

Birchington Medical Centre

Inspection report

Date of inspection visit: 17 April 2018

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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 

Are services safe?

Requires improvement 

Are services effective?

Good 

Are services caring?

Good 

Are services responsive?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

Overall summary

This practice is rated as Good overall. (Previous inspection 2 November 2015 – Good).

The key questions are rated as:

Are services safe? – Requires improvement

Are services effective? – Good

Are services caring? – Good

Are services responsive? – Good

Are services well-led? – Good

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection at Birchington Medical Centre on 17 April 2018 as part of our inspection programme.

At this inspection we found:

- The practice had clear systems to manage risk (with the exception of medicines) so that safety incidents were less likely to happen. When incidents did happen, the practice learned from them and improved their processes.
- The practice did not have access to recommended medicines to treat patients in an emergency.
- We found systems for managing and storing medicines needed to be strengthened such as regularly reviewing patients on high risk medicines, the secure storage and monitoring of prescriptions and acting on safety alerts.
- The practice reported incidents, investigated them and learnt from them, changing practices to mitigate their reoccurrence.

- The practice routinely reviewed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the care it provided. It ensured that care and treatment was delivered according to evidence- based guidelines.
- Staff involved and treated patients with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.
- Patients reported that they were able to access care when they needed it.
- The practice had processes to develop leadership capacity and skills.
- Staff were assigned roles but their associated responsibilities in some roles were not always well defined in respect of medicine management.
- There was a commitment to continuous learning and improvement at all levels of the organisation.

The areas where the provider must make improvements are:

- Ensure care and treatment is provided in a safe way to patients.

The area where the provider should make an improvement is:

- Strengthen their accountability structures to support good governance and management specifically in relation to medicine management.

Professor Steve Field CBE FRCP FFPH FRCGP
Chief Inspector of General Practice

Population group ratings

Older people	Good 
People with long-term conditions	Good 
Families, children and young people	Good 
Working age people (including those recently retired and students)	Good 
People whose circumstances may make them vulnerable	Good 
People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia)	Good 

Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector. The team included a GP specialist adviser and a practice manager adviser.

Background to Birchington Medical Centre

Birchington Medical Centre provides medical care Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm. Twice a week the practice operates extended hours until 7.30pm. The practice is situated in the coastal town of Birchington in Thanet, Kent. It provides services to approximately 9000 patients in the locality.

The practice serves an affluent population with low levels of deprivation. It has lower representation amongst its patient population from patients under the age of 18 years when compared with the local and national average. They provide more services to patients over 65 years of age than the local and national average.

The practice is owned and managed by two GP partners, one female and one male. They are supported by a regular locum male GP and a salaried female GP. The practice nursing team consists of three advanced nurse practitioners (two female and one male), four practice nurses and five healthcare assistants. The practice also employs a community matron providing outreach care to their elderly and house bound patients.

The administrative, secretarial and reception team are supported and overseen by the assistant practice manager and practice manager.

The practice does not provide out of hours services to its patients and there are arrangements with another provider (the 111 service/IC24) to deliver services to patients when the practice is closed. The practice holds a general medical service (GMS) contract with NHS England for delivering primary medical care services to local communities.

Services are delivered from: Birchington Medical Centre, Minnis Road, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9HQ.

The service is registered to five regulated activities;

- Diagnostics and screening
- Family planning
- Maternity and midwifery
- Surgical procedures

- Treatment of disease, disorder and injury.
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Are services safe?

We rated the practice as requires improvement for providing safe services.

Safety systems and processes

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

- The practice had appropriate systems embedded to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse. All staff received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate to their role. They knew how to identify and report concerns. Reports and learning from safeguarding incidents were available to staff. Staff who acted as chaperones were trained for their role and had received a 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.)
- Staff took steps, including working with other agencies, to protect patients from abuse, neglect, harassment, discrimination and breaches of their dignity and respect.
- The practice carried out appropriate staff checks at the time of recruitment and on an ongoing basis.
- There was an effective system to manage infection prevention and control.
- The practice had arrangements to ensure that facilities and equipment were safe and in good working order.
- Arrangements for managing waste and clinical specimens kept people safe.

