

Fairbrook Medical Centre

Quality Report

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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 Fairbrook Medical Centre on 3 August 2016. 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 in place for reporting and recording significant events.
- Risks to patients were assessed and well managed.
- Staff assessed patients' needs and delivered care in line with current evidence based guidance. Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and treatment.
- The patients we spoke with or who left comments for us were positive about the standard of care they received and about staff behaviours. They said staff were polite, caring, supportive and thorough. They told us that their privacy and dignity was respected 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. Improvements were made to the quality of care as a result of complaints and concerns.
- Patients said it could be difficult to get through to the practice by phone and book appointments in advance. However, they were positive about access to same day and urgent appointments at the practice.
- The practice had good facilities and was well equipped to treat patients and meet their needs.
- There was a clear leadership structure and staff felt supported by management. The practice sought feedback from staff and patients, which it acted on.
- The provider was aware of and complied with the requirements of the duty of candour.

The areas where the provider should make improvements are:

- Ensure that all staff employed are supported by completing the essential training relevant to their roles, including infection prevention and control and basic life support training.

Summary of findings

- Ensure that a process is in place for the practice wide discussion of and response to Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and patient safety alerts.
- Ensure that medicine fridges are in working order with locking mechanisms in place to ensure safe storage of medicines.
- Take steps to ensure systems are in place so that GPs have sight of the appropriate blood test results and subsequent analysis before the prescribing of certain high risk medicines to patients.
- Ensure the health and safety legislation posters contain up to date contact information.
- Ensure the necessary actions to resolve risks identified by the Legionella risk assessment are completed, including the management of hot water temperatures to ensure they are kept within the required levels.
- Ensure that a documented policy on patient consent is in place.
- Ensure that, where practicable and appropriate, all reasonable adjustments are made for patients with a disability in line with the Equality Act (2010).
- Continue to take steps to ensure improvement to National GP Patient Survey results, including access to routine pre-bookable appointments and access to the practice by telephone. Ensure that the current action plan makes provision for the practice's response to below CCG and national average satisfaction scores on consultations with GPs and nurses.

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.

- There was an effective system in place for reporting and recording significant events.
- Lessons learnt were shared to make sure action was taken to improve safety in the practice.
- When there were unexpected safety incidents, patients received reasonable support and truthful information. They were told about any actions to improve processes to prevent the same thing happening again.
- The practice had clearly defined and embedded systems, processes and practices in place to keep patients safe and safeguarded from abuse.
- Risks to patients were assessed and well managed, however processes required strengthening in relation to MHRA patient safety alerts and one high risk medicine.

Good



Are services effective?

The practice is rated as good for providing effective services.

- Data from the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) showed patient outcomes were comparable with or above the local and national averages.
- 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 staff.
- Staff worked with multi-disciplinary teams to understand and meet the range and complexity of patients' needs.

Good



Are services caring?

The practice is rated as good for providing caring services.

- Data from the National GP Patient Survey published in July 2016 showed that with one exception, patients rated the practice similar to or below local and national averages for all aspects of care. Senior staff at the practice were aware of their below average satisfaction scores and could demonstrate they were responding to it.

Good



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.
- Data from the National GP Patient Survey published in July 2016 showed that patients rated the practice below local and national averages for access to the practice. Senior staff at the practice were aware of their below average satisfaction scores and could demonstrate they were responding to it.
- Patients said it could be difficult to make an appointment with a named GP and get through to the practice by phone. However, they said that access to urgent and same day appointments was good.
- The practice had good facilities and was well equipped to treat patients and meet their needs.
- 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.

Good



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 this.
- 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.

Good



Summary of findings

- 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 in place for knowing about 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.
- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels.

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.
- Older people had access to targeted immunisations such as the flu vaccination. The practice had 1,952 patients aged over 65 years. Of those 1,482 (76%) had received the flu vaccination in the 2015/2016 year.
- There were three named GPs for a large local older people's nursing home village and each GP visited once each week on separate days to ensure continuity of care for those patients. Also, one of the practice nurses had dedicated time over three days each week to visit patients in their own homes, including local residential homes, to provide care in the community.

