

The College Practice

Quality Report

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Maidstone

Kent

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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 service

Good 

Are services safe?

Good 

Are services effective?

Good 

Are services caring?

Good 

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

Summary of findings

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Overall summary

Letter from the Chief Inspector of General Practice

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection at The College Practice on 18 January 2017. Overall the practice is rated as good.

Our key findings across all the areas we inspected were as follows:

- There was an open and transparent approach to safety and an effective system for reporting and recording significant events.
- Risks to patients were assessed and well managed.
- The arrangements for managing medicines in the practice kept patients safe.
- Staff assessed patients' needs and delivered care in line with current evidence based guidance. Staff had been trained to provide them with the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and treatment.
- Patients said they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect and they were involved in their care and decisions about their treatment.
- Information about services and how to complain was available and easy to understand.
- Patients said they found it easy to make an appointment with a named GP and there was continuity of care, with urgent appointments available the same day.
- The practice had good facilities and was well equipped to treat patients and meet their needs.
- Translation services were available to patients whose first language was not English; with staff at the practice who could speak Dutch, Sinhalese, Bengali and Welsh. We saw that the practices' self check-in system was accessible in English and Nepalese, as well as other European languages.
- The practice had developed a wide range of other services for patients. The practice objective was to place the patients at the heart of the services, rather than the patients being sent through the health care system to access the services.
- There was a clear leadership structure and staff felt supported by management. The practice sought feedback from staff and patients, which it acted on.

Summary of findings

- The provider was aware of and complied with the requirements of the duty of candour.
- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels within the practice.

We saw one area of outstanding practice:

- Health promotion events were utilised by the practice as a means of supporting patients to live healthier lives. The PPG held information evenings annually. Additionally, the practice had a cycle scheme called 'Cycle Healthy Cycle Happy'. The scheme was introduced to encourage patients to get back on their bikes and improve their health.

However there were areas of practice where the provider should make improvements:

- Continue to ensure that infection control audits highlight areas of concern and ensure these are appropriately actioned.
- Continue to ensure that all staff training files contain up to date evidence of training attended.
- Continue to monitor and improve patient service results into telephone and appointment access.
- Continue to improve the system that identifies patients who are also carers, in order to help ensure that all patients on the practice list who are carers are offered relevant support if required.

Professor Steve Field (CBE FRCP FFPH FRCGP)

Chief Inspector of General Practice

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Are services safe?

The practice is rated as good for providing safe services.

Good



- There was an effective system for reporting and recording significant events
- Lessons were shared to make sure action was taken to improve safety in the practice.
- When things went wrong patients received reasonable support, truthful information, and a written apology. They were told about any actions to improve processes to prevent the same thing happening again.
- Risks to patients were assessed and well managed.
- The arrangements for managing vaccines in the practice kept patients safe. All immunisations were entered into 'Smart Imms Clinic' which allowed for the monitoring of stock control expiry dates and helped to ensure that comprehensive data entries and consents were documented. As an extra precaution, the practice maintained photo sheets for immunisation packaging, in order to help minimise errors and confusion when boxes that immunisations were packaged in changed.

Are services effective?

The practice is rated as good for providing effective services.

Good



- Data from the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) showed patient outcomes were at or above average compared to the national average.
- Staff assessed needs and delivered care in line with current evidence based guidance.
- Clinical audits demonstrated quality improvement.
- Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and treatment.
- There was evidence of appraisals and personal development plans for all staff.
- Staff worked with other health care professionals to understand and meet the range and complexity of patients' needs.

Are services caring?

The practice is rated as good for providing caring services.

Good



- Data from the national GP patient survey showed patients rated the practice higher than others for several aspects of care.

Summary of findings

- Patients said they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect and they were involved in decisions about their care and treatment.
- Information for patients about the services available was easy to understand and accessible.
- We saw staff treated patients with kindness and respect, and maintained patient and information confidentiality.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

The practice is rated as good for providing responsive services.

- Practice staff reviewed the needs of its local population and engaged with the NHS England Area Team and Clinical Commissioning Group to secure improvements to services where these were identified.
- Patients said they found it easy to make an appointment with a named GP and there was continuity of care, with urgent appointments available the same day.
- There was a system for one of the practice nurses to carry out home visits to those patients who found it difficult to access the practice but did not meet the district nurse criteria of being classified as housebound. The purpose of these visits were to ensure patients received appropriate care and avoid hospital admissions. Data from audits of these visits showed that approximately four to six hospital admissions had been avoided in the last 12 months, as a consequence of these visits being conducted.
- Translation services were available to patients whose first language was not English; with staff at the practice who could also speak Dutch, Sinhalese, Bengali and Welsh. We saw that the practices' self check-in system was accessible in English and Nepalese, as well as some European languages. Additionally, there was a book of Nepalese phrases translated into English, to help ensure that reception staff could communicate with their Nepalese patients effectively.
- There was a process for homeless patients to register at the practice. The process included either using the address of the practice or their choice of day care centre for all correspondences relating to those patients. Clear and detailed care plans were maintained, which documented how and when the patient could be contacted.
- The practice had good facilities and was well equipped to treat patients and meet their needs.
- Health promotion events were utilised by the practice as a means of supporting patients to live healthier lives. The PPG

Good



Summary of findings

held information evenings annually. Additionally, the practice had a cycle scheme called 'Cycle Healthy Cycle Happy'. The scheme was introduced to encourage patients to get back on their bikes and improve their health.