Risks to patients

There were not sufficient systems established to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety.

- Arrangements were in place for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed to meet patients' needs, including planning for holidays, sickness, busy periods and epidemics.
- There was an effective induction system for temporary staff tailored to their role.
- The practice had suitable equipment to deal with medical emergencies at the surgery and staff were suitably trained in emergency procedures. However, we found some recommended emergency medicines for the treatment of pain, fits or seizures were not available

and a medicine was out of date for the treatment of asthma. We also found the clinical team did not carry or have access to emergency medicines when out of the practice. There was no risk assessment in place.

- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies on the premises and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention. Clinicians knew how to identify and manage patients with severe infections including sepsis.
- When there were changes to services or staff the practice assessed and monitored the impact on safety.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

- The care records we saw showed that information needed to deliver safe care and treatment was available to staff. There was a documented approach to managing test results.
- The practice had systems for sharing information with staff and other agencies to enable them to deliver safe care and treatment.
- Clinicians made timely referrals in line with protocols.

Appropriate and safe use of medicines

The practice did not have reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

- The practice had an appointed medicine management lead GP. However, the GP did not oversee the review and actioning of medicine alerts. We found a recent alert had not been appropriately actioned potentially placing patients at risk of harm. The practice acknowledged this and reviewed the patients' care.
- We found staff prescribed, administered or supplied medicines to patients and gave advice on medicines in line with current national guidance. The practice had also reviewed its antibiotic prescribing and taken action to support good antimicrobial stewardship in line with local and national guidance.
- The practice did not record the full movement and usage of prescriptions in accordance with national guidance.
- The systems for managing and storing medicines, including vaccines, medical gases, emergency medicines and equipment, did not sufficiently minimise risks to patients and staff on site.

Are services safe?

- We found there were no established systems in place to demonstrate patients' health was monitored in relation to the use of some high risk medicines and followed up on appropriately.

Track record on safety

The practice had a good track record on safety.

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues.
- The practice monitored and reviewed activity. This helped it to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture of safety that led to safety improvements.

Lessons learned and improvements made

The practice learnt and made improvements when things went wrong.

- Staff understood their duty to raise concerns and report incidents and near misses. Leaders and managers supported them when they did so.
- There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The practice learned and shared lessons, identified themes and took action to improve safety in the practice.
- The practice was able to show they had acted on and learned from external safety events as well as patient and some medicine safety alerts.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

Are services effective?

We rated the practice, and all of the population groups, as good for providing effective services.

(Please note: Any Quality Outcomes (QOF) data relates to 2016/2017. QOF is a system intended to improve the quality of general practice and reward good practice.)

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

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

- Patients' immediate and ongoing needs were fully assessed. This included their clinical needs and their mental and physical wellbeing.
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- Staff used appropriate tools to assess the level of pain in patients.
- Staff advised patients what to do if their condition got worse and where to seek further help and support.

Older people:

- Older patients who are frail or may be vulnerable received a full assessment of their physical, mental and social needs. The practice used an appropriate tool to identify patients aged 65 and over who were living with moderate or severe frailty. Those identified as being frail had a clinical review including a review of medication.
- The practice assessed whether it was appropriate to followed up on older patients discharged from hospital. It ensured that their care plans and prescriptions were updated to reflect any extra or changed needs.
- Staff had appropriate knowledge of treating older people including their psychological, mental and communication needs.

People with long-term conditions:

- Patients with long-term conditions had a structured annual review to check their health and medicines needs were being met. For patients with the most complex needs, the GP worked with other health and care professionals to deliver a coordinated package of care.
- Staff who were responsible for reviews of patients with long term conditions had received specific training.

- The advanced nurse practitioner advised GPs as to the patients they should followed up on. For example; patients who had received treatment in hospital or through out of hours services for an acute exacerbation of asthma.
- The practice had arrangements for adults with newly diagnosed cardiovascular disease including the offer of high-intensity statins for secondary prevention, people with suspected hypertension were offered ambulatory blood pressure monitoring and patients with atrial fibrillation were assessed for stroke risk and treated as appropriate.

