

Imtiaz Mohammad, John Murphy, Colin Read  
Partners

# Lowe House Dental Care

## Inspection Report

103 Crab Street  
St Helens  
WA10 2DJ  
Tel: 01744 750701  
Website: [www.lowehousedental.co.uk](http://www.lowehousedental.co.uk)

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### Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 3 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 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 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**

Low House Dental Care is near the centre of St Helens and provides NHS and private dental care for adults and children.

There is level access to facilitate entrance to the practice for people who use wheelchairs and for people with pushchairs. Car parking is available outside the practice.

The dental team includes the principal dentist, an associate dentist, a dental hygiene therapist, four dental nurses and a receptionist. The dental team is supported by a practice manager. The practice has three treatment rooms.

# Summary of findings

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 Lowe House Dental Care is the principal dentist.

We received feedback from eight people during the inspection about the services provided. The feedback provided was positive.

During the inspection we spoke to two dentists, dental nurses, the receptionist 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, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm

Tuesday 8.30am to 7.00pm.

## **Our key findings were:**

- The practice was clean and well maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures in place which reflected published guidance.
- The provider had safeguarding procedures in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. Appropriate medicines and equipment were available.
- The provider had staff recruitment procedures in place. References were not routinely obtained.
- Staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- The dental team provided preventive care and supported patients to achieve better oral health. Oral health education clinics were provided for children.

- Staff treated patients with dignity and respect and took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
- The provider had a procedure in place for dealing with complaints. Staff were not aware of the Duty of Candour.
- The practice had a leadership and management structure in place.
- The provider had systems in place to manage risk.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked well as a team.
- The practice asked patients and staff for feedback about the services they provided.

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

- Review the practice's recruitment procedures to ensure that appropriate checks are completed prior to new staff commencing employment at the practice, and to ensure accurate, complete and detailed records, including references, are maintained for all staff.
- Review the practice's waste handling protocols to ensure waste, specifically gypsum waste, is segregated and disposed of in compliance with the relevant regulations, and taking into account the guidance issued in the Health Technical Memorandum 07-01.
- Review the practice's protocols and procedures for ensuring staff are up to date with recommended training and their continuing professional development, and that their training needs are identified and met.
- Review the practice's complaint handling procedures and staff awareness of their responsibilities in relation to the duty of candour, to ensure compliance with The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

# 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 used learning from incidents to help them improve.

Staff received training in safeguarding and knew how to report concerns.

Staff were qualified for their roles, where relevant.

The provider completed essential recruitment checks before employing staff. References were not available for some staff.

The premises and equipment were clean and properly maintained. The practice followed national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments. Gypsum waste was not appropriately segregated and disposed of. The provider assured us this would be addressed.

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

The provider had systems in place for the safe use of X-rays.

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. The dentists discussed treatment with patients so they could give informed consent, and recorded this in their records.

One of the dental nurses ran clinics to provide oral health education for children to help reduce their chance of dental decay and gum disease.

The practice had clear arrangements for referring patients to other dental or health care professionals.

The provider 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 eight people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were warm, friendly and approachable. They said they were given informative, thorough explanations about dental treatment, and said their dentist listened to them.

Patients commented that staff made them feel at ease, especially when they were anxious about visiting the dentist.

Staff protected patients' privacy and were aware of the importance of confidentiality.

No action



# Summary of findings

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 took account of patients' needs. Patients could book an appointment quickly if in pain.

Staff considered patients' differing needs and put measures in place to help all patients receive care and treatment. This included providing facilities for patients with disabilities and families with children. The practice had access to interpreter services and had arrangements to assist patients who had sight or hearing loss.

The practice had a complaints handling procedure in place. They responded to most concerns and complaints constructively. One complaint had not been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the duty of candour requirement to be open and honest, and offer an apology. The provider assured us this would be addressed.

**No action**



## **Are services well-led?**

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

The provider had arrangements in place to ensure the smooth running of the service. These included systems for the practice team to monitor the quality and safety of the care and treatment provided.

The provider had limited means in place for monitoring staff training. The provider assured us this would be addressed.

The practice had a management structure and staff felt supported and appreciated.

The practice team kept accurate, complete patient dental care records which were stored securely.

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

The provider had procedures in place to manage and reduce risks. We saw that the practice had put in place measures to reduce the risks identified in the assessments.

**No action**



# Are services safe?

## Our findings

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

The practice had safeguarding policies and procedures in place to provide staff with information about identifying and reporting suspected abuse. Staff knew their responsibilities should they have concerns about the safety of children, young people or adults who were at risk due to their circumstances. Staff received safeguarding training and knew the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns.

