

Dr. Eileen Swanson

E M Swanson Dental Practice

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 1 November 2016 to ask the practice the following key questions; Are services safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led?

Our findings were:

Are services safe?

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

Are services effective?

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

Are services caring?

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

Are services responsive?

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

Are services well-led?

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

Background

E M Swanson Dental practice is a dental practice providing NHS and private treatment options for patients. The practice is located in premises in Strood Rochester.

The practice has three treatment rooms, which are on the ground floor.

The practice provides dental services to both adults and children. The practice provides private treatment. Services provided include general dentistry, dental hygiene, crowns and bridges, orthotropics and root canal treatment. Patients also have the option of private treatment options such as implants on referral.

The practice's opening hours are – Monday 8.30am to 3pm with alternate evening appointments 4pm to 7pm, 5pm Tuesday 8.30am to 3pm, Wednesday – reception only, alternate Thursdays 5pm to 8pm, and alternate Friday 9am to 1pm.

Access for urgent treatment outside of opening hours is by telephoning the practice and following the instructions on the answerphone message or by telephoning the 111 NHS service.

The principal dentist/owner is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as an individual. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'.

Summary of findings

Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the practice is run.

The practice has three dentists; two qualified dental nurses, one receptionist, and a hygienist.

We provided CQC comment cards prior to our inspection and reviewed feedback from 23 patients plus feedback that practice had received through surveys, comments and complaints.

Our key findings were:

- The practice was visibly clean and tidy.
- Records showed there were sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of patients.
- Patients at the practice gave mostly positive feedback about their experiences at the practice.

- The practice was well equipped.
- Dentists identified the different treatment options, and discussed these with patients.
- Patients' confidentiality was maintained.
- The practice followed the relevant guidance from the Department of Health's: 'Health Technical Memorandum 01-05 (HTM 01-05) for infection control with regard to cleaning and sterilising dental instruments. Apart from consistent use of the illuminated magnifying glass to ensure that all instruments were free of debris and undamaged.
- The practice had the necessary equipment for staff to deal with medical emergencies, and staff had been trained how to use that equipment. This included an automated external defibrillator, oxygen and emergency medicines.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Are services safe?

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

All staff had received up-to-date training in safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. There were clear guidelines for reporting concerns and the practice had a lead member of staff to offer support and guidance over safeguarding matters. Staff knew how to recognise the signs of abuse, and how to raise concerns when necessary.

The practice had emergency medicines and oxygen available, and an automated external defibrillator (AED). Regular checks were being completed to ensure the emergency equipment was in good working order.

Recruitment checks were completed on all new members of staff. This was to ensure staff were suitable and appropriately qualified and experienced to carry out their role. However, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were not robust.

The practice was visibly clean and tidy and there were infection control procedures to ensure that patients were protected from potential risks. The infection control procedures followed the Department of Health guidance HTM 01-05 with the exception of use of the illuminated magnification device and dates for expiry on pouched instruments.

X-ray equipment was regularly serviced to make sure it was safe for use.

No action



Are services effective?

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

All patients were clinically assessed by a dentist before any treatment began.

The practice was following National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for the care and treatment of dental patients. Particularly in respect of patient recalls, wisdom tooth removal and the non-prescribing of antibiotics for patients at risk of infective endocarditis (a condition that affects the heart).

The practice made referrals to other dental professionals when it was appropriate to do so. There were clear procedures for making referrals in a timely manner.

No action



Are services caring?

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

Patient confidentiality was maintained and electronic dental care records were password protected.

We received feedback from 23 patients via CQC comment cards provided before our inspection. Patients said staff were always friendly, polite and professional. Feedback from patients identified that they felt they were treated with dignity and respect by the reception staff.

No action



Summary of findings

Patients said they received good dental treatment and they were involved in discussions about their dental care.

Patients said they were able to express their views and opinions.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

Patients said they were able to get an appointment routinely and if they were in pain or in need of urgent treatment they would usually be seen on the same day.

The practice had access for patients with restricted mobility via a ramp into the building. All patient areas were located on the ground floor. The practice had completed a disabled access audit to consider the needs of patients with restricted mobility.

