

Gentle Dental Practices Limited

Red Lodge Dental Surgery

Inspection report

18 Boundary Road
Red Lodge
Bury St Edmunds
IP28 8JQ
Tel: 01638750905

Date of inspection visit: 1 October 2021
Date of publication: 19/11/2021

Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 1 October 2021 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 Care Quality Commission, (CQC), inspector who was supported by a specialist dental adviser.

As part of this inspection we asked;

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- 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 this practice was providing safe care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Are services effective?

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

Are services well-led?

Summary of findings

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

Background

Red Lodge Dental Surgery is in the village of Red Lodge, between Mildenhall and Newmarket, Suffolk and provides NHS and private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

There is level access to the practice for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. Car parking spaces, including dedicated parking for people with disabilities, are available outside the practice.

The dental team includes four dentists, a visiting orthodontist, four dental nurses, three trainee dental nurses, two dental hygienists, the practice manager (who is a qualified dental nurse), four receptionists and a cleaner. The practice has five treatment rooms.

The practice is owned by a company and as a condition of registration must have a person registered with the CQC 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 Red Lodge Dental Surgery is the practice manager.

During the inspection we spoke with two dentists, three dental nurses, two receptionists, the provider/owner 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 and Thursday from 9am to 6pm.

Tuesday and Wednesday from 9am to 5.30pm.

Friday from 9am to 4pm.

Our key findings were:

- Premises and equipment were clean and properly maintained and the practice followed national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments. However, we noted five-yearly electrical fixed wire testing had not been undertaken.
- The provider had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Not all appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available. The practice took immediate action to rectify this.
- The provider had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff.
- Audits of antimicrobial prescribing were not undertaken.
- The recording of staging and grading of periodontal (gum) disease in patients dental care records was not always completed. The clinicians had not always justified dental X-rays in the dental care records.
- The provider had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. However, not all staff were aware of safeguarding contact information.
- The provider had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- 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.

Summary of findings

- Staff provided preventive care and supported 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.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked 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 information governance arrangements.

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

- Implement an effective system of checks of medical emergency equipment and medicines taking into account the guidelines issued by the Resuscitation Council (UK) and the General Dental Council.
- Implement audits for prescribing of antibiotic medicines taking into account the guidance provided by the Faculty of General Dental Practice and improve the practice protocols regarding auditing patient dental care records to check that necessary information is recorded.
- Take action to ensure the suitability of the premises and ensure all areas are fit for the purpose for which they are being used. In particular ensure the five-yearly electrical fixed wire testing is undertaken.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We asked the following question(s).

Are services safe?	No action ✓
Are services effective?	No action ✓
Are services well-led?	No action ✓

Are services safe?

Our findings

We found 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 had received safeguarding training. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. There was scope to ensure safeguarding information such as safeguarding contacts and flow charts were easily accessible to all staff and patients.

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 also had a system to identify adults that were in other vulnerable situations for example, those who were known to have experienced modern-day slavery or female genital mutilation.

The provider had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures. They 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 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. The provider had suitable numbers of dental instruments available for the clinical staff and measures were in place to ensure they were decontaminated and sterilised appropriately.

The staff had systems in place to ensure that patient-specific dental appliances were 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 undertaken on 15 June 2015. All recommendations in the assessment had been actioned and records of water testing and dental unit water line management were maintained. Following the completion of recent extension building work at the practice a legionella risk assessment inspection was scheduled for review.

We saw effective cleaning schedules to ensure the practice was kept clean. When we inspected we saw the practice was visibly clean.

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.

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

The dentists used dental dam in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment. In instances where dental dam was not used, such as for example refusal by the patient, and where other methods were used to protect the airway, we saw this was documented in the dental care record and a risk assessment completed.

Are services safe?

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 four staff recruitment records. These showed the provider followed their recruitment procedure.

We observed that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council and had professional indemnity cover.

Staff ensured facilities and equipment were safe, and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including gas appliances. However, we noted five-yearly electrical fixed wire testing had not been undertaken.

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements. We saw there were fire extinguishers and fire detection systems throughout the building and fire exits were kept clear. Staff we spoke to told us they had not undertaken any fire drills, however they were able to describe the actions they would take in the event of an evacuation of the practice.

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

We saw evidence that the dentists did not always justify, grade and report on the radiographs they took. The provider carried out radiography audits every year following current guidance and legislation. However, there was scope to ensure future audits reviewed the recording of staging and grading of periodontal disease in patients dental care records and ensured clinician's justified dental X-rays in the records.

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

Risks to patients

The provider had implemented 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 and was updated annually.

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

Staff had completed sepsis awareness training. Sepsis prompts for staff and patient information posters were displayed throughout the practice. This helped ensure staff made triage appointments effectively to manage patients who presented with a dental infection and where necessary referred patients for specialist care.

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

Emergency equipment and medicines were available. We found staff kept records of their checks of these to make sure they were available, within their expiry date, and in working order. However, we noted the full complement of airways were past their expiry date, there was no spillage kit for bodily fluids. We discussed these concerns with the provider and the practice manager. We were assured during the inspection that immediate action was taken to rectify these issues, replace missing and expired items and improve checks to include expiry dates of all equipment to prevent any reoccurrence of this.

Are services safe?

A dental nurse worked with the dentists when they treated patients in line with General Dental Council Standards for the Dental Team. A risk assessment was in place for when the dental hygienists worked without chairside support.

