

Ms. Jan Watkins

The Smile Clinic

Inspection Report

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Date of inspection visit: 20 March 2019

Date of publication: 26/04/2019

Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 20 March 2019 under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. We planned the inspection to check whether the registered provider 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 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

The Smile Clinic is in the London Borough of Hammersmith. The practice provides predominantly private and some NHS dental treatment to patients of all ages.

The practice is located on the ground floor level in a purpose adapted premises. There is step free access to the practice and both treatment rooms are located on the ground floor.

The practice is located close to public transport bus and train services.

Summary of findings

The dental team includes the principal dentist who owns the practice, one associate dentist who provides dental implants and one trainee dental nurse. The clinical team are supported by a receptionist.

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 received feedback from 18 patients.

During the inspection we spoke with the principal dentist, the trainee dental nurse and the receptionist. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open

Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 9am and 6pm

Thursdays between 9am and 7.30pm

Fridays between 9am and 5pm.

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Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared clean and well maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance. Improvements were needed so that infection prevention and control audits were carried out every six months in accordance with current guidelines.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk. Improvements were needed so that risk assessments were carried out regularly in line with current guidelines.

- The practice 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.
- 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 had arrangements to deal with complaints positively and efficiently.
- The practice had suitable information governance arrangements.

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

- Review the practice's arrangements for sharing and responding to patient safety alerts, recalls and rapid response reports issued from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and through the Central Alerting System (CAS), as well as from other relevant bodies, such as Public Health England (PHE).
- Review the practice's audit protocols to ensure audits of various aspects of the service, such as radiography and infection prevention and control are undertaken at regular intervals to help improve the quality of service. Practice should also ensure, that where appropriate audits have documented learning points and the resulting improvements can be demonstrated.

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.

There were systems to use learning from incidents and complaints to help them improve.

Improvements were needed to the arrangements for sharing and responding to patient safety alerts.

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 followed national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments.

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

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 told us that they were very happy with the treatments they received, which they described as excellent. They commented that staff were professional and knowledgeable.

The dentists discussed treatment with patients so they could give informed consent and recorded this in their records. Patients told us that the dentist always explained their treatment in detail.

The practice had clear arrangements when patients needed to be referred to other dental or health care professionals. There were protocols to ensure that routine and urgent referrals were monitored suitably.

The practice supported staff to complete training relevant to their roles and had systems to help them monitor this.

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 18 people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were gentle, reassuring, helpful and friendly. They told us that staff always treated them with kindness and that the dentists were understanding and that they helped them to relax when they were anxious or in pain or discomfort.

No action



Summary of findings

Patients said that the dentist listened to them and helped them to understand the treatment provided including any options available.

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. Patients commented that they received treatment in a timely manner.

Staff considered and took into account patients' different needs and had made reasonable adjustments to accommodate patients who may need additional support.

The practice could make arrangements to help patients whose first language was not English and those with sight or hearing loss should these be required.

The practice took patients views seriously. They valued compliments from patients and had arrangements to respond 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.

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 had a range of policies and procedures to underpin the day to day management of the service.

The practice monitored some 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. Improvements were needed so that audits and risk assessments were carried out regularly in line with current guidelines.

No action



Are services safe?

Our findings

Radiography (X-rays)

The practice had systems to keep patients safe.

Staff knew their responsibilities if they had concerns about the safety of 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. The principal dentist was the practice safeguarding lead who had undertaken additional training and was responsible for overseeing the practice procedures.

We saw evidence that staff received safeguarding training to an appropriate level depending on their roles within the practice. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns to the local safeguarding team and the police as appropriate and notification to the CQC.

Staff demonstrated an understanding and awareness of issues which may render some people more vulnerable such as 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 reprimand.

The dentists used rubber dams in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment.

The practice had a suitable staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at the recruitment records each of the four members of staff. These showed the practice followed their recruitment procedure. Appropriate procedures and checks including employment references and Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks and evidence of each candidate's skills and experience were carried out for all staff.

We noted that the dentists were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover. There were systems in place to monitor this.

The practice ensured that facilities and equipment were safe and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including sterilising and X-Ray equipment, electrical and mechanical appliances.

The practice had a fire safety procedure, which was reviewed regularly and a fire safety risk assessment was in place and this was kept under review. Records showed that fire detection and firefighting equipment such as fire extinguishers and emergency lighting systems were regularly tested and serviced. There was a fire evacuation procedure in place and staff who we spoke with were aware of these procedures.