There were arrangements for emergency dental treatment outside of normal working hours, including weekends and public holidays which were clearly displayed in the practice.

There were systems and processes to support patients to make formal complaints. Where complaints had been made these were acted upon, and apologies given when necessary.

No action



Are services well-led?

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

There was a clear management structure at the practice. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities within the dental team, and knew who to speak with if they had any concerns.

The practice was carrying out regular audits of both clinical and non-clinical areas to assess the safety and effectiveness of the services provided.

Staff said the practice was a friendly place to work, and they could speak with the dentists if they had any concerns.

No action



E M Swanson Dental Practice

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

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

We carried out an announced, comprehensive inspection on 1 November 2016. The inspection team consisted of a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspector and a dental specialist advisor.

We requested some information from the practice before the inspection such as, the practice statement of purpose, a list of staff employed and their roles and qualifications and a summary of complaints received in the last 12 months. We also reviewed the information we held about the practice and looked at the practice website.

On the day of our inspection we reviewed policies, procedures and other documents. We received feedback via CQC comment cards from 23 patients about the dental services they had received.

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

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

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

Are services safe?

Our findings

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

The practice recorded and investigated accidents, significant events and complaints. This allowed them to be analysed and any learning points identified and shared with the staff. Documentation showed there had been two minor accidents recorded over the last 12 months and demonstrated that the correct action was followed. Staff when questioned, could explain what action they would need to take if an accident or incident occurred to ensure it would be dealt with appropriately; and the measures they would need to take to reduce the risk of it happening again.

The practice was aware of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013). Staff told us there had been no RIDDOR notifications made although the practice was aware of how to make these on-line.

The practice received Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) alerts. These were sent out centrally by a government agency (MHRA) to inform health care establishments of any problems with medicines or healthcare equipment. These were received electronically by the principal dentist who shared them with staff when appropriate.

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

The practice had policies for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. We noted that the contact numbers for the local area team were current. In addition there was a copy of the Kent multi-agency safeguarding procedures, and staff were aware of its location. The policies directed staff in how to respond to and escalate any safeguarding concerns. We spoke with staff who were aware of the safeguarding policies, they knew who to contact and how to refer concerns to agencies outside of the practice when necessary. The relevant contact telephone numbers were on display behind reception.

The principal dentist was the identified lead for safeguarding in the practice. They had received training to level two in child protection to support them in fulfilling that role. We saw evidence that all staff had completed an online training course.

There were guidelines to guide staff in the use and handling of chemicals in the practice. The policy identified the risks associated with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH). There were risk assessments which identified the steps to take to reduce the risks which included the use of personal protective equipment (gloves, aprons and masks) for staff, and the safe and secure storage of hazardous materials. The manufacturers' product data sheets were available to staff in the COSHH file. We saw the COSHH file had been reviewed.

The practice had an up to date Employers' liability insurance certificate which was due for renewal in September 2017. Employers' liability insurance is a requirement under the Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.

The practice had a sharps policy which informed staff how to handle sharps (particularly needles and sharp dental instruments) safely. We saw the practice used a recognised system for handling sharps safely in accordance with the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, and practice policy. The principal dentist said that only dentists handled sharp instruments such as needles.

There were sharps bins (secure bins for the disposal of needles, blades or any other instrument that posed a risk of injury through cutting or pricking.) We saw the sharps bins were located in accordance with the guidance which states sharps bins should not be located on the floor, and should be out of reach of small children.

Discussions with dentists and a review of patients' dental care records identified the dentists were using rubber dams when carrying out root canal treatments. Guidelines from the British Endodontic Society recommend that dentists should be using rubber dams. A rubber dam is a thin rubber sheet that isolates selected teeth and protects the rest of the patient's mouth and airway during treatment. We saw the practice had a supply of rubber dam kits in the practice.

