

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 Wimpole Street Clinic for Women Ltd as part of our inspection programme under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether service was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

The Wimpole Street Clinic for Women Ltd is an independent health service based in Westminster, where gynaecology consultations for woman aged 18 years and above took place.'

Our key findings were :

- Systems were in place to keep patients safe and safeguarded from abuse.
- There were systems to keep the provider up to date with evidence based practice.
- Medicines were managed and monitored in a way that kept patients safe.
- There was a programme of quality improvement activities.
- All members of staff were up-to-date with training relevant to their role.
- There were comprehensive risk assessments to mitigate current and future risks.
- Systems were in place to protect the personal information of patients.
- Policies and procedures were in place to govern activity.

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

The Wimpole Street Clinic for Women Ltd at 19 Harley Street

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 

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Are services effective?

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Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector who was supported by a GP specialist advisor.

Background to The Wimpole Street Clinic for Women Ltd at 19 Harley Street

The Wimpole Street Clinic for Women Ltd operates under the provider The Wimpole Street Clinic for Women Limited. The provider is registered with the Care Quality Commission to carry out the regulated activity of diagnostic and screening procedures.

Jeffrey Braithwaite is the registered manager. A registered manager is a person who is registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. 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 service is run.

The service consists of a consultant gynaecologist, a practice manager and a chaperone.

The service is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and there are between 13 to 15 appointments held each day, with an average of 280 patients seen each month. Patients have access to the on-call doctor via a triage system accessed by telephone.

Patient records are all computer based. The service refers patients to other providers when necessary.

How we inspected this service

Prior to the inspection, we reviewed information requested from the provider about the services they were providing. During the inspection, we spoke with the consultant gynaecologist, the practice manager and the chaperone. We reviewed a sample of key policies and procedures, made observations of the environment and infection prevention and control measures.

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:

- The service has systems for reporting, recording and learning from significant events.
- There were adequate arrangements to respond to emergencies and major incidents.
- The service had a range of risk assessments and action plans to minimise risks to staff and patients.

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. 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. Policies were regularly reviewed and were accessible to all staff. They outlined clearly who to go to for further external guidance.
- 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 provider carried out staff checks at the time of recruitment and on an ongoing basis where appropriate. This included obtaining assurance that the correct staff checks had been carried out by the agency which provided external administration services. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were undertaken for all staff members. (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 and a legionella risk assessment had been completed.

- 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 took into account 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.

- 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 suitable medicines and equipment to deal with medical emergencies which were stored appropriately and checked regularly.
- When there were changes to services or staff the service assessed and monitored the impact on safety.
- The provider had 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.
- The provider 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, emergency medicines and equipment minimised risks. The service kept prescription stationery securely and monitored its use.
- The service ensured prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing.
- The provider 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.

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.
- There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The service had not had any significant events in the last year.
- The service was aware of and had systems in place to comply with the requirements of the duty of candour.

When there were unexpected or unintended safety incidents:

- The service told us they would give 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?

We rated effective as Good because:

- The clinician was aware of relevant evidence based guidance.
- There was evidence of appraisals for staff members.
- Staff had the skills and knowledge to deliver effective care and treatment. All staff members had completed mandatory training such as basic life support.

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 physical wellbeing.
- The clinicians had enough information to make or confirm a diagnosis.
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- The clinician assessed and managed patients' pain where appropriate.
- The service used the most up to date machinery to provide the best results.

Monitoring care and treatment

The service was actively involved in quality improvement activity.

- The service used information about care and treatment to make improvements. For example, the service employed a full-time chaperone to avoid patients having to use friends or family members in this role during intimate examinations, which could lead to embarrassment. The service made improvements through the use of completed audits. Clinical audit had a positive impact on quality of care and outcomes for patients. There was clear evidence of action to resolve concerns and improve quality. For example, regular cytology audits were carried out to ensure that all results were received, that inadequate results were handled appropriately and in a timely manner and to ensure that the exams were completed appropriately.

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.
- The provider was registered with the General Medical Council and was 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.

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. The consultant gynaecologist where appropriate referred patients to himself to carry out procedures at local hospitals where they booked theatres. The service also referred patients to other services where appropriate.
- Before providing treatment, the doctor at the service ensured he 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.
- 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.

Consent to care and treatment

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

Are services effective?

- 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?

We rated caring as Good because:

- The patient survey was 100% positive about the service.
- Information for patients about the services available was easily accessible.
- We saw staff treated patients with kindness and respect and maintained confidentiality.

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- The service sought feedback on the quality of clinical care patients received.
- Feedback from patients was 100% 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.

- Telephone interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language.
- 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:

- Waiting times, delays and cancellations were minimal and well managed.
- Information about how to complain was easy to understand and easily accessible.

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. For example, an overflow telephone system was installed to maximise the number of calls the service could receive at any one time.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.

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.
- Referrals and transfers to other services were undertaken in a timely way. Referrals were completed the same day and the majority of patients were given their referral appointments before they left the premises.

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. For example, as a result of comments made about the time it took to get through to the service by telephone, the service commissioned an external company to receive their calls offsite to create more capacity. We saw that this service was routinely audited to ensure that efficiency and patient satisfaction was maintained.

Are services well-led?

We rated well-led as Good because:

- The service had a clear vision and strategy to deliver high quality care and promote good outcomes for patients. Staff were clear about the vision and their responsibilities in relation to it.
- There was a clear leadership structure and staff felt supported by management.

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 to achieve priorities.
- 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.
- The provider told us they would act on behaviour and performance inconsistent with the vision and values.
- 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. All staff received regular annual appraisals in the last year.
- There was a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of all staff.
- The service actively promoted equality and diversity. Staff had received equality and diversity training. Staff felt they were treated equally.
- There were positive relationships between staff.

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 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

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. Clinical performance 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. 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

Are services well-led?

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 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, staff and external partners to support high-quality sustainable services.

- The service encouraged and heard views and concerns from patients, staff and external partners and acted on them to shape services and culture.
- Staff could describe to us the systems in place to give feedback. The service carried out an annual patient survey. We also saw staff engagement in responding to these findings.
- The service was transparent, collaborative and open with stakeholders about performance.

Continuous improvement and innovation

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.
- The provider encouraged staff to take time out to review individual and team objectives, processes and performance.
- There were systems to support improvement and innovative work.