent electrical installation (fixed wiring) inspection had been carried out. There were plans for this inspection to take place once refurbishment including electrical wiring improvements were completed.

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements and the management of fire safety was effective. We highlighted the cellar was inaccessible in places due to the storage of old equipment and other items. The manager confirmed this would be addressed.

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

Risks to patients

The practice had implemented systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient and staff safety. This included sharps safety, sepsis awareness and lone working.

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

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

We saw the practice manager was in the process of completing risk assessments to minimise the risk that could be caused from substances that are hazardous to health. Hazardous substances were stored securely.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Are services safe?

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

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

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The practice had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating incidents and accidents. The practice had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

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

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep dental professionals up to date with current evidence-based practice. Clinicians were made aware of and invited to attend clinical courses and the clinical directors provided regular clinical updates.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

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

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

Consent to care and treatment

Staff obtained patients' consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance.

Staff understood their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Staff described how they involved patients' relatives or carers when appropriate and made sure they had enough time to explain treatment options clearly.

Monitoring care and treatment

The practice kept detailed dental care records in line with recognised guidance.

Staff conveyed an understanding of supporting more vulnerable members of society such as patients with dementia, and adults and children with a learning difficulty.

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

Effective staffing

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

Newly appointed and temporary staff had a structured induction and clinical staff completed continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

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

The dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care for treatment the practice did not provide. Staff maintained a log of all referrals. We found not all the dentists were aware of this. The manager confirmed this would be discussed.

Are services caring?

Our findings

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

Kindness, respect and compassion

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

Patients feedback showed staff were compassionate, understanding and helpful when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

Privacy and dignity

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality.

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

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

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about their care.

Staff gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment.

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

The dentists described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included for example, study models and X-ray images. Interpretation services could be booked where needed.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Our findings

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

Responding to and meeting people's needs

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

Staff were clear about the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care. The practice was in the process of implementing guidance to become a Dementia Friendly practice to provide more accessible care for people with dementia, and signpost them to local support organisations where appropriate.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. Staff had carried out a disability access audit and had formulated an action plan to continually improve access for patients. Additional handrails had been installed at the entrance to the premises for patients with impaired mobility.

Timely access to services

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

The practice had an appointment system to respond to patients' needs.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice responded to concerns and complaints appropriately and discussed outcomes with staff to share learning and improve the service.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

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

Leadership capacity and capability

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

There was strong leadership and emphasis on continually striving to improve.

Systems and processes were embedded, and staff worked together in such a way that the inspection only highlighted minor issues or omissions.

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

We saw the practice had effective processes to support and develop staff with additional roles and responsibilities.

Culture

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

Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice. There were systems to recognise and reward staff contribution. Staff confirmed they could access support when needed.

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

The practice had arrangements to ensure staff training was up-to-date and reviewed at the required intervals.

Governance and management

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

The practice had a system of clinical governance in place which included policies, protocols and procedures that were accessible to all members of staff and were reviewed on a regular basis.

We saw there were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

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

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

Staff gathered feedback from patients, the public and external partners and a demonstrated commitment to acting on feedback. A suggestion box was provided, and the practice displayed feedback and improvements made in response to feedback in the waiting room.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on.

Continuous improvement and innovation

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

Are services well-led?

The practice had taken steps to improve the sustainability and longevity of equipment. Staff were provided with dedicated training to ensure they understood the equipment, and how incorrect cleaning, maintenance and care could impair the function and lifespan of these devices. This was followed up with onsite training sessions to reinforce this learning and ensure staff understood and followed the correct procedures.

The practice had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included audits of dental care records, disability access, radiographs and infection prevention and control.

Staff kept records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements. In particular, we saw the most recent infection and prevention audits had led to improvements. Issues had been clearly highlighted and acted on.