

The Briars Dental Centre

The Briars Dental Centre

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 11 March 2019 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 provider was meeting the legal requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations. The inspection was led by a CQC inspector who was supported by a specialist dental adviser.

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

- 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:

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

The Briars Dental is based in Newbury and provides private treatment to patients of all ages.

There is level access for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. Car parking spaces, including those for blue badge holders, are available outside the practice.

The dental team includes five general dentists, one specialist orthodontist, two endodontists, one

Summary of findings

periodontist, eight dental nurses, two dental hygienists, three treatment coordinators, two receptionists and a practice manager. The practice has seven treatment rooms.

The practice is owned by a partnership and as a condition of registration must have a person registered with the Care Quality Commission as the registered manager. Registered managers 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 registered manager at The Briars Dental is one of the dental partners.

On the day of our inspection we collected 13 CQC comment cards filled in by patients and obtained the views of 21 other patients.

During the inspection we spoke with three dentists, one dental hygienist, one dental nurse, two receptionists and the practice manager. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 5.00pm.

Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared clean and well maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk.
- The practice had suitable safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children.
- Improvements were needed to staff recruitment procedures.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Staff treated patients with dignity and respect and took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- The practice had systems to monitor staff training.
- Staff were providing preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system met patients' needs.
- The practice had effective leadership and culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked well as a team.
- The practice asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided.
- The practice dealt with complaints positively and efficiently.
- The practice had suitable information governance arrangements.
- Improvements were needed to ensure audit were carried out and action plans reflected the results of audits.
- All the shortfalls found during our inspection have since been addressed.

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.

The practice had systems and processes to provide safe care and treatment. They used learning from incidents and complaints to help them improve.

Staff received training in safeguarding and knew how to recognise the signs of abuse and how to report concerns.

Staff were qualified for their roles and the practice completed recruitment checks but improvements were needed to ensure references were obtained for dentists. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Premises and equipment were clean and properly maintained. The practice followed national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments.

Five staff members had not completed fire safety training. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

The practice had suitable arrangements for dealing with medical and other emergencies.

No action



Are services effective?

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

The dentists assessed patients' needs and provided care and treatment in line with recognised guidance.

Patients described the treatment they received as thorough and clearly explained. The dentists discussed treatment with patients so they could give informed consent and recorded this in their records.

The practice had clear arrangements when patients needed to be referred to other dental or health care professionals. However, referrals were not tracked to ensure they were dealt with in a timely manner. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

The practice supported staff to complete training relevant to their roles

No action



Are services caring?

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

We received feedback about the practice from 34 people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were professional, caring and respectful.

No action



Summary of findings

Patients said they were given professional dental treatment, and their dentist listened to them. Patients commented that staff made them feel at ease, especially when they were anxious about visiting the dentist.

We saw that staff protected patients' privacy and were aware of the importance of confidentiality. Patients said staff treated them with dignity and respect.

We noted the windows in one treatment room were overlooked by neighbouring buildings and asked the practice to consider remedial action to protect patients' privacy. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall is being addressed.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

The practice's appointment system took account of patients' needs. Patients could get an appointment quickly if in pain.

Staff considered patients' different needs. This included providing facilities for disabled patients and families with children. The practice had access to telephone interpreter services but did not have arrangements to help patients with sight or hearing loss. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

The practice took patients views seriously. They valued compliments from patients and responded to concerns and complaints quickly and constructively.

No action 

Are services well-led?

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

The practice had arrangements to ensure the smooth running of the service. These included systems for the practice team to discuss the quality and safety of the care and treatment provided. There was a clearly defined management structure and staff felt supported and appreciated.

The practice team kept complete patient dental care records which were, clearly written or typed and stored securely.

The provider monitored clinical and non-clinical areas of their work to help them improve and learn. This included asking for and listening to the views of patients and staff.

Improvements were needed to ensure that antimicrobial, implant and radiograph audits were carried out effectively. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Whilst it is not a requirement to carry out audits of implants, it is considered good practice to audit patient outcomes in implantology.

No action 

Are services safe?

Our findings

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

The practice had clear systems to keep patients safe.

Staff knew their responsibilities if they had concerns about the safety of children, young people and adults who were vulnerable due to their circumstances. The practice had safeguarding policies and procedures to provide staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. All staff received safeguarding training. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns, including notification to the CQC.

The practice had a system to highlight vulnerable patients on records e.g. children with child protection plans, adults where there were safeguarding concerns, people with a learning disability or a mental health condition, or who require other support such as with mobility or communication.

The practice had a whistleblowing policy. Staff felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of reprimand.

The dentists used dental dams in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment.

The practice had a business continuity plan describing how the practice would deal with events that could disrupt the normal running of the practice.

We noted that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover.

The practice had a staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. Improvements were required to ensure references were obtained for dentists in line with the provider's recruitment policy. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

The practice ensured that facilities and equipment were safe and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions.

