

Spring Hill Dental Practice

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Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 12 August 2019 under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. We planned the inspection to check whether the registered provider was meeting the legal requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations. The inspection was led by a CQC inspector who was supported by a specialist dental adviser.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following five questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our findings were:

Are services safe?

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

Are services effective?

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

Are services caring?

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

Are services responsive?

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

Are services well-led?

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

Background

Spring Hill Dental Practice is in Tavistock and provides private treatment to adults and children.

There is level access for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. Car parking spaces are available near the practice.

The dental team includes seven dentists, five dental nurses, two dental hygienists, three administrators, one receptionist and a practice manager. The practice has four treatment rooms.

The practice is owned by a company and as a condition of registration must have a person registered with the

Summary of findings

Care Quality Commission as the registered manager. Registered managers have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations about how the practice is run. The registered manager at Spring Hill Dental Practice is the practice manager.

On the day of inspection, we collected 14 CQC comment cards filled in by patients. This gave us a positive view of the practice.

During the inspection we spoke with two dentists, three dental nurses, two administrators, one receptionist and the practice manager. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open: Monday to Friday 9am – 5:30pm.

Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared clean and well maintained.
 - The provider had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
 - Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
 - The provider had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff.
 - The provider had suitable safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
 - The provider had not followed their recruitment procedure.
 - The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
 - Staff treated patients with dignity and respect and took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- Staff provided preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health.
 - The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
 - The provider had effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement, although we noted some weaknesses in audit completion and capturing learning from incidents in the practice.
 - Staff felt involved and supported and worked well as a team.
 - The provider asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided.
 - The provider dealt with complaints positively and efficiently.
 - The provider had suitable information governance arrangements.

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

- Review the practice's recruitment procedures to ensure that appropriate checks are completed prior to new staff commencing employment at the practice.
- Review the practice's system for recording, investigating and reviewing incidents or significant events with a view to preventing further occurrences and ensuring that improvements are made as a result.
- Review the practice protocols regarding audits for prescribing of antibiotic medicines, taking into account the guidance provided by the Faculty of General Dental Practice. The practice should also ensure that, where appropriate, all audits have documented learning points and the resulting improvements can be demonstrated.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Are services safe?	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 that 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)

Staff had clear systems to keep patients safe.

Staff knew their responsibilities if they had concerns about the safety of children, young people and adults who were vulnerable due to their circumstances. The provider had safeguarding policies and procedures to provide staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. We saw evidence that staff received safeguarding training. 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 vulnerable patients and patients who required other support such as with mobility or communication within dental care records.

The provider had a whistleblowing policy. Staff felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

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

The provider had a business continuity plan describing how they would deal with events that could disrupt the normal running of the practice.

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. We looked at three staff recruitment records. Improvements could be made as these showed the provider had not followed their recruitment procedure. Some applicant background checks had not been completed prior to employment commencing. However, we saw that these had been applied for.

We noted that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover.

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

Records showed that fire detection and firefighting equipment were regularly tested and serviced.

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

We saw evidence that the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The provider carried out radiography audits every year following current guidance and legislation.

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

Risks to patients

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

The practice's health and safety policies, procedures and risk assessments were reviewed regularly to help manage potential risk. The provider had current employer's liability insurance.

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. The staff followed the relevant safety regulation when using needles and other sharp dental items. A sharps risk assessment had been undertaken. However, this was last reviewed in 2016 and did not detail the full range of sharp dental instruments currently used in the practice. We raised this with the practice manager, who told us the policy and associated risk assessment would be reviewed and shared with the staff team.

The provider had a system in place to ensure clinical staff had received appropriate vaccinations, including the vaccination to protect them against the Hepatitis B virus, and that the effectiveness of the vaccination was checked.

Staff knew how to respond to a medical emergency and completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support (BLS) every year.

Emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in recognised guidance. We found staff kept records of their checks of these to make sure these were available, within their expiry date, and in working order.

Are services safe?

A dental nurse worked with the dentists and the dental hygienists when they treated patients in line with General Dental Council (GDC) Standards for the Dental Team.