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.
- 69% of patients on the asthma register had their care reviewed in the last 12 months. This was similar to the CCG average of 76% and the national average of 75%.
- Performance for diabetes related indicators was comparable with the CCG and national averages. The practice achieved 92% of the points available compared to the CCG average of 91% and the national average of 89%.
- All newly diagnosed patients with diabetes were managed in line with an agreed pathway.
- 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 GPs worked with relevant health and care professionals to deliver a multi-disciplinary package of care.

Good



Summary of findings

Families, children and young people

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

- There were systems in place to identify and follow up children living in disadvantaged circumstances and who may be at risk, for example, children and young people who had a high number of A&E attendances. Immunisation rates were slightly better than other practices in the local area 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 93% compared to the CCG average of 83% and the national average of 82%.
- Appointments were available outside of school hours and the premises were suitable for children and babies.
- Following a complaint about the lack of emergency appointments for children in the afternoon, the practice allocated eight appointment slots between 5pm and 6pm daily for children aged from 0 to 14 years.
- There were six week post-natal checks for mothers and their children.
- A range of contraceptive and family planning services were available.

Good



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 offered online services such as limited appointment booking and repeat prescriptions as well as a full range of health promotion and screening that reflects the needs for this age group.
- There was additional out of working hours access to meet the needs of working age patients. There was extended opening until 7.30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays and from 7am on Thursdays. The practice also opened on alternate Saturdays from 8am to midday for GP and nurse pre-bookable appointments.

Good



Summary of findings

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 with a learning disability. There were 56 patients on the practice's learning disability register at the time of our inspection. Of those, all 56 were invited for and 51 (91%) had accepted and received a health review in the past 12 months.
- The practice offered longer appointments for patients with a learning disability and there was a GP lead for these patients.
- The practice regularly worked with multi-disciplinary teams in the case management of vulnerable people.
- 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.
- Additional information was available for patients who were identified as carers and there was a nominated staff lead for these patients. Once each month the lead held a drop-in clinic to provide advice including signposting carers to support services.
- The practice had identified 327 patients on the practice list as carers. This was approximately 2.3% of the practice's patient list. Of those, all were invited for and 66 (20%) had accepted and received a health review in the past 12 months.

Good



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).

- 83% of patients diagnosed with dementia had their care reviewed in a face to face meeting in the last 12 months. This was similar to the CCG average of 85% and the national average of 84%.
- Performance for mental health related indicators was similar to the CCG and national averages. The practice achieved 97% of the points available compared to the CCG average of 96% and the national average of 93%.
- The practice regularly worked with multi-disciplinary teams in the case management of people experiencing poor mental health, including those with dementia.

Good



Summary of findings

- 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.
- Staff had a good understanding of how to support patients with mental health needs and dementia.
- NHS counsellors were based at the practice on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (morning only) each week. Patients could access this service to obtain psychological and emotional counselling and advice through referral from the GPs.
- There were GP leads for mental health and dementia.

Summary of findings

What people who use the service say

The National GP Patient Survey results published in July 2016 showed the practice was generally performing below local and national averages. There were 267 survey forms distributed and 108 were returned. This was a response rate of 40% and represented less than 1% of the practice's patient list.

- 65% found it easy to get through to this surgery by phone compared to a CCG average of 78% and a national average of 73%.
- 81% were able to get an appointment to see or speak to someone the last time they tried (CCG average 88%, national average 85%).
- 82% described the overall experience of their GP surgery as fairly good or very good (CCG average 89%, national average 85%).
- 76% said they would definitely or probably recommend their GP surgery to someone who had just moved to the local area (CCG average 84%, national average 78%).

We asked for CQC comment cards to be completed by patients prior to our inspection. We received 24 comment cards. We also spoke with seven patients during the inspection. From this feedback we found that patients were positive about the standard of care received. Patients said they felt staff were polite, caring, supportive and thorough and that their privacy and dignity was respected. They told us they felt listened to by the GPs and involved in their own care and treatment.

All of the patients we spoke with and some of those who left comments for us said it could be difficult to get through to the practice by phone and book appointments in advance. However, all of the patients we spoke with or who left comments for us were positive about access to same day and urgent appointments at the practice.