Firefighting equipment, such as the fire alarm fire extinguishers were regularly serviced. Records were unavailable to confirm the emergency lighting was regularly serviced. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

We saw evidence that 21 of the 26 staff had received fire safety training in the previous 12 months. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

The practice had suitable arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment. They met current radiation regulations and had the required information in their radiation protection file.

We saw evidence that the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits every year following current guidance and legislation. Improvements were needed to ensure that action plans reflected the results of radiograph audits. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Clinical staff completed continuing professional development (CPD) in respect of dental radiography.

The practice had a cone beam computed tomography machine. Records to confirm staff had received adequate training and appropriate safeguards were in place for patients and staff were not available. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Risks to patients

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

The practice's health and safety policies, procedures and risk assessments were reviewed regularly to help manage potential risk. The practice had current employer's liability insurance.

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. The staff followed relevant safety regulation when using needles and other sharp dental items. A sharps risk assessment had been undertaken and was updated annually.

Are services safe?

The provider had a system in place to ensure clinical staff had received appropriate vaccinations, including the vaccination to protect them against the Hepatitis B virus, and that the effectiveness of the vaccination was checked.

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

Emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in recognised guidance. Staff kept records of their checks to make sure these were available, within their expiry date, and in working order. We noted one medicine was not available in the recommended oral dose. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

A dental nurse worked with the dentists and hygienists when they treated patients in line with GDC Standards for the Dental Team.

The provider had suitable risk assessments to minimise the risk that can be caused from substances that are hazardous to health.

The practice had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures. They followed guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM 01-05) published by the Department of Health and Social Care. Staff completed infection prevention and control training and received updates as required.

The practice had suitable arrangements for transporting, cleaning, checking, sterilising and storing instruments in line with HTM 01-05. The records showed equipment used by staff for cleaning and sterilising instruments was validated, maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance.

An annual infection control statement was not available. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

The practice had systems in place to ensure that any work was disinfected prior to being sent to a dental laboratory.

The practice had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water

systems, in line with a risk assessment. All recommendations had been actioned and records of water testing and dental unit water line management were in place.

We saw cleaning schedules for the premises. The practice appeared clean when we inspected and patients confirmed that this was usual.

The practice had policies and procedures in place to ensure clinical waste was segregated and stored appropriately in line with guidance.

The practice carried out infection prevention and control audits twice a year. The latest audit showed the practice was meeting the required standards.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

We discussed with the dentists how information to deliver safe care and treatment was handled and recorded. We looked at a sample of dental care records to confirm our findings and noted that individual records were written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. Dental care records we saw were accurate, complete, and legible and were kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The provider had systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

There was a suitable stock control system of medicines which were held on site. This ensured that medicines did not pass their expiry date and enough medicines were available if required.

We noted the labelling of dispensed medicines required improvement. Labels did not contain the name and address of the supplying dentist in line with the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 [15,16]. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Antimicrobial prescribing audits were not carried out which meant the dentists could not demonstrate they were following national guidelines. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Track record on safety

The practice had a good safety record.

Are services safe?

There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues. The practice monitored and reviewed incidents. This helped it to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture that led to safety improvements.

Lessons learned and improvements

The practice learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

The staff were aware of the Serious Incident Framework and recorded, responded to and discussed all incidents to reduce risk and support future learning in line with the framework.

There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The practice learned and shared lessons, identified themes and took action to improve safety in the practice.

There was a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts. The practice learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts. We saw they were shared with the team and acted upon if required.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep dental practitioners up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw that clinicians assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

The practice was providing preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health.

The dentists prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them. They used fluoride varnish for children and adults based on an assessment of the risk of tooth decay.

The dentists told us that where applicable they discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and diet with patients during appointments. The practice had a selection of dental products for sale and provided health promotion leaflets to help patients with their oral health.

The practice was aware of national oral health campaigns and local schemes available in supporting patients to live healthier lives. For example, local stop smoking services. They directed patients to these schemes when necessary.

The dentist described to us the procedures they used to improve the outcome of periodontal treatment. This involved preventative advice, taking plaque and gum bleeding scores and detailed charts of the patient's gum condition.

Patients with more severe gum disease were recalled at more frequent intervals to review their compliance and to reinforce home care preventative advice.

Consent to care and treatment

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

The practice team understood the importance of obtaining and recording patients' consent to treatment. The dentists gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these so they could make informed decisions. Patients confirmed their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment.

The practice's consent policy included information about the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The team understood their responsibilities under the act when treating adults who may not be able to make informed decisions. The policy also referred to Gillick competence, by which a child under the age of 16 years of age can consent for themselves. The staff were aware of the need to consider this when treating young people under 16 years of age.

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 containing information about the patients' current dental needs, past treatment and medical histories. The dentists assessed patients' treatment needs in line with recognised guidance.

We saw that the practice audited patients' dental care records to check that the dentists recorded the necessary information.

Conscious Sedation

The practice carried out conscious sedation for patients who were nervous. This included people who were very nervous of dental treatment and those who needed complex or lengthy treatment. The practice could not demonstrate their current systems helped them do this safely.