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

The practice occasionally used locum and/or agency staff. We noted that these staff received an induction to ensure that they were familiar with the practice's procedures. However, this was an informal induction and was not recorded. We raised this with the practice manager, who told us they would create a formalised check list for the induction.

The provider had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures. However, we noted the policy had not been dated. We raised this with the practice manager, who said they would review and date the policy. The staff followed guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM 01-05) published by the Department of Health and Social Care. Staff completed infection prevention and control training and received updates as required.

The provider had suitable arrangements for transporting, cleaning, checking, sterilising and storing instruments in line with HTM 01-05. The records showed equipment used by staff for cleaning and sterilising instruments was validated, maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance.

There were suitable numbers of dental instruments available for the clinical staff.

We found staff had systems in place to ensure that any work was disinfected prior to being sent to a dental laboratory and before treatment was completed.

We saw staff had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems, in line with a risk assessment. All recommendations had been actioned and records of water testing and dental unit water line management were in place.

We saw cleaning schedules for the premises. The practice was visibly clean when we inspected.

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

The infection control lead carried out infection prevention and control audits twice a year. The latest audit showed the practice was meeting the required standards. We noted there was no clear action plan recorded as a result of the most recent audit, where identified improvements could be made.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

We discussed with the dentist how information to deliver safe care and treatment was handled and recorded. We looked at a sample of dental care records to confirm our findings and noted that individual records were written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. Dental care records we saw were complete, legible, were kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

Patient referrals to other service providers contained specific information which allowed appropriate and timely referrals in line with practice protocols and current guidance.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The provider had systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

There was a suitable stock control system of medicines which were held on site. However, we found some out of date dental materials in the fridge, which were disposed of during the inspection. We also noted the fridge was not maintaining a suitable temperature. Staff told us that a replacement had been ordered.

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

The practice had not yet carried out antimicrobial prescribing audits. Dental records we viewed indicated appropriate antimicrobial prescribing.

Track record on safety and Lessons learned and improvements

There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues.

Are services safe?

We discussed learning events with the practice manager. Improvements could be made to expand the practice's definition of incidents or learning events to capture near misses, any incident and positive outcome events, where learning could be shared with the whole staff team.

There was a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts. Staff learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts. We saw they were shared with the team and acted upon if required.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

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

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep dental practitioners up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw that clinicians assessed patients' needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

The practice offered dental implants. These were placed by the one of the dentists at the practice, who had undergone appropriate post-graduate training in this speciality. The provision of dental implants was in accordance with national guidance.

Staff had access to intra-oral cameras and microscopes to enhance the delivery of care. For example, one of the dentists had an interest in endodontics, (root canal treatment). The dentist used a specialised operating microscope to assist with carrying out root canal treatment. The dentist also provided advice and guidance on endodontics to the other dentists in the practice. The dentist had completed healing process audits for endodontic cases completed.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

The practice was providing preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health in line with the Delivering Better Oral Health toolkit.

The dentists prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them. They used fluoride varnish for patients based on an assessment of the risk of tooth decay.

The clinicians where applicable, discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and diet with patients during appointments. The practice had a selection of dental products for sale and provided health promotion leaflets to help patients with their oral health.

Staff were aware of national oral health campaigns and local schemes in supporting patients to live healthier lives. For example, local stop smoking services. They directed patients to these schemes when necessary.

The dentists described to us the procedures they used to improve the outcomes for patients with gum disease. This involved providing patients preventative advice, taking plaque and gum bleeding scores and recording detailed charts of the patient's gum condition

Records showed patients with more severe gum disease were recalled at more frequent intervals for review and to reinforce home care preventative advice.

Consent to care and treatment

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

The practice team understood the importance of obtaining and recording patients' consent to treatment. The dentists gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these, so they could make informed decisions and we saw this documented in patient records. Patients confirmed their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment.

The practice's consent policy included information about the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The team understood their responsibilities under the act when treating adults who might not be able to make informed decisions. We noted the policy did not refer to Gillick competence, by which a child under the age of 16 years of age may give consent for themselves. We spoke with staff, who were aware of the need to consider this when treating young people under 16 years of age. The practice manager told us they would review and update their consent policy.

