

Alexandra Dental Care

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Inspection Report

54 Alexandra Road
Swadlincote
Derbyshire
DE11 9AZ

Tel: 01283 216347

Website: www.alexandradentalcare.co.uk

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 30 January 2018 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.

We told the NHS England area team and Healthwatch that we were inspecting the practice. They did not have any relevant information to share with us regarding this dental practice.

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

Alexandra Dental Care is situated in Swadlincote in south Derbyshire. The practice provides mainly private dental treatment and NHS dental treatment mostly to children.

The practice has five treatment rooms, three of which are located on the first floor. There is free car parking close to the practice.

Summary of findings

The dental team includes: seven dentists, one foundation dentist, three dental hygienists, 13 qualified dental nurses, two trainee dental nurses and a practice manager.

The practice is a training practice with one foundation dentist working there at the time of this inspection. A foundation dentist is a newly qualified dentist gaining experience in a supported environment for the first year after qualification.

The practice is owned by an organisation and as a condition of registration must have a person registered with the 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 the practice is the principal dentist.

On the day of inspection we received feedback from 25 patients. This information gave us a positive view of the practice.

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

The practice opening hours are: Monday: 7.45am to 8pm; Tuesday 7.45am to 6pm; Wednesday 7.45am to 6pm; Thursday 7.45am to 7pm; Friday: 7.45am to 6pm and Saturday: 9am to 1pm.

Our key findings were:

- The practice was clean and was undergoing planned refurbishment in some areas of the practice.
- The practice had infection control procedures which followed published guidance.

- The practice asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided, and received positive feedback.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- Rectangular collimation was not being used with all X-ray machines within the practice.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risks in the practice, particularly with regard to health and safety.
- The practice had suitable safeguarding processes. Staff had been trained and knew their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Staff treated patients with dignity and respect and took measures to protect their privacy and personal information.
- The practice completed regular audits and used the information to make improvements.
- The appointment system met patients' needs.
- The practice had effective leadership. Staff felt involved and supported and worked well as a team.
- The practice did not have an induction hearing loop to assist patients who used a hearing aid.

There were areas where the provider could make improvements and should:

- Review the protocols and procedures for use of X-ray equipment taking into account Guidance Notes for Dental Practitioners on the Safe Use of X-ray Equipment.
- Review its responsibilities to the needs of people with a disability, including those with hearing difficulties and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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?

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

The practice had systems and processes to provide safe care and treatment. They used learning from incidents and complaints to help them improve.

Staff received training in safeguarding and knew how to recognise the signs of abuse and how to report concerns. There was a lead person appointed within the practice for safeguarding matters.

Staff were suitably qualified and the practice completed essential recruitment checks.

The premises and equipment were clean and properly maintained. The practice followed national guidance for cleaning, sterilising and storing dental instruments.

The practice had suitable arrangements and equipment for dealing with medical and other emergencies.

No action



Are services effective?

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

The dentists assessed patients' needs and provided care and treatment in line with recognised guidance. Patients described the treatment they received as professional, helpful and competent. The dentists discussed treatment with patients so they could give informed consent and recorded this in their records.

The practice had clear arrangements when patients needed to be referred to other dental or health care professionals.

The practice supported staff to complete training relevant to their roles and had systems to help them monitor this.

No action



Are services caring?

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

We received feedback about the practice from 25 people. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were patient, caring and understanding. Patients also said their dentist listened to them. Patients commented that they made them feel at ease, especially when they were anxious about visiting the dentist.

We saw that staff protected patients' privacy and were aware of the importance of confidentiality. Patients said staff treated them with dignity and respect.

No action



Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

No action



Summary of findings

The practice's appointment system was efficient and met patients' needs. Patients could get an appointment quickly if in pain.

Staff considered patients' different needs. This included providing ground floor treatment rooms for disabled patients and families with children. The practice also had access to telephone interpreter services. The practice did not have an induction hearing loop to assist patients who used a hearing aid.

The practice took patients views seriously. They valued compliments from patients and responded to concerns and complaints quickly and constructively.

Are services well-led?

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

The practice had arrangements to ensure the smooth running of the service. These included systems for the practice team to discuss the quality and safety of the care and treatment provided. There was a clearly defined management structure and staff felt supported and appreciated.

The practice team kept complete patient dental care records which were, clearly written and stored securely.

The practice monitored clinical and non-clinical areas of their work to help them improve and learn. This included asking for and listening to the views of patients and staff.

No action



Are services safe?

Our findings

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

The practice had policies and procedures to report, investigate, respond and learn from accidents, incidents and significant events. Staff knew about these and understood their role in the process. We reviewed the records for accidents and significant events recorded in the 12 months prior to this inspection.

The practice received national patient safety and medicines alerts from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA). Relevant alerts were discussed with staff, acted on and stored for future reference. Records showed the practice received regular alerts. Staff at the practice were aware of recent alerts affecting dental practice.

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

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 practice had safeguarding policies and procedures to provide staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. The practice manager was the identified lead for safeguarding in the practice. They had completed safeguarding training and had updated this during January 2018.

Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns. The practice had a whistleblowing policy. Staff told us they felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

The practice protected staff and patients with guidance available for staff on the Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002.

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. These included risk assessments which staff reviewed every year. The practice followed relevant safety laws when using needles and other sharp dental items. This included single use matrix bands and a recognised system for the safe use of syringes and needles. In addition it was practice policy that only dentists handled needles. The dentists used rubber dam in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment.

The practice had a business continuity plan describing how the practice would deal events which could disrupt the normal running of the practice. A copy was also available off site.

Medical emergencies

Staff knew what to do in a medical emergency and completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year, with the last training having been completed in June 2017.

Emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in recognised guidance. Staff kept records of their checks to make sure these were available, within their expiry date, and in working order. Equipment included an automated external defibrillator (AED), medical oxygen and portable suction.

The practice had a first aid box which was located centrally. Two members of staff had completed first aid at work training.

Staff recruitment

The practice recruited staff and kept records relating to recruitment in staff files. This reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at six staff recruitment files. These showed the practice followed safe recruitment procedures.

We saw that every member of staff had received a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover. The practice manager had a system to monitor that relevant staff were up to date with their registration and indemnity insurance cover.

Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

The practice's health and safety policies and risk assessments were up to date and reviewed annually to help manage potential risk. These covered general workplace and specific dental topics. The practice manager was the lead person with overall responsibility for health and safety at the practice. The practice had current employer's liability insurance which was due for renewal on 14 June 2018.

We saw that regular health and safety audits were completed, reviewed and where necessary updated.

Are services safe?

The practice had an automatic fire alarm system which was serviced regularly; this included automatic fire detection and emergency lighting. The practice had a fire risk assessment which had been reviewed in May 2017. We noted that some actions identified in the risk assessment had been put on hold until the refurbishment was complete.

A dental nurse worked with the dentists and dental hygienists when they treated patients.

Infection control

The practice had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures to keep patients safe. They followed guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health. We saw that staff completed an annual update in infection prevention and control.

The practice had suitable arrangements for transporting, cleaning, checking, sterilising and storing instruments in line with HTM01-05. The records showed equipment staff used for cleaning and sterilising instruments was maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance.

The practice policy identified infection prevention and control audits should be completed twice a year. The latest audit was completed in December 2017. We noted that action plans were not always produced from these audits and discussed this with the practice manager. They said this was an oversight, and action plans would be produced going forward.

The practice had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems, in line with a risk assessment which had been produced in February 2015 and was scheduled to be reviewed.

There were records to demonstrate that clinical staff had received inoculations against Hepatitis B and had received boosters when required.

We saw cleaning schedules for the premises. The practice was clean when we inspected and patients confirmed this was usual.

Equipment and medicines

We saw servicing documentation for the equipment used. Staff carried out checks in line with the manufacturers' recommendations. There were records within the practice to demonstrate that equipment had been serviced regularly.

The practice had suitable systems for prescribing, dispensing and storing medicines.

The practice stored and kept records of NHS prescriptions as described in current guidance. During the inspection a log was produced to improve security and provide an audit trail.

Radiography (X-rays)

The practice had suitable arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment. They met current radiation regulations and had the required information in their radiation protection file.

The practice had five intraoral X-ray machines and one orthopantomogram known as an OPG. The practice used digital X-rays to reduce the dose of radiation to patients. We noted that not all of the X-ray units were fitted with rectangular collimation. National guidance suggests the use of rectangular collimation will help reduce the dose of radiation to patients and staff to 'as low as reasonably practicable.'

The provider had registered with the Health and Safety Executive in line with recent changes to legislation relating to radiography.

We saw evidence that the dentists justified, graded and reported on the X-rays they took. The practice carried out X-ray audits in line with current guidance and legislation. At the time of this inspection the foundation dentist was completing an X-ray audit as part of his scheduled learning experience.

Clinical staff completed continuous professional development in respect of dental radiography as required by the General Dental Council (GDC).

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The practice kept detailed dental care records containing information about the patients' current dental needs, past treatment and medical histories. Clinical notes were held electronically with patients' radiographs and completed medical history forms added directly into the records. Patients were able to add an electronic signature by means of an electronic pad in reception. The dentists assessed patients' treatment needs in line with recognised guidance. The dental care records identified the discussions and advice given to patients in relation to their dental health by the various dental care professionals at the practice.

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

The practice carried out intra-venous conscious sedation for patients who would benefit. This included people who were very nervous of dental treatment and those who needed complex or lengthy treatment. The practice had systems to help them do this safely. These were in accordance with guidelines published by the Royal College of Surgeons and Royal College of Anaesthetists in 2015.

The practice's systems included checks before and after treatment, emergency equipment requirements, medicines management, sedation equipment checks, and staff availability and training. They also included patient checks and information such as consent, monitoring during treatment, discharge and post-operative instructions.

The practice assessed patients appropriately for sedation. The dental care records showed that patients having sedation had important checks carried out first. These included a detailed medical history, blood pressure checks and an assessment of health using the American Society of Anaesthesiologists classification system in accordance with current guidelines. The records showed that staff recorded important checks at regular intervals. These included pulse, blood pressure, breathing rates and the oxygen saturation of the blood.

