

Heffernan Dental Specialists Ltd

Heffernan Dental Specialists

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 18 January 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 Care Quality Commission 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 five questions:

- 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

Heffernan Dental Specialists is in the London Borough of Westminster. The practice provides private treatment to patients of all ages including dental implants, specialist prosthodontic and endodontic treatments and treatments using conscious sedation techniques.

The practice is located on the third floor of the premises and there is step free access the practice via a passenger elevator. The practice is located close to public transport bus and train services.

The dental team includes the principal dentist who own the practice, one associate dentist who provides specialist endodontic treatments, three dental hygienists and two dental nurses. The clinical team are supported by a practice manager.

Summary of findings

The practice is owned by a company 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 Heffernan Dental Specialists was the principal dentist.

On the day of inspection we received feedback from 30 patients.

During the inspection we spoke with the principal dentist, the associate dentist, one dental nurse, one dental hygienist and the practice manager. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open between 8.30am and 5.45pm on Mondays to Fridays:

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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 with the exception of some medicines which were ordered and received promptly. The practice had shared use of an automated external defibrillator which was available for use within the building. Consideration should be given to potential risks with these arrangements.
- 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.

- The practice had thorough 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 was providing preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system met patients' needs.
- The practice had effective leadership.
- 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 had arrangements to deal with complaints positively and efficiently.
- The practice had suitable information governance arrangements.

There were areas where the provider could make improvements. They should:

- Review availability of equipment to manage medical emergencies taking into account guidelines issued by the Resuscitation Council (UK), and the General Dental Council (GDC) standards for the dental team. This relates specifically to the arrangements in place and the shared use of an automated external defibrillator.
- Review the practice's protocols for conscious sedation, taking into account guidelines published by The Intercollegiate Advisory Committee on Sedation in Dentistry in the document 'Standards for Conscious Sedation in the Provision of Dental Care 2015. This relates specifically to ensuring the completeness of dental records in relation to the assessments and checks carried out before, during and after treatment using conscious sedation.

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.

There were systems to use learning from incidents and complaints to help them improve. This included receiving and responding to patient safety alerts.

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 essential recruitment checks.

Premises and equipment were clean and properly maintained. The practice followed national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments. Improvements were needed so that infection prevention and control audits were carried out twice a year in line with the current guidelines.

The practice had arrangements for dealing with medical and other emergencies. The practice had shared use of an automated external defibrillator which was available for use within the building. Consideration should be given to potential risks with these arrangements. Some of the recommended emergency medicines were not available on the day of the inspection. These were ordered promptly and available shortly after our visit.

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. Improvements were needed so that patient dental records contained all of the relevant information about the checks carried out when patients were treated using conscious sedation.

Patients described the treatment they received as excellent, outstanding and thorough.

The dentists discussed treatment with patients so they could give informed consent and recorded this in their records. Patients told us that the dentist always explained their treatment in detail.

The practice had clear arrangements when patients needed to be referred to other dental or health care professionals. There were protocols to ensure that routine and urgent referrals were monitored suitably.

The practice supported staff to complete training relevant to their roles and had systems to help them monitor this.

No action



Are services caring?

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

No action



Summary of findings

We received feedback about the practice from 30 people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were understanding, empathetic, caring and kind.

Patients said that the dentists and dental hygienists listened to them and helped them to understand the treatment provided including any options available.

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

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 was efficient and met patients' needs. Patients could get an appointment quickly if in pain. Patients commented that they received treatment in a timely manner.

Staff considered and took into account patients' different needs and had made reasonable adjustments to accommodate patients who may need additional support.

The practice had arrangements to help patients whose first language was not English and those with sight or hearing loss should these be required.

The practice took patients views seriously. They valued compliments from patients and had arrangements to respond 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 had a range of policies and procedures to underpin the day to day management of the service.

The practice 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.

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 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. The principal dentist was the practice safeguarding lead who had responsibility for overseeing the practice procedures.

We saw evidence that staff received safeguarding training to an appropriate level depending on their roles within the practice. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns to the local safeguarding team and the police as appropriate and notification to the CQC.

Staff demonstrated an understanding and awareness of issues which may render some people more vulnerable such as 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 told us they felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

The practice had a suitable staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at the recruitment records each of the four members of staff. These showed the practice followed their recruitment procedure. Appropriate procedures and checks including employment references and Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks and evidence of each candidate's skills and experience were carried out for relevant staff.

We noted that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover. There were systems in place to monitor this.

The practice ensured that facilities and equipment were safe and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including sterilising and X-Ray equipment, electrical and mechanical appliances.

The practice had a fire safety procedure, which was reviewed regularly and a fire safety risk assessment was carried out and kept under review. Records showed that fire detection and firefighting equipment such as fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and the smoke alarm systems were regularly tested and serviced. There was a fire evacuation procedure in place and fire safety drills were carried out on a regular basis.