- The practice provided International Normalised Ratio (INR) management clinics for patients prescribed oral anticoagulation medicines. (This is a measure of how much longer it takes the blood to clot when oral anticoagulation medicines are taken). These clinics were implemented following the closure of the clinic at the local hospital. Information about how to complain was available and easy to understand and evidence showed the practice responded quickly to issues raised. Learning from complaints was shared with staff and other stakeholders.

Are services well-led?

The practice is rated as good for being well-led.

- The practice had a clear vision and strategy to deliver high quality care and promote good outcomes for patients. Staff were clear about the vision and their responsibilities in relation to it.
- There was a clear leadership structure and staff felt supported by management. The practice had a number of policies and procedures to govern activity and held regular governance meetings.
- There was an overarching governance framework which supported the delivery of the strategy and good quality care. This included arrangements to monitor and improve quality and identify risk.
- The provider was aware of and complied with the requirements of the duty of candour. The partners encouraged a culture of openness and honesty. The practice had systems for notifiable safety incidents and ensured this information was shared with staff to ensure appropriate action was taken.
- The practice sought feedback from staff and patients, which it acted on. The patient participation group was active.
- The practice took into account other events which were not required to be reported as significant events, and used these to promote learning. For example, a request had been made by the Coroner for a report on a patient no longer registered with the practice. The writing of the report was used as a reflective exercise and the outcome of the Coroner enquiry was reviewed, in order to see what lessons the practice could learn from it.

Good



Summary of findings

The six population groups and what we found

We always inspect the quality of care for these six population groups.

Older people

The practice is rated as good for the care of older people.

- The practice offered proactive, personalised care to meet the needs of the older people in its population.
- The practice was responsive to the needs of older people, and offered home visits and urgent appointments for those with enhanced needs.
- The practice offered proactive, personalised care to meet the needs of the older people in its population. It had a scheme for patients, who live in one of the 15 local nursing and/or residential care homes. This involved registering all the patients (with their consent) with one of the GP partners who looked after that home. As required visits to nursing/residential care homes were conducted.

Good



People with long term conditions

The practice is rated as good for the care of people with long-term conditions.

- Nursing staff had lead roles in chronic disease management and patients at risk of hospital admission were identified as a priority.
- Performance for diabetes related indicators were in line with the local and national averages. For example, 73% of patients with diabetes, on the register, in whom the last IFCC HbA1c is 64 mmol/mol (a blood test to check blood sugar levels) or less in the preceding 12 months (local average 77% and national average 78%).
- Longer appointments and home visits were available when needed.
- All these patients had a named GP and a structured annual review to check their health and medicines needs were being met. For those patients with the most complex needs, the named GP worked with relevant health and care professionals to deliver a multidisciplinary package of care.

Good



Families, children and young people

The practice is rated as good for the care of families, children and young people.

Good



Summary of findings

- There were systems to identify and follow up children living in disadvantaged circumstances and who were at risk, for example, children and young people who had a high number of A&E attendances. Immunisation rates were relatively high for all standard childhood immunisations.
- Patients told us that children and young people were treated in an age-appropriate way and were recognised as individuals, and we saw evidence to confirm this.
- The practice's uptake for the cervical screening programme was 82%, which was comparable to the CCG and national average of 82%.
- Appointments were available outside of school hours and the premises were suitable for children and babies.
- We saw positive examples of joint working with midwives and health visitors.
- The practice provided patients aged 24 and under with access to free condoms, under the Kent C - Card scheme and chlamydia screening for those under 25. This service was offered to patients whether they were registered at the practice or not.

Working age people (including those recently retired and students)

The practice is rated as good for the care of working-age people (including those recently retired and students).

- The needs of the working age population, those recently retired and students had been identified and the practice had adjusted the services it offered to ensure these were accessible, flexible and offered continuity of care.
- The practice was proactive in offering online services as well as a full range of health promotion and screening that reflects the needs for this age group.

Good



People whose circumstances may make them vulnerable

The practice is rated as good for the care of people whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

- The practice held a register of patients living in vulnerable circumstances including those who were homeless or those with a learning disability.
- A GP partner operated the voluntary GP outreach services for homeless patients.
- The practice offered longer appointments for patients with a learning disability.

Good



Summary of findings

- The practice regularly worked with other health care professionals in the case management of vulnerable patients.
- The practice informed vulnerable patients about how to access various support groups and voluntary organisations.
- Staff knew how to recognise signs of abuse in vulnerable adults and children. Staff were aware of their responsibilities regarding information sharing, documentation of safeguarding concerns and how to contact relevant agencies in normal working hours and out of hours.

People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia)

The practice is rated as good for the care of people experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia).