Fairbrook Medical Centre

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 and a nurse acting as specialist advisers.

Background to Fairbrook Medical Centre

Fairbrook Medical Centre provides a range of primary medical services from its premises at 4 Fairway Avenue, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, WD6 1PR.

The practice serves a population of approximately 14,537 and is a teaching practice. The area served is slightly less deprived compared to England as a whole. The practice population is mainly white British with some ethnic and Central and Eastern European communities. The practice serves an above average population of those aged from 0 to 14 years and 30 to 44 years. There is a lower than average population of those aged 15 to 24 years and 55 years and over.

The clinical team includes four male and four female GP partners, two female salaried GPs, five practice nurses and one consultancy nurse. The team is supported by a practice manager, a deputy practice manager, two reception managers, one Quality Outcomes and enhanced services manager and 19 other administration, reception and secretarial staff. The practice provides services under a General Medical Services (GMS) contract (a nationally agreed contract).

The practice is staffed with the doors and phone lines open from 8.30am to 1pm and 2pm to 6.30pm Monday to Friday.

Between 1pm and 2pm daily the doors and phone lines are closed and patients directed to emergency numbers if required. There is extended opening until 7.30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays and from 7am on Thursdays. The practice is also open on alternate Saturdays from 8am to midday for GP and nurse pre-bookable appointments. Appointments are available from 8.30am to 12.30pm, 2pm to 4pm and 4.30pm to 6.30pm daily, with slight variations depending on the doctor and the nature of the appointment.

An out of hours service for when the practice is closed is provided by Herts Urgent Care.

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 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 our inspection, we reviewed a range of information we held about the practice and asked other organisations to share what they knew about the practice. We carried out an announced inspection on 3 August 2016.

During our inspection we spoke with a range of staff including three GP partners, one practice nurse, the practice manager, the QOF and enhanced services

Detailed findings

manager and members of the reception and administration team. We spoke with seven patients and a representative of the Patient Participation Group (the PPG is a group of patients who work with the practice to discuss and develop the services provided). We observed how staff interacted with patients. We reviewed 24 CQC comment cards left for us by patients to share their views and experiences of the practice with us.

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 in place for reporting and recording significant events.

- The staff we spoke with were clear on the reporting process used at the practice and there was a recording form available on the practice's computer system. The incident 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 and were told about any actions to improve processes to prevent the same thing happening again.
- The practice carried out an analysis of significant events. These were managed consistently over time.

We reviewed safety records and incident reports and minutes of meetings where these were discussed. Lessons learnt were shared to make sure action was taken to improve safety in the practice. For example, following a prescribing error the practice reviewed and amended its policy and procedures to prevent recurrence of the incident. We saw that the patient involved was fully informed about the incident, investigation and changes in procedure.

We also looked at how the practice responded to Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and patient safety alerts. We saw that with all the examples we looked at, appropriate action was taken to respond to the alerts and keep patients safe. However, this relied on individual action rather than a practice wide discussion and response.

Overview of safety systems and processes

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

- Arrangements were in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse. These arrangements reflected relevant legislation and local requirements and 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 were two lead members of staff for safeguarding who were trained to the appropriate level. Staff demonstrated they understood their responsibilities and had received training relevant to their roles. GPs were trained to an appropriate level to manage child safeguarding concerns (level three).

- Notices around the practice 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 saw the practice was visibly clean and tidy. Hand wash facilities, including hand sanitiser were available throughout the practice. There were appropriate processes in place for the management of sharps (needles) and clinical waste. One of the practice nurses was the infection control lead who liaised with the local infection prevention teams to keep up to date with best practice. There was an infection control protocol in place and an infection control audit was completed earlier in 2016. We saw evidence that action was taken to address any improvements identified as a result. A programme of infection control training was in place and all clinical staff had completed this. Some non-clinical staff were overdue their training. Despite this, all of the staff we spoke with were knowledgeable about infection control processes relevant to their roles.
- 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). However, we saw that one medicines fridge in the practice had a misaligned door. This did not affect the door seal and internal temperature, but the locking mechanism designed to keep the medicines secure was no longer effective. However, the fridge was in a staff only area of the practice. All the other fridges were lockable and the keys were available.
- Processes were in place for handling repeat prescriptions. The practice carried out regular

Are services safe?

medicines audits, with the support of the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) medicines management team, to ensure prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing.