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 containing information about the patients' current dental needs, past treatment and medical histories. The dentists assessed patients' treatment needs in line with recognised guidance.

We saw the practice audited patients' dental care records to check that the dentists/clinicians recorded the necessary information.

Effective staffing

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

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Staff new to the practice had a period of induction based on a structured programme. We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

Staff discussed their training needs at annual appraisals and staff meetings. We saw evidence of completed appraisals and how the practice addressed the training requirements of staff.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

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

The dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide.

Staff had systems to identify, manage, follow up and where required refer patients for specialist care when presenting with dental infections.

The provider also had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two week wait arrangements. This was initiated by NICE in 2005 to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist.

Staff monitored all referrals to make sure they were dealt with promptly.

The practice was a referral clinic for endodontics and we saw they monitored and ensured the dentists were aware of all incoming referrals daily.

Are services caring?

Our findings

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

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

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

Patients commented positively that staff were courteous, supportive and helpful. We saw that staff treated patients respectfully, appropriately and kindly, and were friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

Patients said staff were compassionate and understanding. Patients could choose whether they saw a male or female dentist.

Patients told us staff were kind and helpful when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

Information folders were available for patients to read.

Privacy and dignity

Staff respected and promoted patients' privacy and dignity.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. The layout of reception and waiting areas provided privacy when reception staff were dealing with patients. If a patient asked for more privacy, staff would

take them into another room. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave patients' personal information where other patients might see it.

Staff password protected patients' electronic care records and backed these up to secure storage. They stored paper records securely.

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about their care and were aware of the

requirements under the Equality Act to make sure that patients and their carers can access and understand the information they are given. Interpretation services were available for patients who did not speak or understand English. Information was also available in large print, upon request.

Staff gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment. Patients confirmed that staff listened to them, did not rush them and discussed options for treatment with them. A dentist described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options.

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

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

We found that 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 on the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care, such as patients with dental phobia and people living with long-term conditions.

Patients described high levels of satisfaction with the responsive service provided by the practice.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. These included steps free access and accessible toilet with hand rails and a call bell.

A disability access audit had been completed and an action plan formulated to continually improve access for patients.

Staff described an example of a patient who found it unsettling to wait in the waiting room before an appointment. The team kept this in mind to make sure the dentist could see them as soon as possible after they arrived.

Staff telephoned some patients on the morning of their appointment to make sure they could get to the practice.

Timely access to services

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

The practice displayed its opening hours in the premises and included it in their information leaflet and on their website.

The practice had an appointment system to respond to patients' needs. Patients who requested an urgent appointment were seen the same day. Patients had enough time during their appointment and did not feel rushed. Appointments ran smoothly on the day of the inspection and patients were not kept waiting.

The practice's website, information leaflet and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open. Patients confirmed they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

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

The provider had a policy providing guidance to staff on how to handle a complaint. The practice information leaflet explained how to make a complaint.

The practice manager was responsible for dealing with these.

We looked at comments, compliments and complaints the practice received in the last 12 months.

These showed the practice responded to concerns appropriately and discussed outcomes with staff to share learning and improve the service.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

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

Leadership capacity and capability

We found the management team of the practice manager and senior dentists had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

They were visible and approachable. Staff told us they worked closely with them and others to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.

Culture

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

Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice.

Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated when 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 could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so, and they had confidence that these would be addressed.

Governance and management

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

The lead dentist had overall responsibility for clinical leadership of the practice. The practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the service. Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities.

The provider 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.

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

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

The provider used patient surveys and verbal comments to obtain staff and patients' views about the service. We saw examples of suggestions from patients the practice had acted on. For example, in reviewing staffing levels, improving access at the practice for patients with mobility limitations and improving patient waiting areas.

The provider 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

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

The provider had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included audits of dental care records, radiographs, endodontic healing and infection prevention and control. Improvements could be made to include antimicrobial prescribing and to ensure all audits have clear action plans as a result of audit findings.

The management team showed a commitment to learning and improvement and valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff.

The whole staff team had annual appraisals. They discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development.

Staff completed 'highly recommended' training as per General Dental Council professional standards. This included undertaking medical emergencies and basic life support training annually. The provider supported and encouraged staff to complete CPD.