- The percentage of patients diagnosed with dementia who had their care reviewed in a face to face meeting in the last 12 months was 76%, which was comparable to the local and national averages of 84%.
- The percentage of patients with schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses who had a comprehensive, agreed care plan documented in the record, in the preceding 12 months was 91%, local average of 92% and national averages of 89%.
- The practice regularly worked with multi-disciplinary teams in the case management of patients experiencing poor mental health, including those with dementia.
- The practice carried out advance care planning for patients with dementia.
- The practice had told patients experiencing poor mental health about how to access various support groups and voluntary organisations.
- The practice had a system to follow up patients who had attended accident and emergency where they may have been experiencing poor mental health.
- Staff had a good understanding of how to support patients with mental health needs and dementia.

Good



Summary of findings

What people who use the service say

The national GP patient survey results were published in July 2016. The results showed the practice was performing significantly better than the local and national averages in some aspects of care received. Two hundred and fifty three survey forms were distributed and 104 were returned. This represented 1% of the practice's patient list.

- 56% of patients found it easy to get through to this practice by phone compared to the national average of 73%.
- 74% of patients were able to get an appointment to see or speak to someone the last time they tried compared to the national average of 92%.
- 81% of patients described the overall experience of this GP practice as good compared to the national average of 85%.

- 71% of patients said they would recommend this GP practice to someone who has just moved to the local area compared to the national average of 80%.

As part of our inspection we also asked for CQC comment cards to be completed by patients prior to our inspection. We received 33 comment cards of which 32 were positive about the standard of care received and one was negative. The negative comments related to individual experiences of care received.

We spoke with three patients during the inspection. All three patients said they were satisfied with the care they received and thought staff were approachable, committed and caring.

Areas for improvement

Action the service **SHOULD** take to improve

- Continue to ensure that infection control audits highlight areas of concern and ensure these are appropriately actioned.
- Continue to ensure that all staff training files contain up to date evidence of training attended.
- Continue to monitor and improve patient service results into telephone and appointment access.
- Continue to improve the system that identifies patients who are also carers, in order to help ensure that all patients on the practice list who are carers are offered relevant support if required.

Outstanding practice

Health promotion events were utilised by the practice as a means of supporting patients to live healthier lives. The PPG held information evenings annually. Additionally, the

practice had a cycle scheme called 'Cycle Healthy Cycle Happy'. The scheme was introduced to encourage patients to get back on their bikes and improve their health.

The College Practice

Detailed findings

Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by:

Our inspection team was led by a CQC Lead Inspector. The team included a GP specialist adviser and practice manager specialist adviser.

Background to The College Practice

The College Practice is a GP practice based in Maidstone, Kent with a patient population of 15759. There is a branch practice located in Barming, Kent. Patients can attend either practice.

The practice is similar across the board to the national averages for some population groups. For example, 19% of patients are aged 0-14 years of age compared to the CCG national average of 17%. Figures were similar for patients aged under 18 years of age, 65 years, 75 years, 85 years and over. The practice is on the sixth centile deprivation indices, meaning this practice is in the middle in terms of deprivation in Kent and has a mix of a white British and Nepalese population, with some pockets of deprivation, as well as average levels of unemployment and alcohol and drug misuse.

The practice holds a General Medical Service contract and consists of six GP partners (two female and four male). The GPs are supported by a practice manager, seven practice nurses (female), three healthcare assistants (female), a pharmacist and a team of 34 administrative. A wide range of services and clinics are offered by the practice including asthma and diabetes.

Both practices are arranged over two storeys, with all the patient accessible areas being located on the ground floor. The practice is accessible to patients with mobility issues, as well as parents with children and babies.

Both practices are open between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. There is a duty doctor system for patients to access the practice between 6pm to 6.30pm. Extended hours appointments are offered 6.30pm to 8pm on Thursday evenings (occasionally held on a Wednesday) and from 8.30am to 11am at The College Practice every Saturday (except for the first Saturday in the month when they are at Barming Surgery). In addition, appointments could be booked up to twelve weeks in advance; urgent appointments were also available for people that needed them. There are arrangements with other providers (Integrated Care 24) to deliver services to patients outside of the practice's working hours.

The practice is a training practice which takes GP Registrars and has four GP Registrars working at the practice.

Services are provided from:

- The College Practice, 50-52 College Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6SB
- Barming Surgery, Marigold Way, Barming, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 0ZJ

Why we carried out this inspection

We carried out a comprehensive inspection of this service under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. The inspection was planned to check whether the provider is meeting the legal

Detailed findings

requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008, to look at the overall quality of the service, and to provide a rating for the service under the Care Act 2014.

How we carried out this inspection

Before visiting, we reviewed a range of information we hold about the practice and asked other organisations to share what they knew. We carried out an announced visit on 18 January 2017. We visited both practices as part of this inspection.

During our visit we:

- Spoke with a range of staff (four GPs, the practice manager, two nurses, a healthcare assistant and 10 administrative staff) and spoke with three patients who used the service.
- Observed how staff talked with carers and/or family members
- Reviewed an anonymised sample of the personal care or treatment records of patients.
- Reviewed 33 comment cards, where patients or other healthcare providers shared their views and experiences of the service.

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?

We also looked at how well services were provided for specific groups of people and what good care looked like for them. The population groups are:

- Older people
- People with long-term conditions
- Families, children and young people
- Working age people (including those recently retired and students)
- People whose circumstances may make them vulnerable
- People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia).

Please note that when referring to information throughout this report, for example any reference to the Quality and Outcomes Framework data, this relates to the most recent information available to the CQC at that time.