- Blank prescription forms and pads were securely stored and there were systems in place to monitor their use. Patient Group Directions (PGDs) and Patient Specific Directions (PSDs) had been adopted by the practice to allow nurses to administer medicines and vaccinations in line with legislation.
- We reviewed five personnel files and found appropriate recruitment checks had been undertaken prior to employment. For example, proof of identification, registration with the appropriate professional body and the appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Monitoring risks to patients

Risks to patients were assessed and well managed.

- Systems and processes were in place for the review of high risk medicines, however we found improvements could be made for the effective management of one high risk medicine. The practice had a shared care agreement in place with a secondary care provider for patients receiving Warfarin (an anticoagulant medicine used to reduce the risk of blood clots forming). As part of this, the analysis of patients' international normalised ratio (INR) blood test results was completed by the secondary care provider. (INR measures the time it takes for blood to clot). GPs at the practice then prescribed Warfarin as required to the appropriate patients. However, they did so without sight of the blood test results and subsequent analysis.
- There were procedures in place for monitoring and managing risks to patient and staff safety. There was a health and safety policy available with posters displayed in staff areas which identified local health and safety representatives. However, the contact information on the posters was out of date. The practice had an up to date fire risk assessment and fire drills were completed regularly. 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 Legionella risk assessment in place (Legionella is a term for a particular bacterium which can contaminate water systems in buildings). Completed in June 2016, the assessment identified some areas of risk and the practice was able to demonstrate it had responded by organising contractors to complete the necessary actions. Regular water temperature checks were completed; however we found that some hot water temperatures were below the required level. The Legionella risk assessment also raised this as a concern.

- Arrangements were in place for planning and monitoring the number of staff and skill mix of staff needed to meet patients' needs. There was a system in place across all the different staffing groups to ensure that enough staff were on duty.

Arrangements to deal with emergencies and major incidents

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

- There was an alarm system in the consultation and treatment rooms and in the reception area that alerted staff to any emergency.
- All clinical and most non-clinical staff had received basic life support training. A programme was in place to ensure the remaining staff completed the training.
- The practice had a defibrillator and emergency oxygen with adult and child masks available on the premises. These were checked and tested.
- 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 business continuity plan in place for major incidents such as power failure or building damage. The plan included emergency contact numbers for staff to use.

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 in place 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 people's needs. They explained how care was planned to meet identified needs and how patients were reviewed at required intervals to ensure their treatment remained effective.
- By using such things as risk assessments and audits the practice monitored that these guidelines were followed.

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 showed the practice achieved 98% of the total number of points available, with 11% exception reporting. (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). The practice's overall exception reporting was similar to the CCG average of 8% and the national average of 9%. Data from 2014/2015 showed;

- Performance for diabetes related indicators was similar to the CCG and national averages. The practice achieved 92% of the points available with 13% exception reporting compared to the CCG average of 91% with 11% exception reporting and the national average of 89% with 11% exception reporting.
- The percentage of patients with hypertension having regular blood pressure tests was similar to the CCG and national averages. The practice achieved 82% of the points available, with 4% exception reporting, compared to the CCG and national average of 84%, with 4% exception reporting.

- Performance for mental health related indicators was similar to the CCG and national averages. The practice achieved 97% of the points available with 4% exception reporting compared to the CCG average of 96% with 9% exception reporting and the national average of 93% with 11% exception reporting.

We discussed some areas of above CCG and national average exception reporting for the 2014/2015 year with senior clinical staff during our inspection. We also looked at individual examples of why patients had been exempted. The practice's exception reporting for depression was 47%, compared to the CCG average of 21% and the national average of 25%. The practice's exception reporting for rheumatoid arthritis was 26%, compared to the CCG average of 6% and the national average of 7%. We found that in the cases we looked at the exception reporting was clinically appropriate. Also, the practice was able to demonstrate there were discrepancies in the figures and that actual exception reporting was much lower in both the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 years.