Medical emergencies

The dental practice was equipped to deal with any medical emergencies that might occur. This included emergency medicines and oxygen which were located in a secure central location. We checked the emergency medicines and found they were all in date and stored appropriately. We saw the practice had a designated member of staff who

Are services safe?

was responsible for checking and recording expiry dates of medicines, and replacing when necessary. However we found that the practice did not stock one medication as listed in the Resuscitation Council guidance to help a person suffering an epileptic fit. We discussed this with the principal dentist who stated they would purchase this medicine immediately. Following our inspection we received evidence to show they had this medicine available.

There was an automated external defibrillator (AED) at the practice. An AED is a portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses life threatening irregularities of the heart and delivers an electrical shock to attempt to restore a normal heart rhythm. Records showed the AED was being checked regularly to ensure it was working correctly. This complied with the Resuscitation Council UK guidelines.

All staff had completed basic life support and resuscitation training individually throughout 2016. Additional emergency equipment available at the practice included: airways to support breathing, manual resuscitation equipment (a bag valve mask) and a portable suction unit.

Staff recruitment

There was a recruitment policy which did not have a review date. We looked at the staff recruitment files to check that the recruitment procedures had been followed. The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 identifies information and records that should be held in all staff recruitment files. This includes: checking the person's skills and qualifications; that they are registered with professional bodies where relevant; evidence of good conduct in previous employment and where necessary a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (or a risk assessment if a DBS was not needed). 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. We found that all members of staff had received a DBS check. However we found that the majority of these were from a previous employer and over six months old. We discussed the records that should be held in the recruitment files with the practice owner who assured us that all staff will be subject to a new DBS check immediately. Following our inspection we received confirmation that these checks had been carried out.

Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

The practice had a health and safety policy. In addition the practice had completed environmental risk assessments. For example there were risk assessments for: the practice in general, the autoclave, manual handling, fire, electrical safety, bodily fluids, blood borne infections and radiation (X-rays).

Records showed that the fire extinguishers had last been serviced in October 2015. The practice had completed a fire evacuation drill on 19 April 2016 and a fire risk assessment had been carried out in June 2015 by an external company.

Infection control

Dental practices should be working towards compliance with the Department of Health's guidance, 'Health Technical Memorandum 01-05 (HTM 01-05): Decontamination in primary care dental practices' in respect of infection control and decontamination of equipment. This document sets out clear guidance on the procedures that should be followed, records that should be kept, staff training, and equipment that should be available.

The practice had an infection control policy which had not been updated and contained information that was no longer current guidance. We brought this to the attention of the provider who addressed this immediately. The policy was readily available to all staff working in the practice. We saw that dental nurses had set responsibilities for cleaning and infection control in each individual treatment rooms. The practice had systems for testing and auditing the infection control procedures and there were records and documentation to demonstrate this.

Records showed that regular six monthly infection control audits had been completed. We noted that the audits referred to the use of the illuminated magnifier being used routinely. This was not the case as it was located in another room away from the decontamination area. We discussed this with the principal dentist. Following our inspection we received confirmation that the illuminated magnification was now installed in the decontamination room. We saw that infection control audits were as recommended by HTM 01-05, being completed on a six monthly basis.

The practice had a clinical waste contract with a recognised company. We saw that clinical waste was collected regularly. The waste was stored securely away from patient areas while awaiting collection. The clinical waste contract

Are services safe?

also covered the collection of amalgam and teeth that had been removed. Amalgam is a type of dental filling which contains mercury and is therefore considered a hazardous material. The practice had a spillage kit for mercury. There were also spillage kits for bodily fluids which were in date.

There was a decontamination room where dental instruments were cleaned and sterilised. There was a clear flow from dirty to clean areas to reduce the risk of cross contamination and infection. Staff wore personal protective equipment during the process to protect themselves from injury. This included the use of heavy duty gloves, aprons and protective eye wear.

We saw how instruments were being cleaned and sterilised at the practice, with a dental nurse demonstrating the decontamination process. We saw the procedures were as outlined in the published guidance (HTM 01-05) except for checking the instruments following manual scrubbing had taken place.