Are services safe?

Our findings

Safe track record and learning

There was an effective system for reporting and recording significant events.

- Staff told us they would inform the practice manager of any incidents and there was a recording form available on the practice's computer system. The incident recording form supported the recording of notifiable incidents under the duty of candour. (The duty of candour is a set of specific legal requirements that providers of services must follow when things go wrong with care and treatment).
- We saw evidence that when things went wrong with care and treatment, patients were informed of the incident, received reasonable support, truthful information, a written apology and were told about any actions to improve processes to prevent the same thing happening again.
- The practice carried out a thorough analysis of the significant events. Records showed that actions had been taken to improve processes and that learning points had been implemented.

We reviewed safety records, incident reports and minutes of meetings where these were discussed. We saw evidence that lessons were shared and action was taken to improve safety in the practice. For example, there had been an incident of a missed positive test result causing a delay in the patient receiving treatment in a timely manner. As a consequence of this incident, the practice had implemented an additional step for highlighting high risk test results to the GPs, in order to help reduce/eliminate the risk of similar future incidents.

Overview of safety systems and processes

The practice had clearly defined and embedded systems, processes and practices to keep patients safe and safeguarded from abuse, which included:

- Arrangements to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse. These arrangements reflected relevant legislation and local requirements. Policies were accessible to all staff. The policies clearly outlined who to contact for further guidance if staff had concerns about a patient's welfare. There was a lead member of

staff for safeguarding. GPs always provided reports where necessary for other agencies. Staff demonstrated they understood their responsibilities and all had received training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults relevant to their role.

- A notice in the waiting room advised patients that chaperones were available if required. All staff who acted as chaperones were trained for the role and had received a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. (DBS checks identify whether a person has a criminal record or is on an official list of people barred from working in roles where they may have contact with children or adults who may be vulnerable).
- The practice maintained appropriate standards of cleanliness and hygiene. We observed the premises to be clean and tidy. The Lead nurse was the infection control clinical lead who liaised with the local infection prevention teams to keep up to date with best practice. There was an infection control protocol and staff had received up to date training. Annual infection control audits were undertaken and we saw evidence that action was taken to address any improvements identified as a result. However, the audit in November 2016 had identified some issues but these had not been actioned. We raised this with the practice manager, who subsequently sent us documentary evidence to show that the issues had been actioned and completed.
- The arrangements for managing medicines, including emergency medicines and vaccines, in the practice kept patients safe (including obtaining, prescribing, recording, handling, storing, security and disposal). We spoke with GPs and members of the non-clinical team, who told us there was a system for checking that repeat prescriptions were issued according to medicine review dates and also included the review of high risk medicines. Patients told us that they had not experienced any difficulty in getting their repeat prescriptions. Blank prescription forms and pads were securely stored. The practice carried out regular medicine audits, with the local CCG pharmacy teams, to ensure prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing. Patient Group Directions (PGDs) had been adopted by the practice to allow nurses to administer medicines in line with legislation. We saw evidence that the nurses had received appropriate training and been assessed as competent to administer the medicines referred to under a PGD.

Are services safe?

- We reviewed five personnel files and found appropriate recruitment checks had been undertaken prior to employment. For example, proof of identification, references, qualifications, registration with the appropriate professional body and the appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service or a suitable risk assessment where a DBS check was deemed not necessary by the practice.

Monitoring risks to patients

Risks to patients were assessed and well managed.

- There were procedures for monitoring and managing risks to patient and staff safety. There was a health and safety policy available with a poster in the reception office which identified local health and safety representatives. The practice had up to date fire risk assessments and carried out regular fire drills. All electrical equipment was checked to ensure the equipment was safe to use and clinical equipment was checked to ensure it was working properly. The practice had a variety of other risk assessments to monitor safety of the premises such as control of substances hazardous to health and infection control and legionella (Legionella is a term for a particular bacterium which can contaminate water systems in buildings).

- There were arrangements for the planning and monitoring the number of staff and mix of staff needed to meet patients' needs. There was a rota system for all the different staffing groups to ensure enough staff were on duty.

Arrangements to deal with emergencies and major incidents

The practice had adequate arrangements to respond to emergencies and major incidents.

- There was an instant messaging system on the computers in all the consultation and treatment rooms which alerted staff to any emergency.
- All staff received annual basic life support training and there were emergency medicines available in the treatment room.

The practice had a defibrillator available on the premises and oxygen. A first aid kit and accident book were available.

- Emergency medicines were easily accessible to staff in a secure area of the practice and all staff knew of their location. All the medicines we checked were in date and stored securely.
- The practice had a comprehensive business continuity plan for major incidents such as power failure or building damage. The plan included emergency contact numbers for staff.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Effective needs assessment

The practice assessed needs and delivered care in line with relevant and current evidence based guidance and standards, including National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) best practice guidelines.

- The practice had systems to keep all clinical staff up to date. Staff had access to guidelines from NICE and used this information to deliver care and treatment that met patients' needs.
- The practice monitored that these guidelines were followed through risk assessments, audits and random sample checks of patient records.