The practice had a whistleblowing policy in place to guide staff should they wish to raise concerns. Staff told us they felt confident to raise concerns.

We reviewed the procedures the dentists followed when providing root canal treatment and found these were in accordance with recognised guidance.

The provider had staff recruitment procedures in place to help the practice employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at four staff recruitment records. We saw that recruitment checks were carried out and the required documentation was available, with the exception of references for three of these four staff.

We saw that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council and had professional indemnity cover.

The provider had arrangements in place to ensure that the practice's facilities and equipment were safe, and that equipment, including electrical appliances, was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions.

Fire detection equipment, such as smoke detectors, was regularly tested, and firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers, was regularly serviced.

The provider had put arrangements in place at the practice to ensure X-ray procedures were carried out safely and had the required radiation protection information available.

We saw that the dentists justified, graded, and reported on the X-rays they took. Staff carried out radiography audits regularly following current guidance and legislation.

The provider told us that the clinical staff completed continuing professional development, (CPD), in respect of dental radiography. We were not provided with evidence that they had completed this recommended CPD.

### **Risks to patients**

The provider monitored and acted on risks to patients.

The practice had an overarching health and safety policy in place, underpinned by several specific policies and risk assessments to help manage potential risk. These covered general workplace risks, for example, fire and control of hazardous substances, and specific dental practice risks. Staff reviewed risk assessments regularly. We saw that the practice had put in place measures to reduce the risks identified in the assessments.

The provider had current employer's liability insurance.

Staff followed relevant safety regulations when using needles and other sharp dental items. A sharps risk assessment had been undertaken and this was reviewed annually. Staff confirmed that only the dentists were permitted to dismantle and dispose of needles and other sharp items in order to minimise the risk of inoculation injuries to staff. Staff were aware of the importance of reporting inoculation injuries. Protocols were in place to ensure staff accessed appropriate care and advice in the event of a sharps injury.

The provider ensured clinical staff had received appropriate vaccinations, including the vaccination to protect them against the Hepatitis B virus. Arrangements were in place to check the effectiveness of the vaccination.

Staff knew how to respond to medical emergencies and completed training in medical emergencies and life support annually. The practice had medical emergency equipment and medicines available as recommended in recognised guidance. Staff carried out, and kept records of, checks to make sure the medicines and equipment were available, within their expiry dates and in working order. We saw records of checks carried out on the medical emergency equipment. We were not provided with records to confirm that checks were carried out on the medical emergency medicines.

The practice was located in a shared healthcare building. The building was equipped with three automated external defibrillators, (AEDs), one on each floor. The AEDs were provided and managed by a facilities company, and not by

# Are services safe?

the individual healthcare providers who shared the building. The AED on the ground floor was shared between the dental practice, the pharmacy and a clinic. It was situated in the clinic behind locked doors. Access to the AED was via the reception desk in the main building. The receptionist would call one of the nurses who would unlock the doors to provide access to the AED. The inspection team found that it was possible to obtain the AED within the recommended time period, however if this system should fail, and also when the main building reception was unmanned, as it was during the daily lunch hour, the provider could not access the AED. The provider told the inspection team he had requested an access key on a number of occasions but had not received one. The inspector contacted the facilities company to request that they liaise with the provider to improve access to the AED.

A dental nurse worked with each of the clinicians when they treated patients.

The practice had an infection prevention and control policy and associated procedures in place to guide staff. These took account of The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices, (HTM 01-05), guidance published by the Department of Health. Staff completed infection prevention and control training regularly and received updates as required.

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

The provider had had a Legionella risk assessment carried out at the practice in accordance with current guidance. We saw that all the recommended actions had been completed. We saw evidence of measures put in place by the provider to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems, for example, water temperature testing and the management of dental unit water lines.

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

Staff ensured most clinical waste was segregated and stored securely. We found no appropriate means for

segregating and disposing of gypsum waste was in place. The provider assured us this would be addressed. Following the inspection we were not provided with evidence that this had been done.

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 several dental care records to confirm what was discussed and observed 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.

Medical histories were updated at every patient attendance.

We saw that when patients were referred to other healthcare providers information was shared appropriately and in a timely way.

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

The provider had implemented systems for the appropriate and safe handling of medicines at the practice.

The practice had a stock control system for medicines to help ensure that medicines did not exceed their expiry dates and enough medicines were available when required.