Clinical audits demonstrated quality improvement.

- We looked at nine clinical audits completed since April 2015. Some of these were full cycle (repeated) audits or part of a full cycle programme (scheduled to be repeated) where the data was analysed and clinically discussed and the practice approach was reviewed and modified as a result when necessary.
- Findings were used by the practice to improve services. For example, the practice completed audits on its below national average prevalence for certain conditions. These were chronic kidney disease, depression and hypertension. By reviewing patients on certain types of medicines or receiving certain test results the practice increased its prevalence rates for all three conditions to close to or above the national averages.
- The practice participated in local audits, national benchmarking, accreditation, peer review and research.

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. It covered such topics as fire safety, infection prevention and control and basic health and safety.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

- The practice could demonstrate how they ensured role-specific training and updating for relevant staff. Staff administering vaccinations and taking samples for the cervical screening programme had received specific training which had included an assessment of competence. Staff who administered vaccinations could demonstrate how they stayed up to date with changes to the immunisation programmes, for example by access to online resources.
- 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 scope of their work. This included ongoing support during clinical sessions, appraisals, mentoring, clinical supervision and facilitation and support for revalidating GPs. A programme was in place to ensure all staff received an appraisal on an annual basis.
- Staff received training that included: safeguarding, fire safety awareness and basic life support. Most of the training was provided by the use of an e-learning facility or in-house on a face-to-face basis.

Coordinating patient care and information sharing

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

- 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 services 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, when they were referred, or after they were discharged from hospital. We saw evidence that multi-disciplinary team meetings to discuss the needs of complex patients took place on a quarterly basis. These were particularly well attended by external healthcare professionals. There were also monthly palliative care meetings to discuss the needs of patients with end of life care needs. These patients' care plans were routinely reviewed and updated.

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.
- Despite the practice not having a documented policy on patient consent, we saw a process for seeking consent was in place and well adhered to and examples of documented patient consent for recent procedures completed at the practice were available.

Supporting patients to live healthier lives

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

- These included patients in the last 12 months of their lives, carers, those at risk of developing a long-term condition and those requiring advice on their smoking cessation and weight management. Patients were signposted to the relevant services when necessary.
- Smoking cessation advice was available at the practice from two of the nurses and a Herts Community Trust smoking cessation adviser who was based at the practice once each week. A dietician was based at the practice once every two weeks and the practice referred patients to this service for weight management advice.

The practice's uptake for the cervical screening programme was 93% compared to the CCG average of 83% and the national average of 82%. There was a policy to offer reminders for patients who did not attend for their cervical screening test. The practice demonstrated how they encouraged uptake of the screening programme by ensuring a female sample taker was available. There were systems in place 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 consequence of abnormal results.

Bowel and breast cancer screening rates were below or similar to local and national averages. Data published in March 2015 showed that:

Are services effective? (for example, treatment is effective)

- 52% of the practice's patients aged 60 to 69 years had been screened for bowel cancer in the past 30 months compared to the CCG and national average of 58%.
- 73% of female patients aged 50 to 70 years had been screened for breast cancer in the past three years compared to the CCG and national average of 72%.

However, these were nationally run and managed screening programmes and there was some evidence to suggest the practice encouraged its relevant patients to engage with them and attend for screening.

We discussed the practice's above CCG and national average cancer deaths for the 2014/2015 year with senior clinical staff during our inspection. We found that during this period the practice provided care to patients at a local care home for people with cancer where at least half of the residents received end of life care. This affected the amount of cancer deaths reported in the practice's patient population. The practice no longer provided care for patients at the home.

Childhood immunisation rates for the vaccinations given were slightly above the CCG average. For example, childhood immunisation rates for the vaccinations given to under two year olds ranged from 96% to 99% and five year olds from 94% to 98%.

The practice participated in targeted vaccination programmes. This included the flu vaccination for children, people with long-term conditions and those over 65 years. The practice had 1,952 patients aged over 65 years. Of those 1,482 (76%) had received the flu vaccination in the 2015/2016 year.

