

Dr Ratnesh Dinesh Patel

Elm Tree Dental Surgery

Inspection report

26 Elm Tree Avenue
Frinton on Sea
CO13 0AR
Tel: 01255672309

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced focused inspection on 25 April 2022 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 practice 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 usually ask five key questions, however due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and to reduce time spent on site, only the following three questions were asked:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our findings were:

- The dental clinic was visibly clean and well-maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. Appropriate emergency medicines and most life-saving equipment were available. The practice confirmed missing equipment including portable suction and paediatric pads for the automated external defibrillator (AED) were ordered immediately after the inspection.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff.
- Safeguarding processes were in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect and staff took care to protect their privacy and personal information.

Summary of findings

- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
- There was effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked as a team.
- Staff and patients were asked for feedback about the services provided.
- Complaints were dealt with positively and efficiently.
- The dental clinic had information governance arrangements.

Background

Elm Tree Dental is in Kirby Cross, Frinton on Sea, Essex and provides NHS and private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

There is level access to the practice for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. Car parking spaces, including dedicated parking for disabled people, are available at the front of the practice. The practice has made numerous adjustments to support patients with additional needs, these include a treatment room on the ground floor, widened doors for people who use wheelchairs and a fully accessible toilet.

The dental team includes one dentist, two dental nurses, two receptionists and the practice manager. The practice has one treatment room.

During the inspection we spoke with one dentist, one dental nurse, one 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 to Thursday from 9am to 5pm (closed between 12.30pm and 2pm).

Friday from 9am to 12.30pm.

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

- Implement audits for prescribing of antibiotic medicines taking into account the guidance provided by the College of General Dentistry.
- Take action to ensure the availability of equipment in the practice to manage medical emergencies taking into account the guidelines issued by the Resuscitation Council (UK) and the General Dental Council.
- Take action to implement any recommendations in the practice's Legionella risk assessment, taking into account the guidelines issued by the Department of Health in the Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices, and having regard to The Health and Social Care Act 2008: 'Code of Practice about the prevention and control of infections and related guidance.' In particular, ensure routine sampling for legionella are undertaken in the practice water system.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We asked the following question(s).

Are services safe?	No action	✓
Are services effective?	No action	✓
Are services well-led?	No action	✓

Are services safe?

Our findings

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

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

The practice had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.

The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance. The practice had introduced additional procedures in relation to COVID-19 in accordance with published guidance. The practice had procedures to reduce the risk of Legionella or other bacteria developing in water systems, in line with a risk assessment. However, we noted protein and soil testing were not undertaken on decontamination equipment and quarterly legionella dip slides were not undertaken to measure and monitor microbial activity within the water system. We discussed these shortfalls with the provider and were assured testing would be put in place immediately following the inspection.

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

We saw the practice was visibly clean and there was an effective cleaning schedule to ensure the practice was kept clean.

The practice had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff and had checks in place for agency and locum staff. These reflected the relevant legislation.

Clinical staff were qualified, registered with the General Dental Council and had professional indemnity cover.

The practice ensured equipment was safe to use and maintained and serviced according to manufacturers' instructions. The practice ensured the facilities were maintained in accordance with regulations.

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements and the management of fire safety was effective.

The practice had arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment and we saw the required radiation protection information was available.

Risks to patients

The practice had implemented systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient and staff safety. This included sharps safety, sepsis awareness and lone working.

The provider had emergency medicines as per national guidance, but not all emergency equipment was available in accordance with national guidance. In particular, the provider did not have portable suction or paediatric pads for the AED. We discussed this with the practice manager and were assured these had been ordered immediately after the inspection.

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

The practice had risk assessments to minimise the risk that could be caused from substances that are hazardous to health.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Dental care records we saw were complete, legible, were kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

Are services safe?

The practice had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two-week wait arrangements.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The practice had systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines. We noted antimicrobial prescribing audits were not carried out. We discussed this with the dentist who confirmed these would be put in place.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The practice had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating incidents and accidents. The practice had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

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

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep dental professionals up to date with current evidence-based practice.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

The practice provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.

Consent to care and treatment

Staff obtained patients' consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance.

Staff understood their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

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 in line with recognised guidance.

Staff conveyed an understanding of supporting more vulnerable members of society such as patients with dementia, and adults and children with a learning difficulty.

We saw evidence the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits six-monthly following current guidance and legislation.

Effective staffing

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

Newly appointed staff had a structured induction and clinical staff completed continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

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 a range of specialists in primary and secondary care for treatment the practice did not provide.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

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

Leadership capacity and capability

The practice demonstrated a transparent and open culture in relation to people's safety.

There was strong leadership and emphasis on continually striving to improve.

Systems and processes were embedded, and staff worked together in such a way that where the inspection highlighted issues or omissions, the practice took action to resolve them.

The information and evidence presented during the inspection process was clear and well documented.

We saw the practice had effective processes to support and develop staff with additional roles and responsibilities.

Culture

The practice could show how they ensured high-quality sustainable services and demonstrated improvements over time.

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

Staff discussed their training needs during annual appraisals, one to one meetings and during clinical supervision. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development.

The practice had arrangements to ensure staff training was up-to-date and reviewed at the required intervals.

Governance and management

Staff had clear responsibilities roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

The practice 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.

We saw there were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

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

Staff gathered feedback from patients, the public and external partners and a demonstrated commitment to acting on feedback.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings 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 systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

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

Are services well-led?

Staff kept records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.