

# Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. - Head Office

## Inspection report

Riverside Clinic  
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www.suffolkfed.org.uk

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

## Ratings

Overall rating for this location

Good 

Are services safe?

Good 

# Overall summary

We carried out an announced desk-based review of Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. - Head Office on 22 April 2022. Overall, the practice is rated as Good.

Set out the ratings for each key question

Safe - Good

Effective – Not inspected

Caring - Not inspected

Responsive - Not inspected

Well-led - Not inspected

At our previous inspection on 23 June 2021, the practice was rated Good overall and for providing effective, caring, responsive and well-led services but requires improvement for providing safe services. We found a breach of regulation relating to improvements which needed to be made to the system for monitoring oxygen availability across the GP+ and Out of Hours sites.

The areas where the provider **should** make improvements were:

- Continue with plans to include relevant equipment used but not owned by the provider, as part of their calibration programme.
- Continue work to document the Hepatitis B vaccination status of clinical staff.
- Confirm, in writing, information given to patients verbally in response to complaints raised.

The full reports for previous inspections can be found by selecting the 'all reports' link for Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. - Head Office on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

## Why we carried out this review

This desk-based review was to follow up on the breach of regulation and areas where the provider 'should' improve which were identified at our previous inspection. We found the required improvements had been made and the practice is now rated as good for providing safe services.

## How we carried out the review

Throughout the pandemic CQC has continued to regulate and respond to risk. However, taking into account the circumstances arising as a result of the pandemic, and in order to reduce risk, we have conducted our reviews differently.

This review was carried out remotely. This was with consent from the provider and in line with all data protection and information governance requirements.

This included

- Conducting staff interviews using video conferencing

# Overall summary

- Requesting evidence from the provider

## **Our findings**

We based our judgement of the quality of care at this service on a combination of:

- what we found when we obtained new information from the provider
- information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and
- information from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

## **We have rated this practice as Good overall**

We found that:

- The service had clear systems to keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse.
- The service had reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.
- The service took complaints and concerns seriously and responded to them appropriately to improve the quality of care. At our previous inspection, one of the complaint responses we reviewed did not include information about the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) and another complaint was dealt with by telephone and PHSO information was given verbally but had not been documented. At this inspection, we saw evidence that all complaints handled verbally were followed up with a written communication which included the PHSO information.

**Dr Rosie Benneyworth** BM BS BMedSci MRCGP

Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

## Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector who spoke with staff using video conferencing facilities and reviewed information sent in by the practice.

## Background to Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. - Head Office

Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. - Head Office is located in Ipswich at:

Riverside Clinic

2 Landseer Road

Ipswich

IP3 0AZ

The provider Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C is a community interest company, limited by shares and is owned by 57 GP practices across Suffolk and is a not for profit organisation. Most of the GP practices are independently registered with the CQC. Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C serves a population of approximately 921,000 patients across the county of Suffolk. Services are provided from various locations including GP practices across Suffolk and North-East Essex, and in the local hospitals in Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds and in the community hospital at Felixstowe. The provider holds contracts with Ipswich and East Suffolk, West Suffolk, Mid Essex and North-East Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

There is a Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C board which is made up of the registered manager, a Caldicott guardian, a GP, a responsible person for controlled drugs, safeguarding and information governance leads and six GPs, two GP practice managers and an independent senior non-executive. There is an integrated governance committee (IGC) which is comprised of the medical director, chief nurse, operations director, chief executive officer, financial controller, executive assistant, payroll manager, human resources, governance manager and three non-executive board directors and a service director. The IGC reports directly to the board. There are three review groups; primary care, urgent care and community care. These report to the IGC.

The provider is registered to provide diagnostic and screening procedures, family planning, maternity and midwifery services, surgical procedures and treatment of disease, disorder or injury. This location is registered to provide diagnostic and screening procedures and treatment of disease, disorder or injury.

Services offered by Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. are:

Extended GP access (GP+). Suffolk GP+ is for people who need an appointment with a GP, nurse or other health professional in the evenings or at weekends. The service is staffed by GPs, nurse practitioners, physiotherapists and other health professionals. The service operates across Suffolk including the towns of Ipswich, Wickham Market, Felixstowe, Haverhill, Stowmarket, Bury St. Edmunds, Mildenhall, and Sudbury. This service also includes a GP streaming service in the emergency departments of Ipswich and West Suffolk hospitals to ensure patients are seen by the appropriate clinical staff and in a timely manner.