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

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 dental care records with clinicians to confirm our findings and observed 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 requirements.

The provider had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two-week wait arrangements. These arrangements were initiated by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

There was a stock control system of medicines which were held on site. This ensured that medicines did not pass their expiry date and enough medicines were available if required.

We saw staff stored and kept records of NHS prescriptions as described in current guidance.

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

Antimicrobial prescribing audits were not undertaken, following the inspection we discussed this with the practice manager and the provider.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The provider had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues. Staff monitored and reviewed incidents. This helped staff to understand risks which led to effective risk management systems in the practice as well as safety improvements.

Where there had been a safety incident we saw this was investigated, documented and discussed with the rest of the dental practice team to prevent such occurrences happening again.

The provider had 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.

The practice reviewed regular Coronavirus (COVID-19) advisory information and alerts. Information was provided to staff and displayed for patients to enable staff to act on any suspected Covid cases. Patients and visitors were requested to wear face coverings and use hand gels on entering the premises.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

We found 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 professionals up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw 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 orthodontist carried out a patient assessment in line with recognised guidance from the British Orthodontic Society. An Index of Orthodontic Treatment Need was recorded which would be used to determine whether a patient was eligible for NHS orthodontic treatment. The patient's oral hygiene was also assessed to determine if the patient was suitable for orthodontic treatment.

The practice had access to digital X-rays to enhance the delivery of care.

There was level access, accessible toilets and treatment rooms on the ground floor for those patients who were unable to access stairs. We were told the practice ensured access to appointments daily for patients in pain who required urgent access.

Comments received from patients reflected high patient satisfaction with the quality of their dental treatment and the staff who delivered it.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

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

The dentists prescribed high concentration fluoride products if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them.

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 leaflets to help patients with their oral health.

Staff were aware of and involved with national oral health campaigns and local schemes which supported patients to live healthier lives, for example, local stop smoking services. They directed patients to these schemes when appropriate.

The dentists described to us the procedures they used to improve the outcomes for patients with periodontal disease. This involved providing patients with preventative advice, taking plaque and gum bleeding scores and recording charts of the patient's gum condition. However, from the patient's dental records we reviewed we noted that dentists did not always record the grading and staging of periodontal (gum) disease. In addition, we noted that the reason for taking X-rays was not always justified in the patient's dental care records we reviewed.

Records showed patients with 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.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

The practice team understood the importance of obtaining and recording patients' consent to treatment. The staff were aware of the need to obtain proof of legal guardianship or Power of Attorney for patients who lacked capacity or for children who are looked after. The dentists gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these, so they could make informed decisions. We saw this documented in patients' 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. The policy also referred to Gillick competence, by which a child under the age of 16 years of age may give consent for themselves in certain circumstances. Staff were aware of the need to consider this when treating young people under 16 years of age.

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.

The provider had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. Staff kept records of the results of these audits, the resulting action plans and improvements.

Effective staffing

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

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

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 for treatment the practice did not provide.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

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

The practice demonstrated a transparent and open culture in relation to people's safety. There was strong leadership and emphasis on continually striving to improve. The information and evidence presented during and immediately after the inspection process was clear and well documented. They could show how they ensured high-quality sustainable services and demonstrated improvements over time.

Leadership capacity and capability

We found leaders had the capacity, values and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

Leaders were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of the service. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.

Leaders at all levels were visible and approachable. Staff told us they worked closely with them to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.

We saw the provider had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the practice.

The provider had a strategy for delivering the service which was in line with health and social priorities across the region. Staff planned the services to meet the needs of the practice population.

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.

Staff discussed their training needs at annual appraisal, during one to one meetings and through clinical supervision. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development.

The staff focused on the needs of patients. For example, through the provision of general dentistry the practice aimed to provide regular care at appropriate intervals for patients. This was supported by the ability to refer patients for sedation or implant services if required. The practice manager described the on-going development and renovation of the practice and how this had impacted on the improvement in patient care and treatment.

We saw the provider had systems in place to deal with staff poor performance.

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.

Governance and management

Staff had clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

The registered manager had overall responsibility for the management and clinical leadership of the practice. The registered 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.

Are services well-led?

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

Quality and operational information, for example, surveys, audits and external body reviews were used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.

The provider had information governance arrangements and staff had completed training and 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 the service. For example:

Patients were encouraged to complete the NHS Friends and Family Test. This is a national programme to allow patients to provide feedback on NHS services they have used. We noted the practice had recently reintroduced patient surveys, feedback and the NHS Friends and Family Test. Results of the most recent patient feedback had seen 28 responses, 26 of these were positive, others commented on waiting times once patients had arrived at the practice.

The provider gathered feedback from staff through informal discussions, daily morning huddles where open discussion between the team were encouraged and regular team monthly meetings where the agenda included regular items for discussion, such as safeguarding, safety alerts and any other business for staff to raise. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to by the practice manager.

Continuous improvement and innovation

The provider had 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 and infection prevention and control. Staff kept records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements. However, there was scope to ensure future audits reviewed the recording of staging and grading of periodontal disease in patients dental care records and ensured clinicians justified dental X-rays in the patient records.

The practice manager showed a commitment to learning and improvement and valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff. They described the support provided to new members of staff including the trainee dental nurses to ensure their future development and training.

Staff completed 'highly recommended' training as per General Dental Council professional standards. The provider supported and encouraged staff to complete continuing professional development.