

# Doctorcall London

## Inspection report

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This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

## Ratings

Overall rating for this location

Good



Are services safe?

Good



# Overall summary

**This service is rated as Good overall.** The service had previously been inspected on 27 June 2019. Overall the report was rated as good, but at the latest inspection in 2019 the service was found to be in breach of regulation 12 of HSCA (RA) 2014. The safe key question was rated as requires improvement and a requirement notice was issued. The specific issues found which breached regulation 12 were in regards to arrangements for managing medical emergencies, systems for prescribing and dispensing medicines, services being provided outside of the scope of the service, and insufficient systems to check parental authority or guardianship when children attended..

We carried out an announced focussed inspection of Doctorcall London on 7 July 2021, where we reviewed the identified breaches from the previous report in the safe key question only. We are mindful of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on our regulatory function. We will continue to discharge our regulatory enforcement functions required to keep people safe and to hold providers to account where it is necessary for us to do so. We found that all of the breaches of regulation from the previous inspection had been addressed. Following this inspection, the key questions are rated as:

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Are services safe? – Good

## **Our key findings were:**

- The service provided care in a way that kept patients safe and protected them from avoidable harm.

**Dr Rosie Benneyworth BM BS BMedSci MRCGP**

Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

## Our inspection team

Our inspection team consisted of a CQC lead inspector only.

## Background to Doctorcall London

Doctorcall London provides an independent 24-hour visiting doctor service in London. The doctors carry out home or hotel visits inside the M25 on request.

This inspection covers the visiting doctor service and the provider's clinic in Harley Street in central London, and not other registered locations of the provider. Both the clinic and visiting doctor services are available to children and adults, although most patients seen are adults.

Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic, on average the provider saw between 100 and 200 patients a month, although the numbers had varied based on restrictions put in place either by central government or the service itself since the pandemic began.. There is a focus on providing screening services, travel vaccination and treatment for acute issues, rather than long-term conditions. The provider also provides medical checks and consultations under contract to corporate employers and agencies and in line with certain industry (eg 'oil and gas') requirements. There are arrangements in place for patients to be referred by the provider to other services for diagnostic imaging and specialist care.

The Harley Street clinic is open from Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm and on Saturday from 10am to 1pm. The clinic is located in a converted property. The consultation rooms and office areas occupy the second floor which is accessible by stairs and a lift.

The service currently contracts with 18 self-employed doctors (male and female) to provide the visiting doctor and clinic services. The service employs an administrative team, a service manager, and a supervisor who works across all the sites. The visiting service is additionally supported by a separate call-centre and staff. The medical director has overall responsibility for the service.

Doctorcall London is registered with the Care Quality Commission to provide the regulated activities: diagnostic and screening procedures and treatment of disease, disorder or injury.

### How we inspected this service

During our visit we, spoke with staff including the practice manager and the operations manager. We reviewed documentary evidence relating to the service and inspected the facilities, equipment and security arrangements.

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

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

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

# Are services safe?

## **We rated safe as Good because:**

We carried out this announced focussed inspection on 7 July 2021. We had previously carried out an announced comprehensive inspection in June 2019. At the time of the first inspection the service was not providing safe services. We found the following:

- Arrangements to manage medical emergencies in the clinic lacked clarity and could potentially delay the delivery of treatment.
- The service was not effectively monitoring risks associated with prescribing and dispensing medicines and was not monitoring its prescribing activity.
- There was a lack of clarity about the range of services being provided by different clinic-based doctors (for example, in relation to long term conditions) and whether all risks were being appropriately monitored.
- The provider had not implemented an effective system to check that adults accompanying children had parental authority.

At the time of the inspection visit on 7 July 2021, these issues had been addressed.

## **Safety systems and processes**

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

- The provider conducted safety risk assessments. It had appropriate safety policies, which were regularly reviewed and communicated to staff. They outlined clearly who to go to for further guidance. 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.
- The service had systems in place to assure that an adult accompanying a child had parental authority.

## **Risks to patients**

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

- Emergency equipment which included oxygen, a defibrillator, pulse oximeters, oxygen masks and tubing, and some medicines were available and accessible to treat patients in an emergency.
- The service had reviewed the emergency medicines it considered appropriate to hold at the clinic and to be carried by the visiting doctors.

## **Information to deliver safe care and treatment**

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

- The service had systems for sharing information with staff and other agencies to enable them to deliver safe care and treatment. This included NHS GPs.

## **Safe and appropriate use of medicines**

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

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

# Are services safe?

- The service does not prescribe Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs (medicines that have the highest level of control due to their risk of misuse and dependence).
- 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 prescribing patterns, and staff kept accurate records of medicines. Reviews ensured that the service was not prescribing medicines for longer than was safe, and that prescribing was in line with the organisation's operating model.