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

We saw evidence that the dentists reported on and usually justified the radiographs they took. The principal dentist reviewed the quality and grade of dental radiographs. Improvements were needed so that dental radiography audits following current guidance and legislation.

Risks to patients

The practice's health and safety policies, procedures and these were up to date and accessible to staff 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. The practice had arrangements to manage risks associated with use and disposal of dental sharps in line with current legislation.

The provider had a system in place to ensure that 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.

The practice had policies and procedures in place to assist staff to respond promptly and appropriately to medical emergencies. The staff team demonstrated that they understood and followed these procedures. Staff completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support (BLS) every year.

Are services safe?

Emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in recognised guidance. Staff kept records of their checks to make sure these were available, within their expiry date, and in working order. We noted that two items; oropharyngeal airways and adhesive pads for use with the Automated External Defibrillator were past their use-by date. These items had been ordered prior to our inspection visit.

A dental nurse worked with the dentist when they treated patients in line with GDC Standards for the Dental Team.

The provider had arrangements to minimise the risk that can be caused from substances that are hazardous to health. There were records maintained of all hazardous materials used at the practice and staff had access to detailed information to guide them on how to act in the event of accidental exposure to hazardous substances.

The practice had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures. They followed guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health. Staff were aware of and followed these procedures. 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 the dental laboratory 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. A Legionella risk assessment had been carried out and all the recommended improvements had been addressed. We saw records of water testing and dental unit water line management were in place.

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.

Improvements were needed so that infection prevention and control audits were undertaken twice a year. Regular audits had been carried out historically but had lapsed in the previous 18 months. The latest audit which was completed in January 2019 showed the practice was meeting the required standards.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Staff had the information they needed to deliver safe care and treatment to patients.

We discussed with the principal 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 detailed, complete and written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. Dental and other records and were kept securely. Information handling processes at the practice were in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations requirements (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The practice had reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines. We noted that medicines were stored securely and there were arrangements in place for monitoring stocks to minimise the risk of misuse.

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

Track record on safety

The principal dentist demonstrated that they understood risks and there were risk assessments in relation to safety issues such as fire safety, premises and equipment. Improvements were needed so that these were reviewed annually or more frequently if needed as part of a planned system for monitoring safety within the practice.

There were systems in place for reporting and investigating accidents or other safety incidents.

The principal described one significant event that had occurred and the measures that had been implemented following the incident to minimise the risk of future incidents.

Lessons learned and improvements

Are services safe?

There were suitable systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The practice learned and shared lessons, identified themes and took action to improve safety in the practice.

Improvements were needed to the practice systems for sharing and acting on safety alerts such as those issued from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory

Agency (MHRA) and through the Central Alerting System (CAS), as well as from other relevant bodies, such as Public Health England (PHE). The principal dentist told us that they received and reviewed these. Improvements were needed so that relevant alerts and safety information was available to the staff team to refer to as needed.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep the dentists up to date with current evidence-based practice. The principal dentist described how they assessed patient's 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 one of the dentists at the practice 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 principal dentist told us they prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them. They also 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 principal dentist 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.

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 principal dentist told us they gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these so they could make informed decisions. Patients were

provided with detailed information and explanations in relation to their proposed treatments. This included information in relation to the intended benefits, potential complications or risks and the cost of treatment.

Patients confirmed that their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment and time to consider any treatment options available.

The practice's consent policy included information about the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The dental team understood their responsibilities under the act when treating adults who may not be able to make informed decisions. The practice consent policy also referred to the 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.

Monitoring care and treatment

The principal dentist told us that they assessed patients' treatment needs in line with recognised guidance. The dental care records which we looked at included details of the relevant information in relation to the assessments which the dentists carried out such.

Effective staffing

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

There were arrangements in place to provide a period of induction based on a structured programme to newly appointed staff to help familiarise themselves with the practice policies, procedures and protocols. We saw records in relation to the induction provided for two members of staff who had recently started work at the practice. These showed that staff were provided with information and practical guidance in relation to their roles and responsibilities.

There were arrangements in place to discuss staffs' individual training and development needs. The trainee dental nurse and the receptionist had recently started work at the practice and there were arrangements to appraise and review performance and development needs at the appropriate time.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

The practice had procedures for when they referred patients to specialists within the practice, and in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide.

There were 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 had arrangements in place to monitor all referrals to make sure they were dealt with promptly. The principal dentist told us that routine referrals were reviewed and followed up within a three month period to ensure that patients were received the appropriate assessments and or dental treatments.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Kindness, respect and compassion

Patients told us that staff treated them with kindness, respect and compassion.

