

Visa Medicals Ltd

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Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 18 February 2019 to ask the service the following key questions; Are services safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led?

Our findings were:

Are services safe?

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

Are services effective?

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

Are services caring?

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

Are services responsive?

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

Are services well-led?

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

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 service was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

Visa Medical Ltd provides medical examinations for people who require medicals for visa applications for Canada and USA.

This service is registered with CQC under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 in respect of the provision of advice or treatment by, or under the supervision of, a medical practitioner, including the prescribing of medicines.

The practice manager 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 patients' feedback we received were positive about the service, for example describing the service as friendly and efficient.

Our key findings were:

- The clinicians were aware of current evidence based guidance and had the skills and knowledge to deliver effective care and treatment.
- The provider had systems in place to protect people from avoidable harm and abuse.

Summary of findings

- The service had arrangements in place to respond to medical emergencies.
- The provider had quality improvement processes in place.
- The patient feedback indicated that people were very satisfied with the service they received.

Dr Rosie Benneyworth BM BS BMedSci MRCGP

Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

Visa Medicals Ltd

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

Visa Medical Ltd is a private facility providing 'third party' medical examinations to individuals who require medicals for visa applications to visit the United States of America and Canada.

The service is open 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm on occasional Saturdays. Patients are asked to call to book an appointment by telephone between 9am and 5pm

The service estimates that it has consultation with approximately 200 people a week.

Patient facilities are provided on the first floor of the building. The provider employs 8 immigration doctors, a practice manager, three nurses, three radiographers and three reception/administrative staff.

The provider is registered with CQC to carry out regulated activities of Treatment of disease, disorder and injury and Diagnostic and screening.

We carried out this inspection on 18 February 2019. The inspection team comprised of a CQC inspector and a GP specialist advisor.

Before visiting, we reviewed a range of information we hold about the service and asked the practice to send us some information about the service which we also reviewed.

During our visit we:

- Spoke with the doctors, radiographer, the practice manager and administration staff.
- Reviewed internal patient surveys.
- Reviewed documentary evidence relating to the service and inspected the facilities, equipment and security arrangements.
- We reviewed a number of patient records alongside the doctor. We needed to do this to understand how the service assessed and documented patients' needs, consent and any treatment required.

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 formed the framework for the areas we looked at during the inspection.

Are services safe?

Our findings

We found that this service was providing safe services in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Safety systems and processes

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

- The provider 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 reviewed and were accessible to all staff. They outlined clearly who to go to for further 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. 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.
- The service maintained appropriate standards of cleanliness and hygiene. The premises were cleaned daily and we saw cleaning schedules and monitoring systems were in place. There were infection prevention and control protocols which were implemented and reviewed. The provider had carried out an infection control audit in August 2018. Staff had received up to date training on these. The provider disposed of clinical waste appropriately.
- The landlord had a range of health and safety and environmental policies in place. Health and safety risk

assessments for the premises had been carried out and we saw that an external company had undertaken a legionella risk assessment who had identified a number of actions that the provider was in the process of completing. Fire safety equipment was regularly tested.

- All electrical and clinical equipment was checked and calibrated to ensure it was safe to use and was in good working order. There were up to date maintenance and testing records for x-ray equipment.
- We saw evidence to demonstrate compliance with Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000 (amended 2006 and 2011) [IR(ME)R] and Ionising Radiations Regulations [IRR] 1999 requirements.

Risks to patients

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

- There were arrangements for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention.
- When there were changes to services or staff the service assessed and monitored the impact on safety.
- There were appropriate indemnity arrangements in place to cover all potential liabilities.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

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

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

Are services safe?

- The systems and arrangements for managing medicines, including emergency medicines and equipment minimised risks.
- The service kept prescription stationery securely and monitored its use.
- 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.

Track record on safety

The service had a good safety record.

- There were risk assessments in relation to safety issues, for example, the X-ray equipment.
- 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

There were systems in place for identifying, investigating and learning from safety incidents. The practice had a definition of a 'serious incident' which staff were required to report. It had also encouraged staff to report less serious incidents which might lead to improvement. Action and learning arising from incidents was also reviewed at practice meetings to which all staff were invited.