Families, children and young people:

- Childhood immunisations were carried out in line with the national childhood vaccination programme. The practice achieved 90% vaccination rates in line with the national target of 90%.
- The practice did not have established arrangements in place to identify and review the treatment of newly pregnant women on long-term mental health medicines.
- Patients were provided with advice and post-natal support in accordance with best practice guidance.
- The practice had arrangements for following up failed attendance of children's appointments following an appointment in secondary care or for immunisation.

Working age people (including those recently retired and students):

- The practice's uptake for cervical screening in 2017/2018 unqualified data was 76%, which was in line with the 80% coverage target for the national screening programme.
- The practice had systems to identify eligible patients to have the meningitis vaccine, for example before attending university for the first time.
- Patients had access to appropriate health assessments and checks including NHS checks for patients aged 40 to 74. There was appropriate follow-up on the outcome of health assessments and checks where abnormalities or risk factors were identified.

People whose circumstances make them vulnerable:

- End of life care was delivered in a coordinated way which took into account the needs of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Are services effective?

- The practice held a register of patients living in vulnerable circumstances including homeless people and those with a learning disability.
- The practice had a system for vaccinating patients with an underlying medical condition according to the recommended schedule.

People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia):

- The practice assessed and monitored the physical health of people with mental illness, severe mental illness, and personality disorder by providing access to health checks, interventions for physical activity, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and access to 'stop smoking' services. There was no established system for following up patients who failed to attend for administration of long term medication such as their failure to collect prescription medication.
- QOF data for 2016/2017 showed 93% of patients diagnosed with dementia had their care reviewed in a face to face meeting in the previous 12 months. This is above the local average of 80% and the national average of 84%.
- QOF data for 2016/2017 showed 93% of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses had a comprehensive, agreed care plan documented in the previous 12 months. This is above the local average of 87% and the national average 91%.
- The practice specifically considered the physical health needs of patients with poor mental health and those living with dementia. For example, the QOF data for 2016/2017 showed 93% of patients experiencing poor mental health had received discussion and advice about alcohol consumption. This is above the local average of 87% and the national average of 91%.
- Patients at risk of dementia were identified and offered an assessment to detect possible signs of dementia. When dementia was suspected there was an appropriate referral for diagnosis.
- The practice offered annual health checks to patients with a learning disability.

Monitoring care and treatment

The practice had a programme of quality improvement activity and routinely reviewed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the care provided under the Quality and Outcome Framework.

- The practice achieved 100% of the points available. They had an exception rate of 8%; this was 4% below the clinical commissioning group average and 2% below the national average.
- We found appropriate reviews had been conducted.
- The practice used information about care and treatment to make improvements.

Effective staffing

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

- Staff had appropriate knowledge for their role, for example, to carry out reviews for people with long term conditions, older people and people requiring contraceptive reviews.
- Staff whose role included immunisation and taking samples for the cervical screening programme had received specific training and could demonstrate how they stayed up to date.
- The practice 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.
- The practice provided staff with ongoing support. This included an induction process, one-to-one meetings, appraisals, coaching and mentoring, clinical supervision and support for revalidation.
- There was a clear approach for supporting and managing staff when their performance was poor or variable.

Coordinating care and treatment

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

- We saw records that showed that all appropriate staff, including those in different teams and organisations, were involved in assessing, planning and delivering care and treatment.
- The practice shared clear and accurate information with relevant professionals when deciding care delivery for people with long term conditions and when coordinating healthcare for care home residents. The shared information with, and liaised, with community services, social services and carers for housebound patients.

Are services effective?

- Patients received coordinated and person-centred care. This included when they moved between services, when they were referred, or after they were discharged from hospital. The practice worked with patients to develop personal care plans that were shared with relevant agencies.
- The practice ensured that end of life care was delivered in a coordinated way which took into account the needs of different patients, including those who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

Staff were consistent and proactive in helping patients to live healthier lives.