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

Patients commented positively that staff were gentle, reassuring, helpful and friendly. They told us that staff always treated them with kindness and that the dentists were understanding and that they helped them to relax when they were anxious or in pain or discomfort.

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 area was open plan in design and staff were mindful of this when assisting patients in person and on the telephone. 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 the principal dentist was aware of the Accessible Information Standards and the requirements under the Equality Act

- Interpretation services could be accessed for patients who did not have English as a first language if required.

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 and costs of treatment with them. The principal dentist described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options.

The practice's website and the patient information leaflet provided patients with information about the dental team, the range of range of treatments available at the practice, costs of treatment and arrangements for booking appointments.

A range of patient information leaflets and posters provided additional information.

The principal dentist described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included for example dental radiographs and dental models which were shown to the patient to help them better understand the diagnosis and treatment.

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. The practice had procedures in place to help them plan routine appointments and to manage appointments for emergency dental treatments. Patients said that they were able to access appointments that were convenient to them.

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.

Staff told us that they currently had some patients for whom they needed to make adjustments to enable them to receive treatment.

A Disability Access audit had been completed and this was kept under review in order to continually improve access for patients. The practice had made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. These included step free practice. The layout and design of the premises did not afford the provision of fully accessible toilets. Staff told us that they advised patients when they contacted the practice and assisted patients as much as possible. Where the practice could not accommodate patients staff would advise them of other dental practices locally.

Timely access to services

Patients were able to access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs. Patients confirmed they could make routine and

emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment. The practice displayed its opening hours in the practice patient information leaflet and on the practice website.

Staff told us that patients who requested an urgent appointment were where possible seen on 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.

The practice website and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open.

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 principal dentist was responsible for dealing with complaints. Staff who we spoke with told us that they reported any complaints made promptly so patients received a quick response.

Information was available about organisations patients could contact if not satisfied with the way the practice dealt with their concerns.

The principal dentist told us that there had been no complaints received within the previous 12 months.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Leadership capacity and capability

The practice had arrangements in place to help ensure that they had the capacity and skills to deliver their aims and goals to provide high quality, patient focused care. There were arrangements in place to review patient and service demands and plans to ensure that the practice had the capacity to meet these.

The dental team was new and the trainee dental nurse and receptionist had started work at the practice recently. They told us that they had been supported to familiarise themselves with the practice procedures for the day - to - day running of the practice.

The principal dentist we were told by staff was supportive and approachable.

The practice had systems and procedures in place which underpinned the management and the delivery of the service. These were reviewed and updated as required and accessible to staff.

Vision and strategy

The practice had a clear vision which was reflected in its policies, procedures and the day – to- day management of the service. There were arrangements to share relevant information with staff through a range of formal and informal discussions and staff could contribute to the how the practice vision and strategy was delivered.

Culture

The practice had a culture of openness, transparency and candour and there were policies and procedures in place to support this. These were in accordance with compliance with the requirements of the Duty of Candour.

Staff stated they felt involved, supported and valued. They told us that they were happy to work at the practice. The practice had arrangements to support staff and to ensure that behaviour and performance were consistent with the practice's vision and values.

Staff we spoke with told us they were able to raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.

Governance and management

The principal dentist was responsible for the clinical leadership and the day to day running of the service.

There were processes for identifying and managing risks, issues and performance.

The provider had a system of clinical governance in place which included policies, protocols and procedures that were accessible to all members of staff.

Appropriate and accurate information

The practice had information governance arrangements and staff were aware of the importance of these in protecting patients' personal information. The practice was aware of and had systems in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. Patients were told how information about them would be used and were assured of the measures in place to protect this information.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The practice used comments and feedback to obtain patients' views about the service. Patients who received NHS dental treatment 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. We looked at the most recent reviews which showed that 100% of patients who participated in the FFT would recommend the dental practice to their family and friends.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through regular meetings, reviews 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 arrangements to review staff and appraise staff performance and to support all members of staff to develop skills, knowledge and experience.

Staff completed 'highly recommended' and continuing professional development training as per General Dental Council professional standards. This included undertaking medical emergencies and basic life support training annually. Staff told us the practice provided support and encouragement for them to do so.

Are services well-led?

Some improvements were needed to practice quality assurance processes so that regular audits in respect of areas such as dental radiography, and infection control procedures were carried out.