The practice carried out manual scrubbing of instruments. After cleaning the dental instruments were rinsed under running water, we discussed this as it provided an aerosol risk. The staff assured us that they would rinse the instruments in a bowl of water to prevent the aerosol risk in future. We were aware that staff did not examine instruments using an illuminated magnifying glass and we found instruments intended for re-use that still had debris on them. We were assured following our inspection that instruments were being checked using the illuminated magnifier. Finally the instruments were sterilised in an autoclave (a device for sterilising dental and medical instruments). At the completion of the sterilising process, all instruments were cooled, dried, and stored in pouches which were stamped with an expiry date. The staff told us how they checked the pouched instruments to ensure they were within date or required to be re-processed before use.

We checked the records to demonstrate that equipment used for cleaning and sterilising the dental instruments was maintained and serviced regularly in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. The records demonstrated the equipment was in good working order and being effectively maintained.

The practice had access to occupational health facilities through the local hospital. We saw records which demonstrated staff had received inoculations against Hepatitis B. Health professionals who are likely to come

into contact with blood products, or who are at increased risk of sharps injuries should receive these vaccinations to minimise the risk of contracting blood borne infections such as Hepatitis B.

The practice had a risk assessment for dealing with the risks posed by Legionella. This had been carried out by the principal dentist. Legionella is a bacterium found in the environment which can contaminate water systems in buildings. The assessment had not identified actions, such as, regular monitoring of hot and cold water temperatures at each water outlet or had any water sampling carried out. The risk assessment only referred to the flushing and disinfection of the dental unit waterlines and had not considered other water supplies in the building. Following our inspection we received evidence that water sampling had been carried out and sent to laboratory for analysis and that water outlets in the building were being monitored for water temperatures.

Equipment and medicines

The practice kept records to demonstrate that equipment had been maintained and serviced in line with the manufacturer's guidelines and instructions. Portable appliance testing (PAT) had been completed on electrical equipment at the practice in August 2016.

The practice had most of the medicines needed for an emergency situation, as recommended by the British National Formulary (BNF) with the exception of a medicine used for epilepsy. We received confirmation that this medicine had been purchased following our inspection. Medicines were stored securely and appropriately and there were sufficient stocks available for use.

The practice held a small stock of medicines to dispense to patients such as, antibiotics and pain relief medicine. We looked at the processes for the procurement, storage, dispensing, recording and disposing of medicines to assess if this was in-line with the Medicines Act 1968. We found that there were some gaps such as; recording who was the prescriber and the amounts held in stock. We discussed this with the principal dentist. We were provided with documentation following our inspection to show that all aspects of the Medicines Act were being adhered to.

Are services safe?

The practice had recently purchased a brand new pressure vessel (compressor) which produced the compressed air for the dental drills and hand pieces. We were provided with the written scheme for this piece of equipment following our inspection as it had just been installed.

Radiography (X-rays)

The practice had a Radiation Protection file which contained most of the relevant information and records relating to the X-ray machines and their safe use on the premises.

The practice had two intraoral X-ray machines (intraoral X-rays are small images taken inside the mouth).

X-rays were carried out in line with local rules that were relevant to the practice and specified equipment. The local rules for the use of each X-ray machine were available in each area where X-rays were carried out. The local rules are bespoke operating procedures for the area where X-rays are taken and the amount of radiation required to achieve a good image. Each practice must compile their own local rules for each X-ray set on the premises. The local rules set out the dimensions of the controlled area. This is a set parameter around the dental chair/patient and the lowest dose possible. Applying the local rules to each X-ray taken means that X-rays are carried out safely

The Radiation Protection file and the local rules identified who was the radiation protection supervisor (RPS) this being the principal dentist. The provider had appointed an external radiation protection advisor (RPA). This was a company who were available for expert advice regarding the machinery and radiation safety. The Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999 (IRR 99) requires that an RPA and an RPS

to be appointed and identified in the local rules. Their role is to ensure the equipment is operated safely and only by qualified staff. The RPS must be somebody who has a radiography qualification and is on the premises whilst X-rays are being conducted. The RPS has oversight of radiation safety in the practice.