- The practice identified patients who may be in need of extra support and directed them to relevant services.
- Staff encouraged and supported patients to be involved in monitoring and managing their own health.

- Staff discussed changes to care or treatment with patients and their carers as necessary.
- The practice supported national priorities and initiatives to improve the population's health, for example, stop smoking campaigns, tackling obesity.

Consent to care and treatment

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

- Clinicians understood the requirements of legislation and guidance when considering consent and decision making.
- Clinicians supported patients to make decisions. Where appropriate, they assessed and recorded a patient's mental capacity to make a decision.
- The practice monitored the process for seeking consent appropriately.

Are services caring?

We rated the practice as good for caring.

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- Feedback from patients was positive about the way staff treat people.
- Staff understood patients' personal, cultural, social and religious needs.
- The practice 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. They were aware of the Accessible Information Standard (a requirement to make sure those patients and their carers can access and understand the information that they are given.)

- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.
- Staff helped patients and their carers find further information and access community and advocacy services. They helped them ask questions about their care and treatment.
- The practice proactively identified carers and supported them.

Privacy and dignity

The practice respected patients' privacy and dignity.

- Reception staff knew that if patients wanted to discuss sensitive issues or appeared distressed they could offer them a private room to discuss their needs.
- Staff recognised the importance of people's dignity and respect. They challenged behaviour that fell short of this.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

We rated the practice, and all of the population groups, as good for providing responsive services.

Responding to and meeting people's needs

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

- The practice understood the needs of its population and tailored services in response to those needs.
- Telephone consultations were available to patients for patients who were unable to attend the practice.
- The practice conducted home visits and held weekly ward rounds at their care homes for vulnerable patients.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.
- The practice made reasonable adjustments when patients found it hard to access services.
- The practice provided effective care coordination for patients who are more vulnerable or who have complex needs. They supported them to access services both within and outside the practice. For example, the appointment of their community matron.
- Care and treatment for patients with multiple long-term conditions and patients approaching the end of life was coordinated with other services.

Older people:

- All patients had a named GP who supported them in whatever setting they lived, whether it was at home or in a care home or supported living scheme.
- The practice was responsive to the needs of older patients, and offered home visits and urgent appointments for those with enhanced needs. The GP and practice nurse also accommodated home visits for those who had difficulties getting to the practice due to limited local public transport availability.

People with long-term conditions:

- Patients with a long-term condition received an annual review to check their health and medicines needs were being appropriately met. Multiple conditions were reviewed at one appointment, and consultation times were flexible to meet each patient's specific needs.
- The practice held regular scheduled meetings with the local district nursing team and partner services to discuss and manage the needs of patients with complex medical issues.

Families, children and young people:

- We found there were systems to identify and follow up children living in disadvantaged circumstances and who were at risk, for example, children and young people who had a high number of accident and emergency (A&E) attendances. Records we looked at confirmed this.
- All parents or guardians calling with concerns about a child under the age of 18 were offered a same day appointment when necessary.

Working age people (including those recently retired and students):

- The needs of this population group had been identified and the practice had adjusted the services it offered to ensure these were accessible, flexible and offered continuity of care. For example, extended opening hours.

People whose circumstances make them vulnerable:

- The practice held a register of patients living in vulnerable circumstances including homeless people and those with a learning disability.
- People in vulnerable circumstances were easily able to register with the practice, including those with no fixed abode.

People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia):

- Staff interviewed had a good understanding of how to support patients with mental health needs and those patients living with dementia.
- The practice provided personalised services to patients with poor mental health to minimise anxiety. Patients who failed to attend were proactively followed up by a phone call from the advanced nurse practitioner or GP.

Timely access to care and treatment

Patients were able to access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable 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 with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.
- Patients reported that the appointment system was easy to use.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

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

- Information about how to make a complaint or raise concerns was available. Staff treated patients who made complaints compassionately.

- The complaint policy and procedures were in line with recognised guidance. The practice learned lessons from individual concerns and complaints and also from analysis of trends.

