

Mr. Gary Hills

St Anne's Dental Clinic

Inspection Report

2 – 6 St Annes Road West
First Floor
St Annes
Lancashire
FY8 1 RF

Tel: 01253 727070

Website: www.stannedentalclinic.co.uk

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 13 June 2018 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 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

St Annes Dental Clinic is in Lytham, St Annes and provides private and NHS general dental service and orthodontic treatments to adults and children.

The practice is situated on the first floor of the building. It is separated into two separate dental areas; general NHS dentistry and private orthodontic and dental implant treatments. Each area has its own separate access and waiting room. If patients report to the wrong reception area they are asked to access the correct area from the separate entrance and stairs. Staff can move between the

Summary of findings

two practices but this is restricted for patients. There is no access for people who use wheelchairs. Car parking spaces, including spaces for blue badge holders, are available near the practice.

The dental team includes six dentists, 14 dental nurses (One of whom is the clinical lead, one is a full time receptionist and one of whom is a trainee) and an administration lead. The role of the practice manager is split between the administration lead and the clinical lead (manager leads). The practice has seven treatment rooms.

The practice is owned by an individual who is the principal dentist there. They have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations about how the practice is run.

On the day of inspection, we collected 23 CQC comment cards filled in by patients.

During the inspection we spoke with the principal dentist, two associate dentists, two dental nurses, the receptionist and two dental nurses working on reception, the administrator and the two manager leads. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday Tuesday and Thursday 9.00am – 6.00pm

Wednesday 9.00am – 5.30pm

Friday 9.00am – 2.00pm

The practice is open until 8.00pm on the second and fourth Thursday of each month and between 8.30am – 12.30pm every second and fourth Saturday of the month.

Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared clean and well maintained.

- The practice had infection control procedures
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Not all appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk but some improvements could be made.
- The practice staff 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 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 staff dealt with complaints positively and efficiently.
- The practice staff had suitable information governance arrangements.

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

- Review the availability of equipment to manage medical emergencies taking into account the guidelines issued by the Resuscitation Council (UK), and the General Dental Council standards for the dental team and sedation guidelines.

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 essential recruitment checks.

Premises and equipment were clean and properly maintained. The practice was aiming to national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments. A separate decontamination room for the cleaning of instruments was not available. Systems that were in place were safe.

The practice did not use a safer sharps system. The system for the disposal of used needles and medicines was the responsibility of the clinicians. This was supported by a sharps risk assessment.

The practice had arrangements for dealing with medical and other emergencies, but improvement is needed regarding equipment.

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 excellent, professional and first class. 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.

The practice supported staff to complete training relevant to their roles and had systems to help them monitor this. A dental nurse had taken the lead to ensure that all relevant staff in the practice were aware of the new training and personal development requirements put in place by the General Dental Council (GDC).

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 23 people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were always polite, helpful and caring.

No action



Summary of findings

They said that they were given detailed, helpful and honest explanations about their dental treatment, and said their dentist listened to them. Patients commented that they 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.

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.

Staff considered patients' different needs. Due to the practice's location on the first floor of the building they did not provide facilities for disabled patients. Patients who had pushchairs were helped up the stairs as necessary. There were procedures in place to signpost patients with limited mobility to the nearest accessible practice. The practice had access to telephone interpreter services and had arrangements to help patients with sight or hearing loss.

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.

On the day of the inspection, all staff were welcoming and open to discussion and feedback.

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 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 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. We saw evidence that 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.

There was 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 told us they felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

The dentists used rubber dams in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment. In instances where the rubber dam was not used, such as for example refusal by the patient, and where other methods were used to protect the airway, this was not always documented in the dental care record and a risk assessment completed.

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

The practice had a staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at four staff recruitment records. These showed the practice followed their recruitment procedure.

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

The practice ensured that facilities and equipment were safe and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including electrical and gas appliances.

Records showed that emergency lighting, fire detection and firefighting equipment such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers were regularly tested. Staff had completed fire safety training and regularly tested the existing fire detection and firefighting equipment such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

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. The practice had a radiation protection file and arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment. We noted that the practice had registered their practice's use of dental X-ray equipment with the Health and Safety Executive in line with the new Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017 (IRR17).

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.

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

The practice had a cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) machine. Staff had received training and appropriate safeguards were in place for patients and staff.

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 up to date and 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. There was a sharps risk assessment in place. A safer sharps and matrix band systems were not in use. Staff confirmed that only the dentists were permitted to assemble, re-sheath and dispose of needles where necessary to minimise the risk of inoculation injuries to staff.

Are services safe?

Protocols were in place to ensure staff accessed appropriate care and advice in the event of a sharps injury and staff were aware of the importance of reporting inoculation injuries. There had been no injuries caused by sharps reported in the last 12 months.

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. BLS with airway management and Immediate Life Support (ILS) training for sedation was also completed

Emergency equipment and medicines were not available as described in recognised guidance. As the practice provided conscious sedation for patients, a second medical oxygen cylinder was not available. There was no portable suction and some face masks were found to be beyond their 'best used by' date. The principal dentist agreed to review emergency equipment following our visit.

