

London Bridge

Inspection report

Bank Chambers
6-10 Borough High Street
London
SE1 9QQ
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This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

Ratings

Overall rating for this location	Good	
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Are services safe?	Good	
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Are services effective?	Good	
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Are services caring?	Good	
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Are services responsive to people's needs?	Good	
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Are services well-led?	Good	
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Overall summary

This service is rated as Good overall.

The key questions are rated as:

Are services safe? – Good

Are services effective? – Good

Are services caring? – Good

Are services responsive? – Good

Are services well-led? – Good

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection of London Bridge on 14 July 2022. This was the first CQC inspection of this location under the current CQC inspection methodology, following a move from another location in the London Bridge area. We are mindful of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on our regulatory function. We will continue to discharge our regulatory enforcement functions required to keep people safe and to hold providers to account where it is necessary for us to do so.

The Medical Director of the company who works as a GP at the service is the registered manager. A registered manager is a person who is registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

Our key findings were:

- The service provided care in a way that kept patients safe and protected them from avoidable harm.
- Patients received effective care and treatment that met their needs.
- Staff dealt with patients with kindness and respect and involved them in decisions about their care.
- The service organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs. Patients could access care and treatment in a timely way.
- The way the service was led and managed promoted the delivery of high-quality, person-centre care.

The service **should:**

- Review risk assessments for medications where the amount prescribed is outside of NICE guidelines, or where medicines are off license.

Dr Rosie Benneyworth BM BS BMedSci MRCGP

Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector. The team also included a GP specialist advisor.

Background to London Bridge

London Bridge is located at Bank Chambers, 6-10 Borough High Street, London, SE1 9QQ in the London borough of Southwark. The service is an independent health consulting doctor, the service does not see NHS patients.

The provider is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to deliver the regulated activities of maternity and midwifery service, treatment of disease, disorder or injury, and diagnostic and screening procedures.

The service is primarily a GP service for patients attending for one off illnesses, and for those patients wanting comprehensive health checks. The service may consult some patients with long term conditions, although this is a small proportion of patients.

The provider primarily provides services to patients within the borough of Southward, and the surrounding areas. The service is based within a larger office building. Patients attend the reception area, and there are three consulting rooms used by the service adjacent NHS practice to the reception area.

The service operates on Monday to Friday from 9am until 5:30pm. At weekends the service operates on Saturday when there is sufficient demand for the service to open. The service does not formally provide a service outside of these hours. All consultations on site are with GPs, although other locations managed by the provider have nurse appointments which the provider is looking to start at this location. The clinicians who work at the service are either directly employed by the provider, or are on a list of bank staff who have received full induction and training.

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 therefore formed the framework for the areas we looked at during the inspection.

Are services safe?

We rated safe as Good:

Safety systems and processes

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

- The provider conducted safety risk assessments. It had appropriate safety policies, which were regularly reviewed and communicated to staff including locums. They outlined clearly who to go to for further guidance. Staff received safety information from the service as part of their induction and refresher training. The service had systems to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse.
- The service had systems in place to assure that an adult accompanying a child had parental authority.
- The service worked with other agencies to support patients and protect them from neglect and abuse. Staff took steps to protect patients from abuse, neglect, harassment, discrimination and breaches of their dignity and respect.
- The provider carried out staff checks at the time of recruitment and on an ongoing basis where appropriate. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were undertaken where required. (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).
- All staff received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate to their role. They knew how to identify and report concerns. Staff who acted as chaperones were trained for the role and had received a DBS check.
- There was an effective system to manage infection prevention and control. Infection control audits were carried out on an annual basis by the provider. We noted that all clinical and patient areas were clean and fit for purpose.
- The provider ensured that facilities and equipment were safe, and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions. There were systems for safely managing healthcare waste.
- The provider carried out appropriate environmental risk assessments, which took into account the profile of people using the service and those who may be accompanying them.

Risks to patients

There were systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety.

- There were arrangements for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed.
- There was an effective induction system for agency staff tailored to their role.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention. They knew how to identify and manage patients with severe infections, for example sepsis.
- When there were changes to services or staff the service assessed and monitored the impact on safety.
- There were appropriate indemnity arrangements in place.
- There were suitable medicines and equipment to deal with medical emergencies which were stored appropriately and checked regularly. If items recommended in national guidance were not kept, there was an appropriate risk assessment to inform this decision.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

- Individual care records were written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. The care records we saw showed that information needed to deliver safe care and treatment was available to relevant staff in an accessible way.
- The service had systems for sharing information with staff and other agencies to enable them to deliver safe care and treatment.