Management, monitoring and improving outcomes for people

The practice used the information collected for the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) and performance against national screening programmes to monitor outcomes for patients. (QOF is a system intended to improve the quality of general practice and reward good practice). The most recent published results were 99% of the total number of points available with 5% exception reporting (compared to the CCG average of 5%). (Exception reporting is the removal of patients from QOF calculations where, for example, the patients are unable to attend a review meeting or certain medicines cannot be prescribed because of side effects). This practice was not an outlier for any QOF (or other national) clinical targets. Data from 2015/2016 showed:

- Performance for diabetes related indicators were in line with the local and national averages. For example, 73% of patients with diabetes, on the register, in whom the last IFCC HbA1c is 64 mmol/mol (a blood test to check blood sugar levels) or less in the preceding 12 months (local average 77% and national average 78%).
- The percentage of patients with schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses who had a comprehensive, agreed care plan documented in the record, in the preceding 12 months was 91%, local average of 92% and national averages of 89%

There was evidence of quality improvement including clinical audit.

- There had been three clinical audits completed in the last two years, one of these was a completed audit where improvements had been made and monitored.
- The practice participated in local audits, national benchmarking and accreditation.
- Findings were used by the practice to improve services. on warfarin treatment which had been problematic and being prescribed an alternative medicine, Novel Oral Anticoagulants (blood thinning medicines), where required.

Information about patients' outcomes was used to make improvements such as: routinely reviewing patients on a certain medicine which had adverse cardiac (heart) side effects.

Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and treatment.

- The practice had an induction programme for all newly appointed staff. This covered such topics as safeguarding, infection prevention and control, fire safety awareness, health and safety and confidentiality.
- The practice could demonstrate how they ensured role-specific training and updating for relevant staff. For example, for those reviewing patients with long-term conditions. Practice nurses also held training and/or diplomas in asthma, diabetes, insulin Initiation, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Women's Health in Primary Care and international normalised ratio (INR) management (a measure of how much longer it takes the blood to clot when oral anticoagulation (medicines that help prevent blood clots) were used).
- Staff administering vaccines and taking samples for the cervical screening programme had received specific training which had included an assessment of competence. Staff who administered vaccines could demonstrate how they stayed up to date with changes to the immunisation programmes. For example, by access to on line resources and discussion at practice meetings.
- The learning needs of staff were identified through a system of appraisals, meetings and reviews of practice development needs. Staff had access to appropriate training to meet their learning needs and to cover the

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

scope of their work. This included ongoing support, one-to-one meetings, clinical supervision and facilitation and support for revalidating GPs and nurses. All staff had received an appraisal within the last 12 months.

- Staff received training that included: safeguarding, fire safety awareness, basic life support and information governance. Staff had access to and made use of e-learning training modules, in-house and external training.
- The practice was a training practice which takes GP registrars and had four GP Registrars working at the practice. The practice was subject to scrutiny by Health Education Kent, Surrey and Sussex (called the Deanery) as the supervisor of training.

Coordinating patient care and information sharing

The information needed to plan and deliver care and treatment was available to relevant staff in an accessible way through the practice's patient record system and their intranet system.

This included care and risk assessments, care plans, medical records and investigation and test results.

- The practice shared relevant information with other services in a timely way. For example, when referring patients to other services.

Staff worked together and with other health and social care professionals to understand and meet the range and complexity of patients' needs and to assess and plan ongoing care and treatment. This included when patients moved between services, including when they were referred, or after they were discharged from hospital. Meetings took place with other health care professionals on a monthly basis when care plans were routinely reviewed and updated for patients with complex needs. Such meetings were attended by social services, hospice staff, health and social care coordinators, school nurses, mental health nurses, health visitors, complex care nurses, learning disability nurses and health visitors.

Consent to care and treatment

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

- Staff understood the relevant consent and decision-making requirements of legislation and guidance, including the Mental Capacity Act 2005. When providing care and treatment for children and young people, staff carried out assessments of capacity to consent in line with relevant guidance.
- Where a patient's mental capacity to consent to care or treatment was unclear the GP or practice nurse assessed the patient's capacity and, recorded the outcome of the assessment.
- The process for seeking consent was monitored through patient records audits.

Supporting patients to live healthier lives

The practice identified patients who may be in need of extra support. For example:

- Patients receiving end of life care, carers, those at risk of developing a long-term condition and those requiring advice on their diet, smoking and alcohol cessation. Where required, patients were signposted to the relevant service. Additionally, the practice had a cycle scheme called 'Cycle Healthy Cycle Happy'.

The practice's uptake for the cervical screening programme was 82%, which was comparable to the CCG and national average of 82%. The practice telephoned patients who did not attend for their cervical screening test to remind them of its importance. The practice demonstrated how they encouraged uptake of the screening programme by using information in different languages and for those with a learning disability. There were systems to ensure results were received for all samples sent for the cervical screening programme and the practice followed up women who were referred as a result of abnormal results.

The practice achieved comparable results in relation to its patients attending national screening programmes for bowel and breast cancer screening. For example, 55% of eligible patients had been screened for bowel cancer, which was comparable the CCG average of 61% and the national average of 58%. Seventy one percent of eligible patients had been screened for breast cancer, which was comparable to the CCG average of 73% and the national average of 72%.