Patients had access to appropriate health assessments and checks. These included health checks for new patients and NHS health checks for people aged 40 to 74 years. 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 that members of staff were courteous and 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 area to discuss their needs.

The 24 patient Care Quality Commission comment cards we received were positive about the service experienced and staff behaviours. The patients we spoke with said they felt the practice offered a very good service and staff were polite, caring, supportive and thorough and treated them with dignity and respect.

We spoke with a member of the Patient Participation Group. They also told us they were very satisfied with the care provided by the practice and said their dignity and privacy was respected. Patient comments highlighted that staff responded compassionately when they needed help and provided support when required.

Results from the National GP Patient Survey published in July 2016 showed most patients felt they were treated with compassion, dignity and respect. The practice was mostly below or in line with average for its satisfaction scores on consultations with GPs and nurses with one exception. For example:

- 85% said the GP was good at listening to them compared to the CCG average of 91% and national average of 89%.
- 80% said the GP gave them enough time (CCG average 88%, national average 87%).
- 99% said they had confidence and trust in the last GP they saw (CCG average 96%, national average 95%).
- 85% said the last GP they spoke to was good at treating them with care and concern (CCG average 87%, national average 85%).

- 88% said the last nurse they spoke to was good at treating them with care and concern (CCG average 92%, national average 91%).
- 87% said they found the receptionists at the practice helpful (CCG average 89%, national average 87%).

We discussed the below CCG and national average satisfaction scores with senior staff during our inspection. They were aware of the practice's below average satisfaction scores. We saw that senior staff had met to discuss the scores in July 2016 and had developed an action plan in response. However, the action plan was mostly focussed on how the practice could improve patient satisfaction with access to the practice rather than satisfaction scores relating to consultations with GPs and nurses.

Care planning and involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The patients we spoke with or who left comments for us told us they felt involved in decision making about the care and treatment they received. They said their questions were answered by clinical staff and any concerns they had were discussed. 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.

Results from the National GP Patient Survey published in July 2016 showed most patients responded positively to questions about their involvement in planning and making decisions about their care and treatment. However, as with most other areas of the survey results were below local and national averages. For example:

- 77% said the last GP they saw was good at explaining tests and treatments compared to the CCG average of 87% and national average of 86%.
- 77% said the last GP they saw was good at involving them in decisions about their care (CCG average 83%, national average 82%).
- 78% said the last nurse they saw was good at involving them in decisions about their care (CCG average 86%, national average 85%).

Patient and carer support to cope emotionally with care and treatment

Are services caring?

Notices in the patient waiting area informed patients how to access a number of support groups and organisations. Links to such information were also available on the practice website.

The practice's computer system alerted GPs if a patient was also a carer. The practice had identified 327 patients on the practice list as carers. This was approximately 2.3% of the practice's patient list. Of those, all were invited for and 66 (20%) had accepted and received a health review in the past 12 months. The practice had the highest number of carers aged 15 or under and registered with Carers in Herts in the local authority area.

A dedicated carers' notice board in the waiting area provided information and advice including signposting carers to support services. Information was also available online (through the practice website) to direct carers to the

various avenues of support available to them. A member of non-clinical staff was the practice's carers' lead (or champion) responsible for providing useful and relevant information to those patients. Once each month the lead held a drop-in clinic to provide advice including signposting carers to support services. The practice hosted a carers' coffee morning in June 2016 and representatives of a local carers' advice and wellbeing service and Age UK attended to provide information and support. There was also a guest speaker on mental health and dementia.

We saw that the practice notified staff of all recent patient deaths. From speaking with staff, we found there was a practice wide process for approaching recently bereaved patients. The GPs phoned bereaved families offering an invitation to approach the practice for support and signposting them to local bereavement services.

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.

