

The Liverpool Varicose Veins Clinic

Inspection report

73-75
Rodney Street
Liverpool
L1 9EX
Tel: 07816819321

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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?

Good 

Are services effective?

Good 

Are services caring?

Good 

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

Overall summary

This service is rated as Good overall.

The key questions are rated as:

Are services safe? – Good

Are services effective? – Good

Are services caring? – Good

Are services responsive? – Good

Are services well-led? – Good

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection at The Liverpool Varicose Veins Clinic as part of our inspection programme. This location has not previously been inspected since it was registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2018.

The provider Varicose Veins Limited offers specialist treatment for varicose veins. It is based in clinic premises in Rodney Street, Liverpool.

The managing director is the registered manager. A registered manager is a person who is registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are ‘registered persons’. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

At the time of the inspection there were no patients attending or receiving regulated services and we were unable to ask them about the service. However, we reviewed comments from patients that the service had received online.

Our key findings were:

- Patients received detailed and clear information about their proposed treatment which enabled them to make an informed decision. This included costs, risks and benefits of treatment.
- Peri-operative care and advice was clear and post-operative support was available.
- Patients were offered appointments at a time convenient to them and treatment was offered in a timely manner.
- Patients’ needs were fully assessed, and care and treatment were tailored to individual needs.
- Clinicians assessed patients according to appropriate guidance, legislation and standards and delivered care and treatment in line with current evidence-based guidance.
- Information about services and how to complain was available and easy to understand.
- There were sufficient staff who were suitably qualified and trained.
- There was an effective governance framework in place in order to gain feedback and to assess, monitor and improve the quality of the services provided.
- The provider was aware of the requirements of the Duty of Candour.

Dr Rosie Benneyworth BM BS BMedSci MRCGP

Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

Our inspection team

The inspection was led by a CQC inspector who had access to advice from a specialist advisor.

Background to The Liverpool Varicose Veins Clinic

The Liverpool Varicose Veins Clinic service operates from premises located at 73-75 Rodney Street, Liverpool, L1 9EX. They are also known as Liverpool Varicose Veins. Their website can be viewed here:

<https://www.liverpoolvaricoseveins.co.uk/>

They provide care and treatment of varicose veins to people age 18 years and over.

Opening hours/hours of operation:

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

10am – 4pm with some flexibility for earlier or later appointments.

Out of hours support is offered by a 24-hour phone line.

The service is registered with CQC under the Health and Social Care 2008 to provide the following Regulated Activities: Diagnostic and screening procedures and Treatment of disease, disorder or injury.

How we inspected this service

Before visiting we reviewed a range of information we hold about the service and asked the service to send us a range of information. This included their latest statement of purpose, details of staff employed including, their qualifications and proof of registration with their professional bodies. As part of the inspection we reviewed feedback gathered from patients, spoke to the registered manager and nurse, and reviewed a range of documents.

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

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

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

Are services safe?

We rated safe as Good because:

The service provided care in a way that kept patients safe and protected them from avoidable harm.

Safety systems and processes

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

- The provider had safety risk assessments in place. It had appropriate safety policies, which were regularly reviewed and updated. The service had systems to safeguard people from abuse.
- The service worked with other agencies, where relevant, and staff took steps to protect patients from abuse, discrimination and breaches of their dignity and respect.
- The provider carried out staff checks at the time of recruitment and on an ongoing basis where appropriate. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were undertaken where required. (DBS checks identify whether a person has a criminal record or is on an official list of people barred from working in roles where they may have contact with children or adults who may be vulnerable).
- All staff received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate to their role. They knew how to identify and report concerns. Staff who acted as chaperones were trained for the role and had received a DBS check.
- There was an effective system to manage infection prevention and control, including, clinical waste management, Legionella risk management, cleanliness, single- use items and vaccination of healthcare staff.
- The provider ensured that facilities and equipment were safe, and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions.
- The premises had appropriate environmental risk assessments in place.

Risks to patients

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

- There were arrangements for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention.
- There were appropriate indemnity arrangements in place.
- There were suitable medicines and equipment to deal with medical emergencies which were stored appropriately and checked regularly.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

- Individual care records were written and managed in a way that kept patients safe. The care records we saw showed that information needed to deliver safe care and treatment was available to relevant staff in an accessible way.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

Are services safe?

- The provider stocked and used a very small number of medicines. They had anaphylaxis kits, local anaesthetic and sclerosing agents. These were stored, documented and managed safely. (Sclerosing agents are chemical compounds that act as irritants and are used to treat varicose veins).
- The service does not prescribe Schedule 2 and 3 controlled drugs (medicines that have the highest level of control due to their risk of misuse and dependence). Neither did they prescribe schedule 4 or 5 controlled drugs.
- Staff did not prescribe, administer or supply any other medicines to patients.

Track record on safety and incidents

The service had a good safety record.

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues.
- The service monitored and reviewed activity to help understand risks and lead to safety improvements.

Lessons learned and improvements made

The service learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

- There was a system for recording and acting on significant events. Staff understood their duty to raise concerns and report incidents and near misses.
- There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The service learned and took action to improve safety in the service. The service had one incident that occurred in the last 12 months and this had been dealt with appropriately.
- The provider was aware of and complied with the requirements of the Duty of Candour. The provider encouraged a culture of openness and honesty. The service had systems in place for knowing about notifiable safety incidents.

The service acted on and learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts. The service had an effective mechanism in place to disseminate alerts to all members of the team.

Are services effective?

We rated effective as Good because:

People received effective care and treatment that met their needs.

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

Clinicians assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance relevant to their service.