Records showed the X-ray equipment had last been checked by an engineer in September 2015. The Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999 (IRR 99) require that X-ray equipment is inspected at least once every three years to ensure it is safe and working correctly. On the day of our inspection we noted that the practice did not have a Health and Safety Executive notification (HSE) that radiographs were being taken on the premises. This was a requirement of the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000. We asked the practice owner to arrange for this to be obtained and added to the radiation protection file. Following our inspection we were sent this document and were assured that the radiation protection file was now complete.

All patients were required to complete a medical history form and the dentist considered each patient's individual circumstances to ensure it was safe for them to receive X-rays. This included identifying where patients might be pregnant. There were risk assessments in place for pregnant and nursing mothers.

Patients' dental care records showed that information related to X-rays was recorded in line with guidance from the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000. This included grading of the X-ray, views taken, justification for taking the X-ray and the clinical findings.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The practice held electronic and paper dental care records for each patient. They contained information about the patients' assessments, diagnosis, and treatment and also recorded the discussion and advice given to patients by dental professionals. The dental care records showed a thorough examination had been completed and identified risk factors such as smoking and diet for each patient.

Patients at the practice completed a medical history form at each visit. Following the patient's first visit the information was transferred into the electronic records and updated at each following visit. This allowed dentists to check the patient's medical history before treatment began. The patients' medical histories included any health conditions, medicines being taken and whether the patient might be pregnant or had any allergies.

The dental care records showed that dentists assessed the patients' periodontal tissues (the gums) and soft tissues of the mouth. The dentists used the basic periodontal examination (BPE) screening tool. BPE is a simple and rapid screening tool used by dentists to indicate the level of treatment needed in relation to a patient's gums.

We saw dentists used national guidelines on which to base treatments and develop treatment plans for managing patients' oral health. Discussions with dentists showed they were aware of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, particularly in respect of the timescales for recalling patients; prescribing of antibiotics for patients at risk of infective endocarditis (a condition that affects the heart); and lower wisdom tooth removal. A review of the records identified that the dentists were following NICE guidelines in their treatment of patients.

Health promotion & prevention

The practice had a variety of information for patients in the waiting room. There were leaflets in reception and posters about treatments and giving health education information to patients.

Discussions with dentists identified that children were assessed on an individual basis to check their risk of dental decay. This resulted in children being offered fluoride application varnish and fluoride toothpaste if they were identified as being at risk. This was in accordance with the

government document: 'Delivering better oral health: an evidence based toolkit for prevention. This had been produced to support dental teams in improving patients' oral and general health.

We saw examples in patients' dental care records that dentists had provided advice on the harmful effects of smoking, alcohol and diet and their effect on oral health. With regard to smoking, dentists had particularly highlighted the risk of dental disease and oral cancer.

Information on display in the reception area gave patients information and advice on stopping smoking. This included contact details for other agencies who could be of assistance.

Staffing

The practice had three dentists; two qualified dental nurses, one receptionist and a hygienist. Before the inspection we checked the registrations of all dental care professionals with the General Dental Council (GDC) register. We found all staff were up to date with their professional registration with the GDC.

We looked at staff training records held in staff files and these identified that clinical staff were maintaining their continuing professional development (CPD). CPD is a compulsory requirement of registration with the GDC. The training certificates showed how many hours training staff had undertaken together with which training courses were attended. This was to ensure staff remained up-to-date and continued to develop their dental skills and knowledge. The practice manager kept records to monitor the number of hours each dental professional had completed each year. Examples of training completed included: radiography (X-rays), infection control, and medical emergencies, although we noted that infection control training had lapsed we were shown evidence of courses booked in the near future.