Are services safe?

- The service had a system in place to retain medical records in the event that they cease trading.
- Clinicians made appropriate and timely referrals in line with protocols and up to date evidence-based guidance.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

- The systems and arrangements for managing medicines, including vaccines, controlled drugs, emergency medicines and equipment minimised risks. The service kept prescription stationery securely and monitored its use.
- The service carried out regular medicines audit to ensure prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing.
- The service did not prescribe Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs (medicines that have the highest level of control due to their risk of misuse and dependence). The service did prescribe other controlled medicines, for example Zopiclone. The service had audited the prescribing of Zopiclone, specifically looking at the risk of dependency. However, this medicine was being prescribed in quantities of up to 28 doses at a time. The recommended NICE guidance is that this medicine would not normally be prescribed in more than 14 doses at a time. The audit showed that consideration of the risk of this medicine had been considered, but the volumes in which it was prescribed had not been risk assessed.
- The only non-licensed medicine that was prescribed at the service was Kenalog for hay fever. The prescribing of this medicine had been audited and patients who were prescribed this medicine had to sign a specific consent form.
- Staff prescribed, administered or supplied medicines to patients and gave advice on medicines in line with legal requirements and current national guidance. Processes were in place for checking medicines and staff kept accurate records of medicines. Where there was a different approach taken from national guidance there was a clear rationale for this that protected patient safety.

Track record on safety and incidents

The service had a good safety record.

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues. Some of these were provided by the organisation with which the provider had a service level agreement, although the agreement itself did not specify exactly what risk assessments would cover the service.
- The service monitored and reviewed activity. This helped it to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture that led to safety improvements.

Lessons learned and improvements made

The service learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

- There was a system for recording and acting on significant events. Staff understood their duty to raise concerns and report incidents and near misses. Leaders and managers supported them when they did so. The most recent example was of a broken refrigerator in which vaccines were stored, and the service updated its protocols relating to vaccine disposal in the event of this occurring again.
- There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The service learned and shared lessons identified themes and took action to improve safety in the service.
- The service acted on and learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts. The service had an effective mechanism in place to disseminate alerts to all members of the team including sessional and agency staff.

Are services effective?

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The provider had systems to keep clinicians up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw evidence that clinicians assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance (relevant to their service)

- The provider assessed needs and delivered care in line with relevant and current evidence-based guidance and standards such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) best practice guidelines.
- Patients' immediate and ongoing needs were fully assessed. Where appropriate this included their clinical needs and their mental and physical wellbeing.
- Clinicians had enough information to make or confirm a diagnosis
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- The service did not provide care for long term conditions of patients.
- Staff assessed and managed patients' pain where appropriate.

Monitoring care and treatment

The service was actively involved in quality improvement activity.

- The service undertook regular notes audits to ensure that the care provided by clinicians at the service was in line with NICE best practice guidelines. This included sample audits of the clinical records of clinicians who worked at the service and medicines audits.
- Where medicines audits took place where there were recommendations for improvements, we saw that these audits were improved until such time that improvement could be demonstrated.

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

- All staff were appropriately qualified.
- Relevant professionals (medical) were registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) and were up to date with revalidation
- The provider understood the learning needs of staff and provided protected time and training to meet them. Up to date records of skills, qualifications and training were maintained. Staff were encouraged and given opportunities to develop.

Coordinating patient care and information sharing

Staff worked together, and worked well with other organisations, to deliver effective care and treatment.

- Patients received coordinated and person-centred care. Staff referred to, and communicated effectively with, other services when appropriate.
- Before providing treatment, doctors at the service ensured they had adequate knowledge of the patient's health, any relevant test results and their medicines history.
- All patients were asked for consent to share details of their consultation and any medicines prescribed with their registered GP on each occasion they used the service.
- The provider had risk assessed the treatments they offered. They had identified medicines that were not suitable for prescribing, including when the patient did not give their consent to share information with their GP, or they were not registered with a GP.

Are services effective?

- Patient information was shared appropriately (this included when patients moved to other professional services), and the information needed to plan and deliver care and treatment was available to relevant staff in a timely and accessible way. There were clear and effective arrangements for following up on people who had been referred to other services.
- The service monitored the process for seeking consent appropriately.

Supporting patients to live healthier lives

Staff were consistent and proactive in empowering patients, and supporting them to manage their own health and maximise their independence.