Childhood immunisation rates for the vaccinations given were comparable to the national averages. There are four areas where childhood immunisations are measured; each

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

has a target of 90%. The practice achieved the target in three out of four areas; in the remaining area they scored 61.8%. These measures can be aggregated and scored out of 10, with the practice scoring 8.7 (compared to the national average of 9.1). The practice provided us with data from 2015/2016 (which has not yet been verified, published and made publically available) and these showed that 90% of two year olds had received the vaccination in the target area with a low score. Additionally, the practice telephoned patients (or their parent if the patient was a child) who did not attend for their immunisations to remind them of its importance.

Patients had access to appropriate health assessments and checks. These included health checks for new patients. NHS health checks for patients aged 40–74 were available via referrals to other service providers and there were plans for the practice to have these held in-house with effect from April 2017. Appropriate follow-ups for the outcomes of health assessments and checks were made, where abnormalities or risk factors were identified.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Kindness, dignity, respect and compassion

We observed members of staff were courteous and very helpful to patients and treated them with dignity and respect.

- Curtains were provided in consulting rooms to maintain patients' privacy and dignity during examinations, investigations and treatments.
- We noted that consultation and treatment room doors were closed during consultations; conversations taking place in these rooms could not be overheard.
- Reception staff knew when patients wanted to discuss sensitive issues or appeared distressed they could offer them a private room to discuss their needs.

The majority of the patient Care Quality Commission comment cards we received were positive about the service experienced. Patients said they felt the practice offered an excellent service and staff were helpful, caring and treated them with dignity and respect.

We spoke with Chairperson of the patient participation group (PPG). They also told us they were satisfied with the care provided by the practice and said their dignity and privacy was respected. Of the 33 comment cards we received, 32 highlighted that staff responded compassionately when they needed help and provided support when required. One comment card contained negative comments and related to individual experiences of care received.

Results from the national GP patient survey showed patients felt they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect. The practice was comparable to local and national averages for its satisfaction scores on consultations with GPs and nurses. For example:

- 95% of patients said the GP was good at listening to them compared to the clinical commissioning group (CCG) average of 92% and the national average of 89%.
- 93% of patients said the GP gave them enough time compared to the CCG average of 89% and the national average of 87%.

- 94% of patients said they had confidence and trust in the last GP they saw compared to the CCG average of 94% and the national average of 92%.
- 92% of patients said the last GP they spoke to was good at treating them with care and concern compared to the CCG average of 88% and the national average of 85%.
- 91% of patients said the last nurse they spoke to was good at treating them with care and concern compared to the CCG average of 93% and the national average of 91%.
- 85% of patients said they found the receptionists at the practice helpful compared to the CCG average of 89% and the national average of 87%.

Care planning and involvement in decisions about care and treatment

Patients told us they felt involved in decision making about the care and treatment they received. They also told us they felt listened to and supported by staff and had sufficient time during consultations to make an informed decision about the choice of treatment available to them. Patient feedback from the comment cards we received was also positive and aligned with these views.

We reviewed a sample of patients care plans and found these were comprehensive in content and where appropriate, included do not resuscitate orders as well as advanced directives that had been carried out.

Results from the national GP patient survey showed patients responded positively to questions about their involvement in planning and making decisions about their care and treatment. Results were in line with the local and national averages. For example:

- 94% of patients said the last GP they saw was good at explaining tests and treatments compared to the CCG average of 87% and the national average of 86%.
- 80% of patients said the last GP they saw was good at involving them in decisions about their care compared to the CCG average of 84% and national average of 82%.
- 89% of patients said the last nurse they saw was good at involving them in decisions about their care compared to the CCG average of 86% and the national average of 85%.

Are services caring?

The practice provided facilities to help patients be involved in decisions about their care:

- Staff told us that translation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language. We saw notices in the reception areas informing patients this service was available.
- Information leaflets were available in easy read format, as well as large font.

Patient and carer support to cope emotionally with care and treatment

Patient information leaflets and notices were available in the patient waiting area which told patients how to access a number of support groups and organisations. Information about support groups was also available on the practice website.

The practice's computer system alerted GPs if a patient was also a carer. The practice had identified 310 patients as

carers (less than 1% of the practice list). There was a section on the practice's new patient registration forms where patients record whether they were or have a carer. The practices' website also contained details of how patients could identify themselves as carers and make arrangements to have a Carer's Health Check with a designated practice nurse. Written and online information was also available to direct carers to the various avenues of support available to them.

Staff told us that if families had suffered bereavement, their usual GP contacted them and sent them a letter. The call and letter were either followed by a consultation at a flexible time and location to meet the family's needs and/or by giving them advice on how to find a support service. GPs and staff at the practice told us they maintained contact with families during bereavements, in order to offer support before, during and after their relative's funeral.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice reviewed the needs of its local population and engaged with the NHS England Area Team and clinical commissioning group (CCG) to secure improvements to services where these were identified.