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

When there were unexpected or unintended safety incidents:

- The service gave affected people reasonable support, truthful information and a verbal and written apology.
- They kept written records in patients' notes of verbal interactions as well as written correspondence.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

We found that this service was providing effective services in accordance with the relevant regulations.

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.

Monitoring care and treatment

The service had systems in place to monitor and improve the quality of care and treatment.

The service made improvements through the use of completed audits. They had carried out annual auditing of blood tests in relation to HIV positive results, to ensure that all patients had been referred to HIV centres and had received appropriate post-test counselling. The provider told us they had provided coaching to doctors to ensure they all had the skills to discuss a 'positive diagnosis'. The provide found that the results in 2017 demonstrated that everyone had received appropriate advice and support from the clinicians. The audit carried out in February 2019 found no applicant had tested HIV positive in the last twelve months.

Effective staffing

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

- All staff were appropriately qualified. The provider had an induction programme for all newly appointed staff.
- Relevant professionals were registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) and were up to date with revalidation.

- The provider understood the learning needs of staff and provided protected time and training to meet them. Up to date records of skills, qualifications and training were maintained. Staff were encouraged and given opportunities to develop.

Coordinating patient care and information sharing

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

- Patients received coordinated and person-centred care. Staff referred to, and communicated effectively with, other services when appropriate for example, NHS health services.
- Before providing treatment, doctors at the service ensured they had adequate knowledge of the patient's health, any relevant test results and their medicines history.
- All patients were asked for consent to share details of their consultation and any medicines prescribed with their registered GP on each occasion they used the service.
- 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 have been referred to other services.

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.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is 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. Patients would be asked for identification when attending the clinic.

Are services caring?

Our findings

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

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

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

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

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

- Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language. Patients were told about multi-lingual staff who might be able to support them. Information leaflets were available in easy read formats, to help patients be involved in decisions about their care.
- We saw from the providers internal feedback that they patients felt listened to and supported by staff.
- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.

Privacy and Dignity

The service respected patients' privacy and dignity.

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

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

We found that this service was providing responsive services in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Responding to and meeting people's needs

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

- The provider understood the needs of their patients and improved services in response to those needs.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.

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 reported that the appointment system was easy to use.
- Referrals and transfers to other services were undertaken in a timely way. For example, where patients were referred to other services, referrals would always be followed up by phone within days.

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 a complaints policy and procedures in place. We saw that where the provider had received a complaint they had responded appropriately to resolve the issue.

Are services well-led?

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

Our findings

We found that this service was providing well-led services in accordance with the relevant regulations

Leadership capacity and capability;

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

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

Vision and strategy

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

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

Culture

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

- Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work for the service.
- The service focused on the needs of patients.
- Leadership and managers acted on behaviour and performance consistent 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.

- Staff we spoke with told us they could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they need. This included appraisal and career development conversations. All staff received regular annual appraisals in the last year. Staff were supported to meet the requirements of professional revalidation where necessary. Clinical staff were considered valued members of the team. They were given protected time for professional time for professional development and evaluation of their clinical work.
- 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 leaders and the team.

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.
- Staff were clear on their roles and accountabilities.
- Leadership 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. The leader had oversight of safety alerts, incidents, and complaints.
- There was 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?

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

The service acted on appropriate and accurate information.

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

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

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

- Staff could describe to us the systems in place to give feedback for example through their appraisals, team

meetings and directly to the managers. We saw evidence of feedback opportunities for staff and how the findings were fed back to staff. We also saw staff engagement in responding to these findings.

- The service was transparent, collaborative and open with stakeholders about performance.

Continuous improvement and innovation

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

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement. The doctors attended an annual summit where they received training and updates from representatives of the Canadian and American immigration services.
- The service made use of internal and external reviews of incidents and complaints.
- The leaders encouraged staff to take time out to review individual and team objectives, processes and performance.