- All newly diagnosed patients with type two diabetes were referred for diabetic eye screening and to the DESMOND programme in adherence with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. (DESMOND is an NHS training course that helps patients to identify their own health risks and set their own goals in the management of their condition).
- 83% of patients diagnosed with dementia had their care reviewed in a face to face meeting in the last 12 months. This was similar to the CCG average of 85% and the national average of 84%.
- 69% of patients on the asthma register had their care reviewed in the last 12 months. This was similar to the CCG average of 76% and the national average of 75%.
- The practice provided an enhanced service in an effort to reduce the unplanned hospital admissions for vulnerable and at risk patients including those aged 75 years and older. (Enhanced services are those that require a level of care provision above what a GP practice would normally provide). As part of this, each relevant patient received a care plan based on their specific needs, a named GP and an annual review. At the time of our inspection, 239 patients (2.2% of the practice's patient population over 18) were receiving such care.
- There were longer appointments available for patients with a learning disability.
- There were 56 patients on the practice's learning disability register at the time of our inspection. Of those, all 56 were invited for and 51 (91%) had accepted and received a health review in the past 12 months.
- Home visits were available for older patients and patients who would benefit from these.
- There were three named GPs for a large local older people's nursing home village and each GP visited once each week on separate days to ensure continuity of care

for those patients. Also, one of the practice nurses had dedicated time over three days each week to visit patients in their own homes, including local residential homes, to provide care in the community.

- Patients were able to receive travel vaccinations available on the NHS as well as those only available privately.
- There were accessible toilet facilities for all patients and translation services including British Sign Language (BSL) were available. There was no hearing loop provided at the practice. The staff we spoke with told us there was no demand for this facility in their patient population.
- There was step free access to the main entrance and automatic doors. The waiting area was accessible enough to accommodate patients with wheelchairs and prams and allowed for manageable access to the treatment and consultation rooms which were all located on the ground floor.
- There were male and female GPs in the practice and patients could choose to see a male or female doctor.
- There were six week post-natal checks for mothers and their children.
- Counselling services were available for patients with mental health issues and there was a GP lead for those patients. NHS counsellors were based at the practice on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (morning only) each week. Patients could access this service to obtain psychological and emotional counselling and advice through referral from the GPs.
- A community navigator (a source of advice and practical support relating to health and social well-being) was based at the practice once each month.

Access to the service

The practice was fully open (phones and doors) from 8.30am to 1pm and 2pm to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. Between 1pm and 2pm daily the doors and phone lines were closed and patients directed to emergency numbers if required. There was extended opening until 7.30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays and from 7am on Thursdays. The practice also opened on alternate Saturdays from 8am to midday for GP and nurse pre-bookable appointments. Appointments were available from 8.30am to 12.30pm, 2pm to 4pm and 4.30pm to 6.30pm daily, with slight variations depending on the doctor and the nature of the appointment. In general, GP pre-bookable appointments could be booked up to one week in advance. However, this

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

increased to four weeks in advance for extended opening and telephone consultation appointments. Urgent appointments were also available for people that needed them.

Results from the National GP Patient Survey published in July 2016 showed that patients' satisfaction with how they could access care and treatment was below local and national averages.

- 70% of patients were satisfied with the practice's opening hours compared to the CCG average of 77% and national average of 76%.
- 65% of patients said they could get through easily to the surgery by phone (CCG average 78%, national average 73%).
- 39% of patients said they always or almost always saw or spoke to the GP they preferred (CCG average 62%, national average 59%).

All of the patients we spoke with and some of those who left comments for us said it could be difficult to get through to the practice by phone and book appointments in advance. However, they all said access to urgent and same day appointments was good.

We discussed the below CCG and national average satisfaction scores with senior staff during our inspection. They were aware of the practice's below average satisfaction scores. We saw that senior staff had met to discuss the scores in July 2016 and had developed an action plan in response. This was in addition to the action already taken by the practice including the installation of a new telephone system in September 2015 which increased the amount of phone lines available.

Information was available to patients about appointments on the practice website. Patients were able to make telephone consultation and extended opening pre-bookable appointments and repeat prescription requests at the practice or online through the practice website.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

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

- A complaints procedure was available and adhered to.
- There was a designated responsible person who handled all complaints in the practice. This was the practice manager.
- We saw that information was available to help patients understand the complaints system. An overview of the practice's complaints procedure was detailed on its website and the full procedure was displayed on a notice board in the practice.