Staff kept records of their checks to make sure medicines were available, within their expiry date, and equipment was in working order but this could be improved. The process to ensure equipment was available and in line with recognised guidance was not effective.

A dental nurse worked with each of the dentists 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 were working towards becoming compliant with the guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health. It states that for best practice, the decontamination facilities should be clearly separate from the clinical treatment area. At St Annes Dental Clinic all instruments were sterilised in each treatment room. The practice had taken reasonable steps to reduce the risk to patients. These included: having the reprocessing area as far from the dental chair as possible and reducing the risk

to bacterial aerosol by not manually cleaning instruments whilst a patient was in the treatment room. The principal dentist confirmed they would review HTM 01-05 guidance and implement a plan of action for a separate decontamination room. 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 HTM01-05. The records showed equipment used by staff for cleaning and sterilising instruments were 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 this 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, 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 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.

The practice carried out infection prevention and control audits twice a year.

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 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 accurate, complete, and legible and were kept securely and complied with data protection requirements.

Are services safe?

Patient referrals to other service providers contained specific information which allowed appropriate and timely referrals in line with practice protocols and current guidance.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The practice had reliable 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.

The practice stored and kept records of NHS prescriptions as described in current guidance.

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

Antimicrobial prescribing audits were not being carried out annually.

Track record on safety

The practice had a good safety record.

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. In the previous 12 months there had been no safety incidents.

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 acted 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.

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.

The practice offered dental implants. These were placed by the principal dentist who had undergone appropriate post-graduate training in this speciality. 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 used fluoride varnish for children 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 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 although this was not always consistent throughout the practice.

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 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. Staff were not always clear about the use of Powers of Attorney. 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.

The practice carried out 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. These were 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.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

The practice assessed patients appropriately for sedation. The dental care records showed that patients having sedation had important checks carried out first. These included a detailed medical history, blood pressure checks and an assessment of health using the American Society of Anaesthesiologists classification system in accordance with current guidelines.

The sedationist was supported by a suitably trained second individual. The name of this individual was recorded in the patients' dental care record.

Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles. For example, staff providing sedation had undertaken extra training to ensure they were fully trained in the procedure.

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

We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council (GDC). A dental nurse had taken the lead to ensure that all relevant staff in the practice were aware of the new training and personal development requirements put in place by the GDC.

Staff told us they discussed training needs at annual appraisals and one to one meetings. We saw evidence of completed appraisals and how the practice addressed the training requirements of staff.

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.

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

Patients commented positively that staff were polite, helpful and caring. We saw that staff treated patients respectfully, appropriately and kindly. They were friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone. Patients said staff were compassionate and understanding.

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

Information folders and patient survey results 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 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 Accessible Information Standards and the requirements under the Equality Act (a requirement to make sure that patients and their carers can access and understand the information they are given):

- Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language.
- Staff communicated with patients in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.
- Staff helped patients and their carers find further information and access community and advocacy services. They helped them ask questions about their care and treatment.

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. The dentists described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options.

The practice's website and information leaflet 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 for example photographs, models, X-ray images and an intra-oral camera. The intra-oral cameras and microscope with a camera enabled photographs to be taken of the tooth being examined or treated and shown to the patient/relative to help them better understand the diagnosis and treatment. One staff member was trained in sign language to support patients who were hearing impaired.

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 care.

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

A Disability Access audit had been completed. The building was grade 2 listed. The practice was not easily accessible due to being on the first floor and there was no lift. It was explained to us that patients with limited mobility were signposted to another practice with accessibility. Patients who brought pushchairs with them were helped into the practice.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments to the premises to accommodate people with a disability or sensory loss. A hearing loop had been installed and spare reading glasses were available behind reception.

Staff told us that they texted, telephoned or emailed patients 48 hours prior to their appointment to make sure they could get to the practice.

Timely access to services

Patients could 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.

They took part in an emergency on-call arrangement with NHS 111 out of hour's service for general dental concerns. Patients who had dental implants had access to the principal dentist if they experienced any concerns

The practice website, information leaflet 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 management team and the principal dentist were responsible for dealing with these. Staff told us they would tell the management team about any formal or informal comments or concerns straight away so patients received a quick response.

The practice 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 and compliments the practice received. The practice had received three complaints during the last 12 months. 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

The management team 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.

The management team 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.

The management team 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 told us they 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 principal dentist had overall responsibility for the management and clinical leadership of the practice. The management team 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. 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. In April 2018, 109 patients had submitted responses. Of these 99 were extremely likely to refer the practice to their friends and family, eight were very likely and one was neither likely or not likely to refer.

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.

Continuous improvement and innovation

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

Are services well-led?

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. They had clear records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements. Audits of note for patients who had received sedation and implants were not routinely undertaken. The principal dentist confirmed, after the inspection, that they had implemented excel sheets for the dental implant audit and sedation monitoring.

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

The dental nurses had annual appraisals. They discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development. We saw evidence of completed appraisals in the staff folders.

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.