The practice had systems for prescribing, dispensing and storing medicines.

Staff stored NHS prescriptions securely.

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

## **Track record on safety**

We saw that the provider monitored and reviewed incidents to minimise recurrence and improve systems.

## Are services safe?

The practice had procedures in place for reporting, investigating, responding to and learning from accidents, incidents and significant events. Staff knew about these and understood their role in the process.

Staff investigated, responded to and discussed incidents to reduce risk, support learning and prevent such occurrences happening again in the future.

The provider had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts, for example from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. The practice learned from external safety events as well as from patient and medicine safety alerts. We saw that relevant alerts were acted on and stored for future reference.

### **Lessons learned and improvements**

Staff confirmed that learning from incidents, events and complaints was shared with them to help improve systems at the practice, to promote good teamwork and to prevent recurrences.

There were systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. Staff learned and shared lessons, identified patterns and acted to improve safety in the practice.



# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

## Our findings

### Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The dentists assessed patients' care and treatment needs in line with recognised guidance. We saw that the dentists took into account current legislation, standards and guidance when delivering care and treatment.

### Helping patients to live healthier lives

Staff supported patients to achieve better oral health in accordance with the Department of Health publication 'Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention'. The dentists prescribed high concentration fluoride products if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them. The clinicians discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and provided dietary advice to patients during appointments.

One of the dental nurses who had an additional dental qualification, ran clinics to provide oral health education for children to help reduce their chance of dental decay and gum disease.

The practice had a selection of dental products for sale and provided health promotion leaflets to help patients with their oral health.

### Consent to care and treatment

Staff 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 told us they 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 in certain circumstances. 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 where appropriate and made sure they had enough time to explain treatment options clearly. We found staff had completed training in consent but not all staff were not consistently aware of issues relating to consent. The provider assured us this would be addressed. Following the inspection we were not provided with evidence that this had been done.

### Monitoring care and treatment

The clinicians kept detailed dental care records containing information about patients' current dental needs, past treatment and medical histories.

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

### Effective staffing

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

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

The provider offered support, training opportunities and encouragement to assist staff in meeting the requirements of their registration.

We were told that staff discussed training needs and future professional development at annual appraisals and one to one meetings. We saw that not all staff had were appraised. We found that the provider was unaware as to when one of the clinical staff had completed recommended training, for example, in safeguarding and infection control.

### Co-ordinating care and treatment

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

The dentists confirmed they referred patients to specialists in primary and secondary care where necessary or where a patient chose treatment options the practice did not provide. This included referring patients with suspected oral cancer under current guidelines to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist.

The practice had systems and processes to identify, manage, follow up, and, where required, refer patients for specialist care where they presented with dental infections.



# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Staff tracked the progress of all referrals to ensure they were dealt with promptly.

# Are services caring?

## Our findings

### **Kindness, respect and compassion**

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

Patients commented positively that staff were welcoming, efficient, and helpful. We saw that staff treated patients respectfully and kindly, and were friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

Staff understood the importance of providing emotional support for patients who were nervous of dental treatment. Patients told us staff were kind and helpful when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

### **Privacy and dignity**

The layout of the reception and waiting areas provided limited privacy when reception staff were dealing with patients, but staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Staff described how they avoided discussing confidential information in front of other patients. Staff told us that if a patient requested further privacy facilities were available. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave patient information where people 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 to be involved in decisions about their care.

Staff were aware of the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard, to make sure that patients and their carers could access and understand the information they are given, and the Equality Act.

- Interpreter services were available for patients whose first language was not English.
- Staff communicated with patients in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.

The practice provided patients with information to help them make informed choices. Patients confirmed that staff listened to them, discussed options for treatment with them and did not rush them. The dentists described to us the conversations they had with patients to help them understand their treatment options.

# 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 take account of patients' needs and preferences.

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

The practice had considered the needs of different groups of people, for example, people with disabilities, wheelchair users, and people with pushchairs, and put in place reasonable adjustments, for example, handrails to assist with mobility, and step-free access. An accessible toilet with hand rails was located in the building.

Staff had access to interpreter and translation services for people who required them. The practice had arrangements in place to assist patients who had hearing impairment, for example, appointments could be arranged by email or text message.

Larger print forms were available on request, for example, patient medical history forms.

### Timely access to services

Patients could access care and treatment at the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs.

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

The practice's appointment system took account of patients' needs. We saw that the clinicians tailored appointment lengths to patients' individual needs. Patients could choose from morning, afternoon or evening appointments. Staff made every effort to keep waiting times and cancellations to a minimum. Patients told us they had enough time during their appointment and did not feel rushed.