The Felixstowe minor injuries clinic is operated from the local community hospital and is a service for patients to attend with an appointment, following referral from NHS111 or their GP practice. This service operates from 8am to 8pm seven days a week.

The cardiology community clinic is an intermediate outpatient service which runs as an alternative to hospital-based clinics, and is offered at two locations, Ipswich and Woodbridge. The service provides consultations, advice and electrocardiogram (ECG) testing. This is for all patients in East Suffolk.

The Non-obstetric Ultrasound service is offered in 12 GP practice locations and one community setting across Suffolk. The service is for ambulant patients and provides ultrasounds for patients in a convenient location near to their home. This is for all patients in Suffolk.

The North East Essex Diabetes service is a pathway hub to co-ordinate, promote, and ensure, via a single point of access, the provision of a comprehensive range of integrated health services for people with diabetes and their carers.

The Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C clinical model includes primary care development, patient involvement and education and reaching non-engaged patients. This is offered across North East Essex.

The Falls and Fracture Liaison service is for patients who had experienced a fracture and may be at risk from falls. The service visited patients in their own homes and assessed patients which included ensuring they were compliant with their medicines. This is for all patients in West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group area.

The Bowel and Bladder service is a nurse led service and treats and supports patients with urinary or faecal incontinence. This is for all patients in Suffolk.

The Stoma Care service provides a supportive, advisory and educational role to the patient, family and integrated neighbourhood teams to ensure care can be self-managed by the patient or by the team. The service supports the timely discharge of patients who have a new stoma, providing holistic care including clinical advice on stoma care, product fitting and psychological support. This is for all patients in East Suffolk.

Suffolk GP Out of Hours (OOH) service, which patients access via the NHS111 service. The NHS111 team assess patients by telephone and refer to the Out of Hours service, if clinically appropriate. This results in either a telephone consultation, a face to face appointment at a primary care centre or a home visit with a doctor, nurse practitioner or other health care professional. (The primary integrated urgent care provider is Practice Plus Group, who subcontract the integrated urgent care treatment and face to face service to Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C.). The Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. began providing this service from April 2019. This service is provided across Suffolk. Bases are at Ipswich Hospital, Riverside Clinic Ipswich, Drovers House Bury St Edmunds, Mildenhall, Eye, Sudbury, Saxmundham, Haverhill and Stowmarket.

This service is registered with CQC under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 in respect of some, but not all, of the services it provides. There are some exemptions from regulation by CQC which relate to particular types of service and these are set out in of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. For example, podiatry. These types of arrangements are exempt by law from CQC regulation.

Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C employs a wide range of clinical and non-clinical skill mix of staff on a permanent, bank, self-employed and agency basis. This includes for example, hospital consultants, GPs, specialist nurses, advanced nurse practitioners and practice nurses, advanced practitioner sonographers, pharmacists, healthcare assistants, and physician associates.

Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C is the provider for one GP practice, Unity Healthcare in Haverhill. This location was not included as part of this review. You can find the report for this inspection by searching for the location name at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk).

# Are services safe?

## We rated safe as Good because:

At our previous inspection published in June 2021, Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. – Head Office was rated as requires improvement for providing safe services because:

- There were two non-Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. owned scales and one Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. owned weighing scales which were not in date for calibration.
- The emergency medicines in stock were in line with current guidelines, however improvements were needed to the system for monitoring oxygen availability across the GP+ and Out of Hours sites.

At this inspection, we saw the required improvements had been made:

## Safety systems and processes

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

- The provider shared some locations with another provider; to ensure compliance of all equipment, Suffolk GP Federation C.I.C. – Head Office has now taken responsibility for calibration of all equipment across these shared sites.
- We saw evidence that the two weighing scales which failed calibration had been disposed of and all other weighing scales had been successfully calibrated on 17 June 2021.
- A system was in place to document the immunisation status of all clinical and non-clinical staff.
- The overall Hepatitis B immunisation status of staff was 99.2%, increased from 94% at our previous inspection in June 2021. A risk assessment was in place to ensure the safety of staff.

## Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

- At our previous inspection in June 2021, it was noted that the oxygen cylinder was less than half full and there was no spare cylinder available. An oxygen gas audit was completed every two months.
- We saw evidence that there were now two oxygen cylinders available at the Riverside location and three oxygen cylinders available at the East Bergholt location. The provider also shared an oxygen gas audit tool. They had added a check to the base resuscitation daily checklist to ensure that there was three quarters or more oxygen in the first oxygen cylinder and that the second oxygen cylinder was completely full. This checklist had been fully completed.