- Where appropriate, staff gave people advice so they could self-care.
- Where patients needs could not be met by the service, staff redirected them to the appropriate service for their needs.

Consent to care and treatment

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

- Staff understood the requirements of legislation and guidance when considering consent and decision making.
- Staff supported patients to make decisions. Where appropriate, they assessed and recorded a patient's mental capacity to make a decision.

Are services caring?

We rated caring as Good:

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- The service sought feedback on the quality of clinical care patients received. The service had received feedback. The patient feedback questionnaires showed that overall, patients were satisfied with the service, and the care that was provided by individual clinicians.
- Staff understood patients' personal, cultural, social and religious needs. They displayed an understanding and non-judgmental attitude to all patients.
- The service gave patients timely support and information.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about care and treatment.

- Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language if required. Patients were also told about multi-lingual staff who might be able to support them.
- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.

Privacy and Dignity

The service respected patients' privacy and dignity.

- Staff recognised the importance of people's dignity and respect.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

We rated responsive as Good:

Responding to and meeting people's needs

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

- The clinic had developed a range of information and support resources which were available to service users.
- The website for the clinic was clear and easy to understand. In addition, it contained clear information regarding the services available.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.

Timely access to the service

Patients were able to access care and treatment from the service within an appropriate timescale for their needs.

- Patients had timely access to initial assessment, test results, diagnosis and treatment.
- Waiting times, delays and cancellations were minimal and managed appropriately.
- Patients reported that the appointment system was easy to use.
- Referrals and transfers to other services were undertaken in a timely way.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The service took complaints and concerns seriously and responded to them appropriately to improve the quality of care.

- Information about how to make a complaint or raise concerns was available. Staff treated patients who made complaints compassionately.
- The provider treated every negative review on the social media platforms that it used of three stars or less as a complaint. Although it had received only nine formal complaints in the last year, it had reviewed over 70 complaints due to this policy.
- The service informed patients of any further action that may be available to them should they not be satisfied with the response to their complaint.
- We reviewed a sample of three complaints managed by the service. Responses to complainants were clear and transparent.

Are services well-led?

We rated well-led as Good:

Leadership capacity and capability;

Leaders had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

- Leaders were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.
- Leaders at all levels were visible and approachable. They worked closely with other staff to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.
- The provider had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the service.

Vision and strategy

The service had a clear vision and credible strategy to deliver high quality care and promote good outcomes for patients.

- There was a clear vision and set of values. The service had a realistic strategy and supporting business plans to achieve priorities.
- The service developed its vision, values and strategy jointly with staff and external partners (where relevant).
- Staff were aware of and understood the vision, values and strategy and their role in achieving them.
- The service monitored progress against delivery of the strategy.

Culture

The service had a culture of high-quality sustainable care.

- Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work for the service.
- The service focused on the needs of patients.
- Although no complaints or incidents had been recorded, openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated within the system for responding to incidents and complaints. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the duty of candour.
- Staff told us they could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they need. This included appraisal and career development conversations.
- There was a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of all staff.
- The service actively promoted equality and diversity. It identified and addressed the causes of any workforce inequality. Staff had received equality and diversity training. Staff felt they were treated equally.
- There were positive relationships between staff.

Governance arrangements

There were clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

Are services well-led?

- Structures, processes and systems to support good governance and management were clearly set out, understood and effective. The governance and management of partnerships, joint working arrangements and shared services promoted interactive and co-ordinated person-centred care.
- Staff were clear on their roles and accountabilities
- Leaders had established proper policies, procedures and activities to ensure safety and assured themselves that they were operating as intended.
- The service used performance information, which was reported and monitored, and management and staff were held to account
- The information used to monitor performance and the delivery of quality care was accurate and useful.
- The service submitted data or notifications to external organisations as required.
- There were robust arrangements in line with data security standards for the availability, integrity and confidentiality of patient identifiable data, records and data management systems.

Appropriate and accurate information

The service acted on appropriate and accurate information.

- Quality and operational information was used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The service involved patients, the public, staff and external partners to support high-quality sustainable services.

- The service encouraged and heard views and concerns from the public, patients, staff and external partners.
- There were systems to support improvement and innovation work.

Continuous improvement and innovation

There were systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement.
- The service made use of internal and external reviews of incidents and complaints. Learning was shared and used to make improvements.
- Leaders and managers encouraged staff to take time out to review individual and team objectives, processes and performance.