- The provider assessed needs and delivered care in line with relevant and current evidence-based guidance and standards including the British Association of Sclerotherapists (BAS) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).
- Patients' immediate and ongoing needs were fully assessed. Where appropriate this included their clinical needs and their mental and physical wellbeing.
- Clinicians had enough information to make or confirm a diagnosis.
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- Staff assessed and managed patients' pain where appropriate.

Monitoring care and treatment

The service was actively involved in quality improvement activity.

- The service used information and feedback about care and treatment to make improvements as necessary. The service had an audit programme in place. They monitored infection prevention and control and patient outcomes through clinical audit.

Effective staffing

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

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

Coordinating patient care and information sharing

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

- Before providing treatment, doctors and nurses at the service ensured they had adequate knowledge of the patient's health, any relevant test results and their medicines history.
- All patients were asked for consent to share details of their consultation and treatment with their registered GP on each occasion they used the service.
- The provider had risk assessed the treatments they offered. Where patients agreed to share their information, we saw evidence of letters sent to their registered GP in line with GMC guidance.

Supporting patients to live healthier lives

Are services effective?

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

- Where appropriate, staff gave people advice so they could self-care.
- Risk factors were identified, highlighted to patients and where appropriate highlighted to their normal care provider for additional support. For example, in the case of obesity and smoking which could impact on patients' health and circulatory conditions including varicose veins and their care and treatment.
- Where patients needs could not be met by the service, staff redirected them to the appropriate service for their needs.

Consent to care and treatment

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

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

Are services caring?

We rated caring as Good because:

People received care and treatment in a caring manner

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- The service sought feedback on the quality of clinical care patients received.
- Feedback from patients was positive about the way staff treat people.
- Staff understood patients' personal, cultural, social and religious needs. They displayed an understanding and non-judgmental attitude to all patients.
- The service gave patients timely support and information.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

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

- Interpretation services were available for patients who did not have English as a first language.
- Patient reviews and feedback told us that 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.
- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand.

Privacy and Dignity

The service respected patients' privacy and dignity.

- Staff recognised the importance of people's dignity and respect.
- Consultation and clinical rooms offered privacy and afforded dignity to patients.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

We rated responsive as Good because:

Services were tailored to meet the needs of individual patients and were accessible.

Responding to and meeting people's needs

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

- The provider understood the needs of their patients.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.
- Reasonable adjustments had been made so that people in vulnerable circumstances could access and use services on an equal basis to others. For example, the premises were accessible to disabled patients.

Timely access to the service

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

- Patients had timely access to initial assessment, diagnosis and treatment.
- Waiting times, delays and cancellations were minimal and managed appropriately.
- The appointment system was easy to use.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

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

- Information about how to make a complaint or raise concerns was available.
- The service informed patients of any further action that may be available to them should they not be satisfied with the response to their complaint.

The service had complaint policy and procedures in place. The service had received no complaints over the last 12 months but discussed how they would deal with any complaints and learn and improve from them where appropriate.

Are services well-led?

We rated well-led as Good because:

There was an effective governance framework in place that demonstrated quality assurance and improvement. The service demonstrated a culture which focused on the needs of patients and a commitment to delivering the best possible care and outcomes.

Leadership capacity and capability;

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

- The provider was knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services and understood any challenges.
- The provider was visible and approachable and worked closely with other staff to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.

Vision and strategy

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

- There was a clear vision and set of values which were shared by all staff. Staff understood their role in achieving them.

Culture

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

- Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work for the service.
- The service focused on the needs of patients.
- Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated in discussions around responding to incidents and complaints. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the duty of candour.
- Staff told us they could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they need, including appraisal. All staff had received regular annual appraisals in the last year. Staff were supported to meet the requirements of professional revalidation where necessary. Clinical staff had protected time for professional development and evaluation of their clinical work.
- There was an emphasis on the safety and well-being of staff.
- The service promoted equality and diversity. Staff had received equality and diversity training. Staff felt they were treated equally. Positive relationships between staff were demonstrated.

Governance arrangements

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

- Structures, processes and systems to support good governance and management were clearly set out, understood and effective.
- Staff were clear on their roles and accountabilities.

Are services well-led?

- Policies, procedures and activities had been developed and implemented to ensure safety and effective care and treatment. These were reviewed and revised as needed on a regular basis.
- The service submitted data or notifications to external organisations as required.
- There were arrangements in line with data security standards for the availability, integrity and confidentiality of patient identifiable data, records and data management systems.
- There were systems to support improvement and innovation work. The provider had published articles and reviews and presented these and relevant audit work at international professional conferences.
- The service used the latest innovations and proven techniques, supported by evidence-based standards, guidelines and best practice.

Managing risks, issues and performance

There were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

- There was an effective, process to identify, understand, monitor and address risks including risks to patient safety.
- The service had processes to manage performance.
- They had oversight of safety alerts, incidents, and complaints.
- Clinical audit was undertaken to assess and review the quality of care and outcomes for patients.

Appropriate and accurate information

The service acted on appropriate and accurate information.

- Quality and operational information was reported on, assess and reviewed. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.
- Quality and sustainability were discussed.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The service involved patients and staff to support high-quality sustainable services.

- There were systems in place for staff and patients to give feedback.
- The service encouraged and heard views and concerns from patients and staff and acted on them where appropriate to shape services and culture.

Continuous improvement and innovation

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

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement.
- The service reviewed incidents and would review complaints if they occurred. Learning was shared and used to make improvements where relevant.

In the last year the clinic had been awarded specialist healthcare clinic of the year (2021) and their nurse has been awarded a patient care award for exemplary patient care and support.