It acted as a result to improve the quality of care.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

Are services well-led?

We rated the practice and all of the population groups as good for providing a well-led service.

Leadership capacity and capability

The lead GPs were committed and delivering high-quality, sustainable care.

- The GP leads were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.
- The lead GPs were visible and approachable. They worked closely with staff and others to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.
- The practice had processes to develop leadership capacity and skills. However they spoke of the challenges they faced with providing care to an aging population with demand, complexity and expectations growing.

Vision and strategy

The practice had a clear vision and credible strategy to deliver high quality, sustainable care.

- There was a clear vision and set of values. The practice had a realistic strategy and supporting business plans to achieve priorities. The practice developed its vision, values and strategy jointly with patients, staff and external partners.
- Staff were aware of and understood the vision, values and strategy and their role in achieving them.
- The strategy was in line with health and social priorities across the region. The practice planned its services to meet the needs of the practice population.

Culture

The practice had an inclusive culture of high-quality sustainable care.

- Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice.
- The practice focused on the needs of patients.
- Leaders and managers acted on behaviour and performance inconsistent with the vision and values.
- 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 we spoke with told us they were able to raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they needed. This included appraisal and career development conversations. All staff received regular annual appraisals in the last year. Staff were supported to meet the requirements of professional revalidation where necessary.
- Clinical staff were considered valued members of the practice team. They were given protected time for professional development and evaluation of their clinical work.
- There was a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of all staff.
- The practice actively promoted equality and diversity. Staff had received equality and diversity training. Staff felt they were treated equally.
- There were positive relationships between staff and teams.

Governance arrangements

Staff were assigned roles but their associated responsibilities in some roles were not always well defined.

- There were systems and processes to support good governance and management. Meetings were scheduled, held and minuted and actions followed up on.
- 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 including in respect of safeguarding and infection prevention and control.
- Practice leaders had policies, procedures and activities to ensure safety and assured themselves that they were operating as intended, with the exception of medicine management.

Managing risks, issues and performance

There were processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

- There was an effective, process to identify, understand, monitor and address current and future risks including risks to patient safety.
- The practice had processes to manage current and future performance.

Are services well-led?

- The Lead GPs had oversight of incidents, and complaints.
- We found evidence of clinical and administrative audit.
- The practice had plans in place and had trained staff for incidents.
- The practice implemented service developments and where efficiency changes were made this was with input from clinicians to understand their impact on the quality of care.

Appropriate and accurate information

The practice had appropriate and accurate information.

- Quality and operational information was used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.
- Quality and sustainability were discussed in relevant meetings where all staff had sufficient access to information.
- The practice used performance information particularly their performance against QOF 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. There were plans to address any identified weaknesses.
- The practice used information technology systems to monitor and improve the quality of care.
- The practice 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.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

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

- A full and diverse range of patients' staff and external partners' views and concerns were encouraged, heard and acted on to shape services and culture. There was an active patient participation group.
- The service was transparent, collaborative and open with stakeholders about performance.

Continuous improvement and innovation

There was evidence of systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement for all their staff.
- Staff knew about improvement methods and had the skills to use them.
- The practice 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.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

This section is primarily information for the provider

Requirement notices

Action we have told the provider to take

The table below shows the legal requirements that the service provider was not meeting. The provider must send CQC a report that says what action it is going to take to meet these requirements.

Regulated activity	Regulation
Diagnostic and screening procedures Family planning services Maternity and midwifery services Surgical procedures Treatment of disease, disorder or injury	Regulation 12 HSCA (RA) Regulations 2014 Safe care and treatment The practice had not reviewed and actioned a recent medicine alert appropriately. We found the practice did not record and monitor the use of prescriptions in accordance with national guidance. Some recommended emergency medicines for the treatment of pain, fits or seizures were not available and a medicine was out of date for the treatment of asthma. We also found the clinical team did not carry or have access to emergency medicines when out of the practice. There was no risk assessment in place. There were no systems in place to ensure the timely and appropriate review of patients receiving high risk medicines.