

Mr. Nalin Patel

N Patel – Dental Surgery

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 31 August 2022 under section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. We planned the inspection to check whether the registered 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 asked 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:

- The dental clinic was visibly clean and well-maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff.
- Safeguarding processes were in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.

Summary of findings

- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect and staff took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
- There was effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked as a team.
- Staff and patients were asked for feedback about the services provided.
- The dental clinic had information governance arrangements.

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

- Implement a system to ensure patient referrals to other dental or health care professionals are centrally monitored to ensure they are received in a timely manner and not lost.
- Implement audits for prescribing of antibiotic medicines taking into account the guidance provided by the College of General Dentistry.

Background

N Patel - Dental Surgery is in the London Borough of Islington and provides NHS and private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

The practice is located on the ground floor of a building close to Archway underground station. There is level access to the practice for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. Car parking spaces, including dedicated parking for disabled people, are available near the practice.

The team consists of the principal dentist, a practice manager, two qualified dental nurses and a cleaner. The practice has one treatment room.

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

The practice is open:

Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm.

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?	No action ✓
Are services effective?	No action ✓
Are services caring?	No action ✓
Are services responsive to people's needs?	No action ✓
Are services well-led?	No action ✓

Are services safe?

Our findings

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

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

The provider had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. We saw evidence that staff received safeguarding training and undertook scenario sessions in team meetings. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns, including notification to the CQC.

The provider had a system to highlight, in the dental care records, vulnerable patients and patients who required other support such as with mobility or communication..

The provider had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance. The provider had introduced additional procedures in relation to COVID-19 in accordance with published guidance.

The provider had procedures to reduce the possibility of legionella or other bacteria developing in water systems, in line with a risk assessment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Risks to patients

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

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

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

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Dental care records were kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

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

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

Are services safe?

The provider had systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines. We noted that antimicrobial prescribing audits were not carried out on an annual basis as recommended by the College of General Dentistry. We discussed this with the provider who agreed to implement them within the next cycle of audits.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The provider had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. We saw evidence of how learning from significant events was shared throughout the practice team.

The provider had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

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

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The provider had a system to keep up to date with current evidence-based practice.

The principal dentist engaged with national dental networks and shared contemporary ways of working with the clinical team.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

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

Staff were aware of and involved with national oral health campaigns and local schemes which supported patients to live healthier lives.

Consent to care and treatment

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

Staff understood their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Staff described how they involved patients' relatives or carers when appropriate and made sure they had enough time to explain treatment options clearly.

Monitoring care and treatment

The practice kept detailed dental care records in line with recognised guidance.

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

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

Effective staffing

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

The principal dentist was proud to have a longstanding staff team. Staff new to the practice had a structured induction programme. We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

Staff worked together and with other health and social care professionals to deliver effective care and treatment.

The dentist confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care for treatment the practice did not provide. The practice did not hold a log of referrals made to other specialists. We discussed this with the provider who agreed to implement a referral log with immediate effect.

Are services caring?

Our findings

We found this practice was providing caring services in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Kindness, respect and compassion

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

We looked at feedback from patients. Patients described the practice team as kind, welcoming and highly skilled. We noted that many patients had been registered at the practice for a significant period, and some who had moved out of the area returned to the practice to receive dental care and treatment.

All feedback was continuously monitored, responded to and shared throughout the practice team.

Privacy and dignity

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality.

The practice had installed closed-circuit television to improve security for patients and staff. Relevant policies and protocols were in place.

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 to be involved in decisions about their care.

Staff gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment.

The practice's information leaflet provided patients with information about the range of treatments available at the practice.

The dentist described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included photographs, study models and radiograph images.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Our findings

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

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs. It took account of patient needs and preferences.

Staff were clear about the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. Staff had carried out a disability access audit and had formulated an action plan to continually improve access for patients.

Timely access to services

Patients could access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs.

The practice had an appointment system to respond to patients' needs.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice knew how to respond to concerns and complaints appropriately.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

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

Leadership capacity and capability

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

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

Systems and processes were embedded, and staff worked together in such a way that the inspection did not highlight any issues or omissions.

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

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

Culture

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

Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice. Staff described the team culture as family orientated and flexible, and described management staff as approachable and caring.

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

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

Governance and management

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

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

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

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

The practice had information governance arrangements and staff were aware of the importance of these in protecting patients' personal information.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

Staff gathered feedback from patients, the public and external partners and a demonstrated commitment to acting on feedback. There was emphasis placed on learning from feedback and sharing it throughout the team. We saw that patient feedback was consistently positive and noted that patients complemented the compassionate nature of the team.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings, surveys, and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on.

Continuous improvement and innovation

The practice had systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

Are services well-led?

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

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