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 following current guidance and legislation.

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

Risks to patients

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

The practice's health and safety policies, procedures and risk assessments were up to date 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 practice had arrangements to manage risks associated with use and disposal of dental sharps.

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.

The practice had policies and procedures in place to assist staff to respond promptly and appropriately to medical

Are services safe?

emergencies and staff who we spoke with demonstrated that they understood and followed these procedures. Staff completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support (BLS) every year.

Emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in recognised guidance with the exception of oromucosal Midazolam solution and the Glucagon injection was stored at room temperature and the expiry date had not been revised in line with the manufacturer's instructions. These items were ordered promptly and made available shortly after our inspection visit.

The practice had shared use of an automated external defibrillator which was available for use within the building. Consideration should be given to potential risks with these arrangements.

There were arrangements in place to regularly these to make sure these were available, within their expiry date, and in working order.

A dental nurse worked with the dentist when they treated patients in line with GDC Standards for the Dental Team. One of the dental hygienists told us that they usually worked with a dental nurse. They said that there were arrangements to access support if needed by raising an alarm through the computerised system.

The provider had arrangements to minimise the risk that can be caused from substances that are hazardous to health. There were records maintained of all hazardous materials used at the practice and there was a risk assessment in place. Staff had access to detailed information to guide them on how to act in the event of accidental exposure to hazardous substances.

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 (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health. Staff were aware of and followed these procedures. Staff completed infection prevention and control training and received updates as required.

The cleaning and decontamination of dental instruments took place in a dedicated area within the treatment room. The practice had suitable arrangements for cleaning, checking, sterilising and storing instruments in line with

HTM01-05. The records showed equipment used by staff for cleaning and sterilising instruments were tested daily, validated, maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance.

The practice had in place systems and protocols to ensure that any dental laboratory work was disinfected prior to being sent to a dental laboratory and before the dental laboratory work was fitted in a patient's mouth.

The practice had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems. A Legionella risk assessment had been carried out and all the recommended improvements had been addressed. We saw records of water testing and dental unit water line management were in place.

The practice was 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.

Improvements were needed so that the practice carried out infection prevention and control audits twice a year in line with current guidelines. At the time of our inspection these audits were being completed annually.

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 principal dentist 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 detailed, accurate, complete, and legible. Dental and other records and were kept securely. Information handling processes at the practice were in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations requirements (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The practice had reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines. We noted that medicines were stored securely and there were arrangements in place for monitoring stocks to minimise the risk of misuse.

Are services safe?

The principal dentists were aware of current guidance with regards to prescribing medicines.

Track record on safety

The practice had a good safety record. There were systems in place for reporting and investigating accidents or other safety incidents.

There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues. These were reviewed annually or more frequently if needed. This helped the practice to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture that led to safety improvements. In the previous 12 months there had been no safety incidents.

Lessons learned and improvements

There were suitable 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.

The practice had systems for receiving and acting on safety alerts such as those issued from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and through the Central Alerting System (CAS), as well as from other relevant bodies, such as Public Health England (PHE).

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 the dentists assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

The practice offered dental implants. These were placed by the principal dentist who had undergone appropriate post-graduate training in dental implantology. The provision of dental implants was in accordance with national guidance.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

The practice was providing preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health in line with the Delivering Better Oral Health toolkit.

The dentists told us they prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them. They also 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 dentists 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.

Three dental hygienists worked at the practice offering treatments and advice to support patients to maintain good oral health.

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 principal dentist told us they gave patients information about

treatment options and the risks and benefits of these so they could make informed decisions. Patients were provided with detailed information and explanations in relation to their proposed treatments. This included information in relation to the intended benefits, potential complications or risks and the cost of treatment.

Patients confirmed their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment and time to consider any treatment options available.

The practice's consent policy included information about the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The dental team understood their responsibilities under the act when treating adults who may not be able to make informed decisions. The practice consent policy also referred to the 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.

Monitoring care and treatment

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

The practice dental care records which we saw included all of the relevant information in relation to the assessments which the dentists carried out.

The practice carried out oral and intravenous conscious sedation for patients who would benefit. This included people who were very nervous of dental treatment and those who needed complex or lengthy treatment. The practice had systems to help them do this safely. This was carried out by a visiting sedationist.

The practice procedures were mostly in accordance with guidelines published by the Royal College of Surgeons and Royal College of Anaesthetists in 2015.

The practice's systems included checks before and after treatment, emergency equipment requirements, medicines management, sedation equipment checks, and staff availability and training. They also included patient checks and information such as consent, monitoring during treatment, discharge and post-operative instructions.