- The practice offered late night appointments from 6.30pm to 8pm on Thursday evenings (occasionally held on a Wednesday) and from 8.30am to 11am at The College Practice every Saturday (except for the first Saturday in the month when they are at Barming Surgery), for working patients who could not attend during normal opening hours.
- There were longer appointments available for patients with a learning disability.
- Home visits were available for older patients and patients who had clinical needs which resulted in difficulty attending the practice. There was a system for one of the practice nurses to carry out home visits to those patients who found it difficult to access the practice but did not meet the district nurse criteria of being classified as housebound. The purpose of these visits were to ensure patients received appropriate care and avoid hospital admissions. Data from audits of these visits showed that approximately four to six hospital admissions had been avoided in the last 12 months, as a consequence of these visits being conducted.
- Same day appointments were available for children and those patients with medical problems that require same day consultation.
- Patients were able to receive travel vaccinations available on the NHS as well as those only available privately.
- There were disabled facilities.
- Translation services were available to patients whose first language was not English;
- Telephone consultations were available, as well as offering online services.
- A minor surgery service was also available.
- There was a scheme for 180 patients, who lived in one of the 15 local nursing and/or residential care homes. This involved registering all the patients (with their consent) with one of GP partner who looked after that home. As required visits to nursing/residential care homes were conducted.
- There was a process for homeless patients to register at the practice. The process included either using the address of the practice or their choice of day care centre for all correspondences relating to those patients. Clear and detailed care plans were maintained, which documented how and when the patient could be contacted. We were told that the practice had once supported a homeless patient with the administration of their medicines for a period of six months, due to their medicines being repeatedly stolen. The practice had comprehensively assessed the patient's lifestyle; which meant they were unable to make an appointment, were uncontactable and could attend the practice at any point in the day. Staff told us how they managed this effectively and in a manner that was responsive to the patient's specific needs.
- The Accessible Information Standard (which aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss are provided with information that they can easily read or understand and with support so they can communicate effectively) had been implemented to capture the specific communication needs of patients. A hearing loop was also available.
- The practice provided international normalised ratio (INR) management clinics for patients prescribed oral anticoagulation medicines. These clinics were implemented following the closure of the clinic at the local hospital. Additionally, systems and processes had been implemented for self-testing of INRs in order to help ensure that working age patients could be routinely monitored without having to attend the practice. The system also included administering Vitamin K injections, outside of the practice hours, to patients whose INR was too high in order to reverse the effects of oral anticoagulation medicines.
- Health promotion events were utilised by the practice as a means of supporting patients to live healthier lives. The PPG held information evenings annually and had previously promoted blood pressure monitoring, child illnesses, diabetes, men's health, depression and stress. Additionally, the practice had a cycle scheme called

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

'Cycle Healthy Cycle Happy'. The scheme was introduced to encourage patients to get back on their bikes and improve their health. The scheme included the practice having a bike and promotional material in the practice, as well as patients being able to hire a free bike from 'community cycle works' GPs and staff were joined by patients on the weekend ride which took them around Maidstone.

Access to the service

Both practices were open between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. There was a duty doctor system for patients to access the practice between 6pm to 6.30pm. Extended hours appointments were offered 6.30pm to 8pm on Thursday evenings (occasionally held on a Wednesday) and from 8.30am to 11am at The College Practice every Saturday (except for the first Saturday in the month when they are at Barming Surgery). In addition, appointments could be booked up to twelve weeks in advance; urgent appointments were also available for people that needed them.

There were arrangements with other providers (Integrated Care 24) to deliver services to patients outside of the practice's working hours. In addition, appointments could be booked up to eight weeks in advance; urgent appointments were also available for people that needed them. There were arrangements with other providers (Integrated Care 24) to deliver services to patients outside of the practice's working hours.

Results from the national GP patient survey showed that patient's satisfaction with how they could access care and treatment were comparable with the local and national averages.

- 76% of patients were satisfied with the practice's opening hours compared to the CCG average of 77% and the national average of 79%.
- 74% of patients were able to get an appointment to see or speak to someone the last time they tried compared to the national average of 92%.
- 56% of patients said they could get through easily to the practice by phone compared to the CCG average of 76% and the national average of 73%.

The practice were aware of the appointment and telephone booking issues and that performance was low. We saw that there was evidence of discussion at practice

meetings to address these. The practice had reviewed its telephone system and a new system had been installed. The new system was being routinely monitored and continually improved, where required. For example, auditing trends for high volumes of calls and ensuring staff allocated to taking calls were not based on the reception desk. The monitoring system showed that calls were being answered promptly and the number of people to answer the telephones were adjusted accordingly during periods of high volume call times. In June 2016 the practice conducted a survey which showed 56% of patients find it easy to get through to practice by phone and a further survey in October 2016 demonstrated an increase to 67% since the implementation of the new system. The practice had recognised that for some patient groups the telephone may not be the chosen method for contacting the practice and offered these patients face to face appointments.

Appointment issues had also been reviewed and the practice found these responses related to being able to book appointments at times that were convenient for the patient. As a consequence, appointment availability had been reviewed at both practices. The practice were coping with demand by capping demand (limiting the number of appointments available) and on 9 May 2016, implemented Total Triage (based on a similar model to Doctors First). The system was such that every patient who contacts the practice was spoken with or seen on the day. There was no waiting list for any patient as the work load was cleared daily. In response the work force of the practice had been enhanced by the employment of other health professionals such as a pharmacist.

People told us on the day of the inspection that they were able to get appointments when they needed them.

The practice had a system to assess:

- whether a home visit was clinically necessary; and
- the urgency of the need for medical attention.