Working with other services

The practice made referrals to other dental professionals based on risks or if a patient required treatment that was not offered at the practice. The practice had a policy for making referrals to other services. The policy identified when and how to make referrals and had a section on making urgent referrals for patients who had suspected oral cancer. This was to the maxillofacial department at the local hospital. Staff demonstrated these were faxed through immediately to the hospital where the referral had

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

been made. These referrals were tracked through a log at reception, and we saw evidence that referrals had been made promptly. Patients were given details of any referral made on their behalf.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice had a consent policy. The policy made reference to the different aspects of consent. The practice also had a policy regarding adults who lacked capacity and this made reference to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) and best interests decisions. The MCA provides a legal framework for acting and making decisions on behalf of adults who lacked the capacity to make particular decisions for themselves. Staff at the practice had completed training in the MCA and could, when questioned describe how the MCA would affect their work and patients and how they would implement it.

Consent was recorded in the practice using a treatment plan. This form recorded both consent and provided a treatment plan. The dentist discussed the treatment plan with the patients and explained the treatment process. This allowed the patient to give their informed consent. A hard copy of the consent form was retained by both the practice and the patient.

Discussions with the dentist identified they were aware of Gillick competency. This refers to the legal precedent set that a child may have adequate knowledge and understanding of a course of action that they are able to consent for themselves without the need for parental permission or knowledge. However, staff said it was unusual for children to come to the practice unaccompanied by either a parent or guardian.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion & empathy

The reception desk was located away from the waiting room. Staff said they were aware of the need for confidentiality and if it were necessary there were areas of the practice where private discussions could be carried out, such as an unused treatment room. Staff said that patients' individual treatments were discussed in the treatment room not at reception.

Patients said staff were always friendly, polite and professional. Feedback from patients identified that they were always treated with dignity and respect by the reception staff.

We observed staff members throughout the day to see how staff spoke with patients. We saw that staff were professional, polite, and welcoming.

We saw that patient confidentiality was maintained at the practice. Patients commented about confidentiality and that they had no concerns about their confidentiality being breached. Computer screens could not be overlooked by patients standing at the reception desk. We saw that patients' dental care records were password protected and held securely.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

Feedback from patients was positive with patients saying they were happy with the dental service they received. Patients spoke positively about the staff and said the facilities were clean and comfortable. Patients told us they felt involved in their treatment and they were encouraged to ask questions and talk with staff about any aspect of their treatment.

We spoke with one dentist about how each patient had their diagnosis and dental treatment discussed with them. We saw evidence in the patient care records of how the treatment options and costs were explained and recorded before treatment started. All patients were given a written copy of the treatment plan which included any costs that may be involved.

Where it was necessary dentists gave patients information about preventing dental decay and gum disease. We saw examples in patients' dental care records. Dentists had discussed the risks associated with smoking and diet, and this was recorded in patients' dental care records. The practice was proactive with regard to smoking cessation advice and we saw posters and booklets in the waiting room that gave additional information.

Patients' follow-up appointments were in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

The practice had three treatment rooms, all were on the ground floor.

The practice had separate staff and patient areas, to assist with confidentiality and security. We saw there was a sufficient supply of instruments to meet the needs of the practice.

Patients commented that they had not had a problem getting an appointment whether either it was routine or needed in an emergency. Patients also told us they found reception staff were very helpful, friendly and approachable. Staff said that when patients were in pain or where treatment was urgent the practice had made efforts to see the patient the same day. Comment cards were viewed reflected this.

We reviewed the appointment book, and saw that patients were allocated sufficient time to receive their treatment and have discussions with the dentist. The practice scheduled emergency slots for patients who were in pain or who required urgent treatment. In addition there was a sit and wait system for patients who were unable to get an emergency appointment but who were in pain or who required emergency treatment. Staff said that generally the practice ran to time, and waiting times were kept to a minimum.

Tackling inequity and promoting equality

The practice was over three floors with patient areas on the ground floor. This included three treatment rooms. The practice had a ramp which would allow patients using wheelchair or with restricted mobility to access treatment at the practice.

The practice had a ground floor toilet adapted for the use of patients with mobility problems. The toilet had support bars, grab handles and an emergency pull cord. Taps on the hand wash sink were lever operated.

The practice had access to a recognised company to provide interpreters, and this included the use of sign language. Staff said the practice had not had to use interpreters in the past, but this was available if needed.