The practice assessed patients appropriately for sedation. These checks included a detailed medical history, blood pressure checks.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Improvements were needed so that the checks undertaken to ensure patient suitability for the procedure such as the assessment of health using the American Society of Anaesthesiologists classification system were suitably recorded in the dental care records.

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles. However, improvements were needed to ensure that staff who assisted the sedationist were suitably trained to do so. We saw that the nurses who assisted had not completed the required training. We were provided with evidence following our inspection that this training was scheduled to be provided in March 2019.

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 programme. This helped new staff to help familiarise themselves with the practice policies, procedures and protocols.

There were arrangements in place to discuss staffs' individual training and development needs. We saw evidence of completed staff reviews, appraisals and personal development plans.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

The practice had procedures for when they referred patients to specialists within the practice, and in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide.

There were 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.

The practice monitored all referrals to make sure they were dealt with promptly.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

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

Patients commented positively that staff were kind, understanding and caring and that staff always treated them with the great dignity.

Patients confirmed that staff helped them to relax when they were anxious or in pain or discomfort.

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 area was open plan in design and staff were mindful of this when assisting patients in person and on the telephone. Staff told us that if a patient asked for more privacy they would take them into another room. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave patients' personal information where other patients might see it.

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

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.
- Patients were also told about multi-lingual staff who might be able to support them.

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 and costs of treatment with them. The principal 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 dental team, the range of range of treatments available at the practice, costs of treatment and arrangements for booking appointments.

A range of patient information leaflets and posters provided additional information.

The principal dentist described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included for example X-ray images which were shown to the patient to help them better understand the diagnosis and treatment.

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. The practice had procedures in place to help them plan routine appointments and to manage appointments for emergency dental treatments. Patients said that they were able to access appointments that were convenient to them.

Staff were clear on the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care.

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

Staff told us that they currently had some patients for whom they needed to make adjustments to enable them to receive treatment.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. These included step free practice. The layout and design of the premises did not afford the provision of step free access to the dental surgery or accessible toilets. Staff told us that they advised patients when they contacted the practice and assisted patients as much as possible. Where the practice could not accommodate patients staff would advise them of other dental practices locally.

A Disability Access audit had been completed and an action plan formulated in order to continually improve access for patients.

Timely access to services

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

Patients confirmed they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment. The practice displayed its opening hours and on the practice website.

Staff told us that patients who requested an urgent appointment were where possible seen on 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 practice website and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open.

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 principal dentist and patient liaison manager shared responsibility for dealing with complaints. Staff reported any complaints made promptly so patients received a quick response.

Information was available about organisations patients could contact if not satisfied with the way the practice dealt with their concerns.

We reviewed a sample of complaints which had been received within the previous 12 months. We saw that these were acknowledged and investigated appropriately and responded to in a timely manner. Learning and outcomes from the complaint investigations were shared with staff to support improvements where needed.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Leadership capacity and capability

The practice had arrangements in place to help ensure that they had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care. There were arrangements in place to review patient and service demands and plans to ensure that the practice had the capacity to meet these.

The dental team was small and worked together to review and monitor various aspect of how the service was managed and delivered. The team demonstrated a commitment to deliver high quality and patient focused care.

The principal dentist we were told by staff was supportive and approachable.

The practice had systems and procedures in place which underpinned the management and the delivery of the service. These were reviewed and updated as required and accessible to staff.

Vision and strategy

The practice had a clear vision to deliver high quality dental care to patients with a patient focused approach. This was reflected in the way in which the practice reviewed and monitored the delivery of its service.

The practice had systems and business plans to achieve priorities and planned its services to meet the needs of the practice population.

Culture

The practice had a culture of openness, transparency and candour.

Staff stated they felt involved, supported and valued. They told us that they were happy to work at the practice and proud of the services that they provided. The practice had arrangements to support staff and to ensure that behaviour and performance were consistent with the practice's vision and values.

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 were able to 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 principal dentist was responsible for the clinical leadership of the practice and was supported by the practice manager for the day to day running of the service. There were clear and accessible systems in place to support staff at all levels. Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities.

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

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.

Appropriate and accurate information

The practice had information governance arrangements and staff were aware of the importance of these in protecting patients' personal information. The practice was aware of and had systems in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. Patients were told how information about them would be used and were assured of the measures in place to protect this information.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The practice involved patients and staff to support high-quality sustainable and patient focused services.

The practice used online reviews, comments and feedback to obtain patients' views about the service.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through regular meetings, reviews and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on.

Continuous improvement and innovation

The practice had quality assurance processes that for example undertaking regular audits of dental radiographs, dental care records and various practice procedures. They had clear records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.

Are services well-led?

There were arrangements to review staff and appraise staff performance and to support all members of staff to develop skills, knowledge and experience.

Staff told us they 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.