Following discussion, the provider assured us no sedation services would be undertaken until systems were set up in accordance with guidelines published by the Royal College of Surgeons and Royal College of Anaesthetists in 2015. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall is being addressed.

Effective staffing

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

Staff new to the practice had a period of induction based on a structured induction programme.

The practice supported staff to complete training, as highly recommended by the GDC.

Staff told us they discussed training needs at annual appraisals, one to one meetings and during clinical supervision.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

We saw evidence that staff, except for dentists, completed appraisals and how the practice addressed the training requirements. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall is being addressed.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

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

Dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide.

The practice had systems and processes to identify, manage, follow up and where required refer patients for specialist care when presenting with bacterial infections.

The practice also had systems and processes for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two-week wait arrangements. This was initiated by NICE in 2005 to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist but referrals were not tracked to ensure they were dealt with in a timely manner. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion

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

Patients commented positively that staff were respectful, pleasant and helpful. We saw that staff treated appropriately and were friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

Patients said staff were compassionate and understanding and they told us they could choose whether they saw a male or female dentist.

Patients told us staff were kind and helpful when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

Information folders were available for patients to read.

Privacy and dignity

The practice respected and promoted patients' privacy and dignity.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. The layout of reception and waiting areas provided privacy when reception staff were dealing with patients. Staff told us that if a patient asked for more privacy they would take them into another area in the practice. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave patients' personal information where other patients might see it.

We noted the windows in one treatment room were overlooked by neighbouring buildings and asked the practice to consider a different arrangement to protect patients' privacy. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

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

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients be involved in decisions about their care and were aware of the requirements under the Equality Act

Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language.

The practice gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices. Patients confirmed that staff listened to them, did not rush them and discussed options for treatment with them. A dentist described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options.

The practice's website 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 photographs, models, X-ray images and an intra-oral camera images.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

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 on the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering treatment.

Patients described high levels of satisfaction with the responsive service provided by the practice.

A Disability Access audit had been completed and the action plan followed.

The practice provided step free access to the reception and a ground floor treatment room. a hearing loop and magnifying lenses. The layout of the building did not allow for a wheelchair accessible toilet.

There were no arrangements in place to support patients with sight and hearing loss. We have since been provided evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Timely access to services

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

The practice displayed its opening hours in the premises, and included it in their practice information leaflet and on their website.

The practice had an efficient appointment system to respond to patients' needs. Staff told us that patients who requested an urgent appointment were seen the same day. Patients told us they had enough time during their appointment and did not feel rushed. Appointments ran smoothly on the day of the inspection and patients were not kept waiting.

The dental partners took part in an emergency on-call arrangement with each other on a rota basis.

The practice website and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open. Patients confirmed they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

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

The practice had a complaints policy providing guidance to staff on how to handle a complaint. The practice information leaflet explained how to make a complaint.

The practice manager was responsible for dealing with these. Staff told us they would tell the practice manager about any formal or informal comments or concerns straight away so patients received a quick response.

The practice manager told us they aimed to settle complaints in-house and invited patients to speak with them in person to discuss these. Information was available about organisations patients could contact if not satisfied with the way the practice dealt with their concerns.

We looked at comments, compliments and complaints the practice received. Information for patients showed that a complaint would be acknowledged within two days and investigated within 21 days.

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

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Leadership capacity and capability

Leaders had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care and had the experience, capacity and skills to deliver the practice strategy and address risks to it.

They 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 practice had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the practice.

Vision and strategy

There was a clear vision and set of values. The practice had a realistic strategy and supporting business plans to achieve priorities.

Culture

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

Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice.

The practice focused on the needs of patients.

Leaders and managers acted on behaviour and performance inconsistent with the vision and values.

Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated when responding to incidents and complaints. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Duty of Candour.

Staff could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.

Governance and management

There were clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

The clinical director, who was also a dentist the practice, had overall responsibility for the clinical leadership of the practice.

The practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the service.

Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities.

The provider 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.

There were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

Appropriate and accurate information

The practice acted on appropriate and accurate information.

Quality and operational information was used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.

The 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

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

The practice used patient surveys, comment cards and verbal comments to obtain staff and patients' views about the service. A change as a result of patient feedback included availability of free Wi-Fi.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings, surveys, and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on. A change as a result of staff feedback included the practice installing air conditioning.

Continuous improvement and innovation

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

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

Improvements were needed to ensure that antimicrobial, implant and radiograph audits were carried out effectively.

Are services well-led?

Whilst it is not a requirement to carry out audits of implants, it is considered good practice to audit patient outcomes in implantology. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

The practice manager showed a commitment to learning and improvement and valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff.

All staff, except dentists, received annual appraisals. They discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for

future professional development. We saw evidence of completed appraisals in the staff folders. We have since been provided with evidence to confirm this shortfall has been addressed.

Staff completed 'highly recommended' training as per General Dental Council professional standards. This included undertaking medical emergencies and basic life support training annually.

The General Dental Council also requires clinical staff to complete continuing professional development. Staff told us the practice provided support and encouragement for them to do so.