Access to the service

The practice's opening hours are – Monday 8.30am to 3pm with alternate evening appointments 4pm to 7pm, 5pm Tuesday 8.30am to 3pm, Wednesday – reception only, alternate Thursdays 5pm to 8pm, and alternate Friday 9am to 1pm. This information was available for patients inside and outside of the practice. In the practice information leaflet and on the website.

Access for urgent treatment outside of opening hours is by telephoning the practice and following the instructions on the answerphone message or by telephoning the local NHS dental emergency service.

Concerns & complaints

The practice had a complaints procedure. The procedure explained how to complain and included other agencies to contact if the complaint was not resolved to the patients satisfaction. Information about how to complain was on display in the practice leaflet.

From information received before the inspection we saw that there had been two complaints received in the 12 months prior to our inspection. The complaints had been acknowledged and resolved as per the practice policy.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

The principal dentist was responsible for all policies and procedural documents at the practice. We saw a number of policies and procedures and saw that there were some that had been reviewed and were relevant. Some other policies were reviewed and contained out of date information. Other policies did not have a review date and lacked some information. We discussed this with the principal dentist who reviewed and updated all of the policies identified and shared them with us after our inspection.

We spoke with staff who said they understood their roles and could speak with either a dentist or the practice owner if they had any concerns. Staff said they understood the management structure at the practice. We spoke with two members of staff who said the practice was a good place to work and they felt supported as part of the team.

We looked at a selection of dental care records to assess if they were complete, legible, accurate, and secure. The dental care records we saw contained sufficient detail and identified patients' needs, care and treatment

Leadership, openness and transparency

The practice was managed by the principal dentist who was also the practice owner. Staff told us that the principal dentist was easy to contact either by telephone or email if they were not on the premises and always responded promptly when contacted.

The practice conducted staff meetings monthly which covered a variety of subjects and addressed items concerned with the day to day running of the practice. We reviewed practice meeting minutes for June, July, August and October 2016. During these meetings we saw that staff had discussed record keeping consistency, antibiotic prescribing, medical emergencies, infection control which included a discussion about the most recent infection control audit and the practice fire procedures.

Staff at the practice said there was a close team and they were able to express their views during daily chats. Staff said dentists were approachable and were available to discuss any concerns.

Discussions with different members of staff showed there was a good understanding of how the practice worked, and knowledge of policies and procedures.

Copies of the General Dental Council's nine principles were displayed in the waiting room. This gave patients an insight into the standards they could expect from their dental practice.

The practice had a whistleblowing policy and staff could demonstrate what they would do if they felt that they needed to raise any concerns if they had any issues with a colleagues' conduct or clinical practice. They told us how they would do this both internally and with identified external agencies.

Learning and improvement

We saw that the practice had carried out a schedule of audits throughout the year. Records showed that audits had been completed over several years demonstrating a commitment to improvement. Regular auditing allowed the practice to identify both areas for improvement, and where quality had been achieved. This was particularly in respect of the clinical areas. Examples of completed audits included: a record audit specifically looking at basic periodontal examination (BPE) scoring. This audit had identified that out of 100 records examined only 28% had a BPE score recorded. As a result actions were identified to ensure that BPE scores were recorded routinely by means of; inclusion of a BPE instrument on an examination tray and a protocol created to support the dental nurses to prompt the dentist to conduct and record a BPE. A second audit was conducted and the report showed that 83% of the records reviewed had a BPE score recorded. Therefore staff were able to analyse what improvements were required in some areas.

Clinical staff working at the practice were supported to maintain their continuing professional development (CPD) as required by the General Dental Council (GDC). Training records at the practice showed that clinical staff were completing most of their CPD and the hours completed had been recorded. Dentists are required to complete 250 hours of CPD over a five year period, while other dental professionals need to complete 150 hours over the same period.

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

The practice carried out patient satisfaction surveys and we reviewed the results for 2016. We looked at the format for the survey, the questions asked and saw that it covered appointments, waiting times, information given and comfort at the practice. It also gave the opportunity for

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patients to suggest improvements. The results were very positive with few negative comments. The negative comments related to lack of parking and sometimes having to wait to be seen.