We looked at the details of 24 complaints received since January 2015. We saw these were all dealt with in a timely way with openness and transparency. Lessons were learnt from concerns and complaints and action was taken as a result to improve the quality of care or patient experience. For example, following a complaint about the lack of emergency appointments for children in the afternoon, the practice allocated eight appointment slots between 5pm and 6pm daily for children aged from 0 to 14 years.

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.

- The practice had a statement of purpose detailing its aims and objectives. These included providing a high standard of care maintained through a motivated and skilled workforce, being committed to patients and acting with integrity.
- An annual practice away day was used for senior staff to discuss and plan the strategic focus of the service for the year ahead. The weekly partners' meeting attended as standard by the GPs and the practice manager was used to monitor the strategic direction of the practice throughout the year. The main strategic focus of the practice in the past year was responding to a series of lower than average National GP Patient Survey satisfaction scores. This had resulted in slight improvements in responses in the past 12 months and an action plan was in place to continue this work.

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 in place and ensured that:

- There was a clear staffing structure and that staff were aware of their own roles and responsibilities. All of the staff we spoke with were clear on the governance structure in place.
- Practice specific policies were implemented and were available to all staff.
- There was a comprehensive understanding of the performance of the practice through the use and monitoring of the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) data and other performance indicators.
- There was a programme of continuous clinical and internal audit which was used to monitor quality and to make improvements.
- There were robust arrangements for identifying, recording and managing risks, issues and implementing mitigating actions.

Leadership and culture

On the day of inspection the partners in the practice demonstrated they had the experience, capacity and capability to run the practice and ensure high quality care. They prioritised safe, high quality and compassionate care. The partners were visible in the practice and staff told us they were approachable and always took the time to listen to all members of staff. There was a clear protocol in place for how decisions were agreed and the meeting structure supported this.

The provider was aware of and had systems in place 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). The partners encouraged a culture of openness and honesty. The practice had systems in place for knowing about notifiable safety incidents.

When there were unexpected safety incidents:

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

There was a clear leadership structure in place and staff felt supported by management.

- There was a regular schedule of meetings at the practice for individual staff groups and multi-disciplinary teams to attend.
- Staff told us there was an open culture within the practice and they had the opportunity to raise and discuss any issues at the meetings and felt confident in doing so and supported if they did.
- Staff said they felt respected, valued and well supported and knew who to go to in the practice with any concerns. 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.
- There were named members of staff in lead roles. We saw there were nominated GP leads for safeguarding and patients with diabetes, learning disabilities, mental health issues and dementia. There were also nurse led clinics for patients with respiratory conditions such as

Are services well-led?

Good 

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

asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The leads showed a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and all staff knew who the relevant leads were.

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

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

The practice had gathered feedback from patients through the Patient Participation Group (the PPG is a community of patients who work with the practice to discuss and develop the services provided) and through comments and complaints received. The PPG met quarterly and submitted proposals for improvements to the practice management team following the last practice patient survey. This included the promotion of the online appointment booking system which was publicised in the patient waiting area and through the practice newsletter.

The practice made use of the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT). The FFT provides an opportunity for patients to feedback on the services that provide their care and treatment. The results from January 2016 to April 2016 showed that of the 18 respondents, 12 were likely or extremely likely to recommend the practice to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment.

We saw there was a comments and suggestions box available for patients to use in reception. Any comments and suggestions made were reviewed by the practice manager.

The practice had gathered feedback from staff through meetings and discussions. Staff told us they were able to give feedback and discuss any concerns or issues with colleagues and management. They said they felt involved and engaged in how the practice was run.

Continuous improvement

The practice team was forward thinking. Aware of its large housebound and care home patient population the practice developed the role of one of its practice nurses as a community nurse. This included the nurse having dedicated time over three days each week to visit patients in their own homes including local residential homes to provide general nursing, health checks, dementia checks and avoiding unplanned hospital admissions care among other things. We saw that the nurse's training was tailored to support them in this role.

There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels within the practice. The practice had reviewed its contract arrangements and processes which were previously fragmented and resulted in missed claims. A series of templates were developed to enable staff to better understand what was required, when and by whom. This resulted in the practice capturing and recording more of its achievements and improving its financial claims for those.