In cases where the urgency of need was so great that it would be inappropriate for the patient to wait for a GP home visit, alternative emergency care arrangements were made. Clinical and non-clinical staff were aware of their responsibilities when managing requests for home visits.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice had an effective system for handling complaints and concerns.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

- Its complaints policy and procedures were in line with recognised guidance and contractual obligations for GPs in England.
- There was a designated responsible person who handled all complaints in the practice.
- We saw that information was available to help patients understand the complaints system. For example, posters displayed in the waiting room, summary leaflets available and through the practices website.

We looked at 10 of the 22 complaints received in the last 12 months and found these were satisfactorily handled, dealt

with in a timely way, openness and transparency. Lessons were learnt from individual concerns and complaints and also from analysis of trends; action was taken as a result to improve the quality of care. For example, the practice had implemented call recording systems, following a number of complaints from patients about staff attitude during phone calls to book appointments or seek medical advice.

Records of complaints, minutes of meetings, NHS Choices and results of friends and family tests, showed that all negative comments received by the practice were responded to appropriately and used to improve services.

Are services well-led?

Good 

(for example, are they well-managed and do senior leaders listen, learn and take appropriate action)

Our findings

Vision and strategy

The practice had a clear vision to deliver high quality care and promote good outcomes for patients. Governance and performance management arrangements were proactively reviewed and reflected best practice.

- The practice had a mission statement which was displayed in the waiting areas and staff knew and understood the values. The statement encompassed values such as making every contact count, working in partnership with each other and with patients; advocating and prescribing safe, effective care. Giving patients the time they need, helping them to find their own solutions, promoting a healthy lifestyle for them and their families, signposting to other organisations, where necessary and involving them in their care choices.
- The practice had a strategy and supporting business plan, which reflected the vision and values and were regularly monitored.

Governance arrangements

The practice had an overarching governance framework which supported the delivery of the strategy and good quality care. This outlined the structures and procedures and ensured that:

- There was a clear staffing structure and that staff were aware of their own roles and responsibilities.
- Practice specific policies were implemented and were available to all staff.
- A comprehensive understanding of the performance of the practice was maintained.
- A programme of continuous clinical and internal audit was used to monitor quality and to make improvements.
- There were arrangements for recording and managing risks, issues and implementing mitigating actions.

Leadership and culture

On the day of inspection GP partners demonstrated they had the experience, capacity and capability to run the

practice and ensure high quality care. They told us they prioritised safe, high quality and compassionate care. Staff told us the GPs were approachable and always took the time to listen to all members of staff.

The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the duty of candour. (The duty of candour is a set of specific legal requirements that providers of services must follow when things go wrong with care and treatment). This included support training for all staff on communicating with patients about notifiable safety incidents. The partners encouraged a culture of openness and honesty. The practice had systems to ensure that when things went wrong with care and treatment:

- The practice gave affected people reasonable support, truthful information and a verbal and written apology.
- The practice kept written records of verbal interactions as well as written correspondence.

There was a clear management structure which included lead roles for the whole staff team (GPs, nursing team staff and administrative staff) and staff felt supported by management.

- Staff told us the practice held regular team meetings. We saw minutes of meetings that confirmed this
- Staff told us there was an open culture within the practice and they had the opportunity to raise any issues at team meetings and felt confident and supported in doing so.
- Staff said they felt respected, valued and supported, particularly by the GPs and practice manager.
- All staff were involved in discussions about how to run and develop the practice, and the partners encouraged all members of staff to identify opportunities to improve the service delivered by the practice.

Seeking and acting on feedback from patients, the public and staff

The practice encouraged and valued feedback from patients, the public and staff. It proactively sought patients' feedback and engaged patients in the delivery of the service.

Are services well-led?

Good 

(for example, are they well-managed and do senior leaders listen, learn and take appropriate action)

- The practice had gathered feedback from patients through the patient participation group (PPG) and through surveys and feedback received.
- The PPG met regularly and submitted proposals for improvements to the practice management team.
- There were high levels of staff satisfaction. Staff were proud of the practice as a place to work and spoke highly of the culture. The practice had gathered feedback from staff through staff meetings, appraisals and discussion. Staff told us they would not hesitate to give feedback and discuss any concerns or issues with colleagues and management.

Continuous improvement

There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels within the practice. There was a clear proactive approach to seeking out and embedding new ways of providing care and treatment.

They took into account other events which were not required to be reported as significant, and used these to promote learning. For example, a request had been made

by the Coroner for a report on a patient no longer registered with the practice. The writing of the report was used as a reflective exercise and the outcome of the Coroner enquiry was reviewed, in order to see what lessons the practice could learn from it.

The practice was a training practice and all the staff were, to some degree, involved in the training of future GPs, reception and administration staff. There were three GPs who provided GP Registrar training. Additionally, the practice provided training for paramedic practitioners, physician associates and one of the practice nurses was in the process of completing mentorship training, in order to support and facilitate the training of student nurses.

Additionally, the practice had taken into account the needs of its patients and were looking at ways to improve services provided. For example, looking at the introduction of online consultations as an effective alternative for patients wishing to be consulted and potentially recruiting another nurse practitioner or paramedic to help support home visits.