The practice had appointments available for dental emergencies and staff made every effort to see patients experiencing pain or dental emergencies on the same day.

The practice's answerphone provided information for patients who needed 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 appointments.

### Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice had a complaints policy providing guidance to staff on how to handle a complaint. Information on how to make a complaint was clearly displayed for patients.

The principal dentist was responsible for dealing with complaints. Staff told us they would tell the principal dentist about any formal or informal comments or concerns straight away so patients received a quick response. Information was available about organisations patients could contact if they were not satisfied with the way the practice dealt with their concerns or should they not wish to approach the practice initially. We saw this did not include contact details for NHS England. The provider assured us this would be added. Following the inspection we were not provided with evidence that this had been done.

We looked at comments and complaints the practice received within the previous 12 months. These showed the practice responded to concerns appropriately, in all but one case, and discussed outcomes with staff to share learning and improve the service. We found that insufficient action had been taken in response to one complaint. The provider assured us this would be addressed. Following the inspection we were not provided with evidence that this had been done.

# Are services well-led?

## Our findings

### Leadership capacity and capability

We found the leaders had the capacity and skills to deliver sustainable care. They were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of the service. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.

The practice had a business continuity plan describing how the practice would manage events which could disrupt the normal running of the practice.

### Vision and strategy

The provider had a clear vision and had set out values for the practice.

The provider had a strategy for delivering care, and supporting business plans to achieve priorities. The strategy was in line with health and social priorities across the region. The practice planned its services to meet the needs of the practice population. Leaders had the experience, capacity and skills to deliver the practice's strategy and address risks to it.

The provider's strategy included the implementation of a dental team approach to deliver care and treatment at the practice. They did this by using a skill mix of dental care professionals, including dentists, a hygiene therapist and a dental nurse with enhanced skills to deliver care in the best possible way for patients.

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

### Culture

Staff said they were respected, supported and valued.

We found that staff were not aware of the duty of candour requirements to be open, honest and to offer an apology to patients should anything go wrong.

Staff told us there was an open, transparent culture in the practice. They said they were encouraged to raise issues and they were confident to do this. They told us the managers were approachable, would listen to their concerns and act appropriately.

The practice held regular meetings where staff could communicate information, exchange ideas and discuss updates. Where appropriate meetings were arranged to share urgent information.

### Governance and management

The provider had systems in place at the practice to support the management and delivery of the service.

Systems included policies, procedures and risk assessments to support governance and to guide staff. These were accessible to all members of staff. We saw that these were regularly reviewed to ensure they were up to date with regulations and guidance.

The provider subscribed to a dental practice compliance scheme to assist with governance. We saw the provider had effective governance processes in place, for example, in relation to staffing, and safeguarding. The provider had limited means in place to monitor staff training to ensure recommended training was completed, and to ensure that the training needs of staff were met. For example, we found that some staff were unsure about how to use the automated external defibrillator, and staff were not consistently aware of consent issues. The provider assured us this would be improved to ensure more effective monitoring took place. Following the inspection we were not provided with evidence that this had been done.

We saw the practice had systems in place to monitor the quality of the service and make improvements where required.

The practice had systems in place to ensure risks were identified and managed, and had put measures in place to reduce risks.

The principal dentist had overall responsibility for the management and clinical leadership of the practice. The practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the service. Staff had additional roles and responsibilities, for example, lead roles for infection control and safeguarding. We saw staff had access to supervision and support for their roles and responsibilities.

### Appropriate and accurate information

The practice's staff acted appropriately on information.

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

# Are services well-led?

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

The practice used patient surveys to obtain the views of patients about the service. Patients were encouraged to complete the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT). This is a national programme to allow patients to provide feedback on NHS services they have used.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings, appraisals 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 provider had systems and processes in place to encourage learning and continuous improvement.

We saw the practice had systems in place to monitor the quality of the service and make improvements where required. These included, for example, audits. We reviewed audits of dental care records, X-rays, infection prevention and control, cleaning, and waiting times. Staff kept records of the results of these and produced action plans where necessary. We saw auditing processes were working well and resulted in improvements.

The provider and practice were committed to learning and improving and valued staff contributions. We saw evidence of learning from complaints, incidents, audits and feedback.

The clinical staff carried out continuous professional development in accordance with General Dental Council professional standards. Staff told us the practice provided support and encouragement for them to do so.