One dental nurse who had appropriate additional training supported the dentist treating patients under sedation. The dental nurses' name was recorded in patients' dental care records.

Health promotion & prevention

The practice believed in preventative care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health in accordance with the government document: 'Delivering better oral health: an evidence based toolkit for prevention'. We saw evidence this was being used in the practice and staff were committed to providing preventative oral health care.

The dentists provided verbal advice and information to patients about oral health, smoking cessation and sensible alcohol consumption. This was further enhanced by appointments with the dental hygienists.

The dentists told us they prescribed high concentration fluoride toothpaste if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them. They used fluoride varnish for all children based on an assessment of the risk of tooth decay for each child.

The dentists told us they discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and diet with patients during appointments. We saw evidence of this in dental care records. The practice had a selection of dental products for sale and provided health promotion leaflets to help patients with their oral health. Free samples of toothpaste were also available in treatment rooms.

Information posters and leaflets were available for patients to read in the waiting room. A six monthly newsletter gave oral health advice and kept patients informed of developments within the practice.

Staffing

The practice had: seven dentists, one foundation dentist, three dental hygienists, 13 qualified dental nurses, two trainee dental nurses and a practice manager.

We checked the registrations of all dental care professionals with the General Dental Council (GDC) register. We found all staff were up to date with their professional registration with the GDC.

Staff new to the practice had a period of induction based on a structured induction programme. We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuous professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council. There were systems to monitor the staff training needed to meet GDC requirements (known as CPD).

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

We saw that staff appraisals had been completed annually with a personal development plan for each member of staff produced.

Working with other services

Dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide. These included referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two week wait arrangements. This was initiated by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in 2005 to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist. The practice monitored urgent referrals to make sure they were dealt with promptly.

The practice received referrals from other dental practices for intra-venous sedation and implants.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice team understood the importance of obtaining and recording patients' consent to treatment. There was a consent policy which cross-referenced to the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 guidance within the practice. There was also guidance relating to the treatment of young people under the age of 16 years. We discussed consent with a dentist who showed a clear understanding and knowledge of the MCA and treating young people aged under 16. The dentists told us they gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these so they could make informed decisions. Patients confirmed their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment. We saw some examples where dentists had recorded this information in dental care records.

Patients were given a copy of their treatment plan and the practice recorded consent within the patient dental care records.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion and empathy

Staff we spoke with reception staff who were aware of their responsibility to respect people's diversity and human rights.

Patients commented positively that staff were patient, caring and understanding. We saw that staff treated patients with respect, were polite, friendly and professional at the reception desk and over the telephone.

Nervous patients said staff were compassionate and understanding.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Staff told us that if a patient asked for more privacy they would take them into a consultation room near to reception. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave personal information where other patients might see it. The practice had a specific telephone room where incoming calls were received. This was located in a staff area to enhance confidentiality and avoid other patients overhearing private and personal conversations.

Staff password protected patients' electronic care records and backed these up to secure storage. Each staff member had their own unique password for the computer system.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The costs for both private and NHS dental treatments were displayed at reception.

The practice gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment options. Patients confirmed that staff listened to them, did not feel rushed and were able to ask questions.

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

The practice's website provided patients with information about the range of treatments available at the practice. These included general dentistry and treatments including dental implants, cosmetic dentistry and dentures provided by this practice.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

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

The practice had an efficient appointment system to respond to patients' needs. Several patients commented on the ease of getting an appointment that suited their needs. Patients told us they found that staff were helpful and accommodating when making appointments. Some patients said they had been seen at short notice when in pain or in an emergency. Staff told us that patients who requested an urgent appointment were seen the same day. Patients told us they 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. Each dentist made emergency appointment slots available each day or patients could come and sit and wait to be seen.

Staff told us that they texted, e mailed or telephoned patients who had signed up for the service 24 hours before an appointment was due.

Promoting equality

The practice made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. The practice had five treatment rooms, three of which were situated on the ground floor and therefore accessible to patients who used wheelchairs and families with pushchairs. The toilet facilities were compliant with the requirements of Equality Act 2010. A removable ramp was available to overcome a slight dip outside the front door for those patients who required it.

The practice did not have an induction hearing loop to assist patients who used a hearing aid.

A patient information folder in the waiting room informed patients about treatments on offer and gave further background advice on the practice and its staff.

Access to the service

The practice displayed its opening hours outside the practice and on its website. This included the different options for access to emergency treatment outside of opening hours.

We confirmed the practice kept waiting times and cancellations to a minimum.

The practice was committed to seeing patients experiencing pain on the same day and kept appointments slots free for same day appointments. The answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was closed. This included providing the NHS 111 telephone number. Patients confirmed they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment.

Concerns & complaints

The practice had a complaints policy providing guidance to staff on how to handle a complaint. The practice displayed a detailed procedure in the waiting room which explained how to make a complaint and identified other agencies patients could contact should they remain dissatisfied. The practice manager was responsible for dealing with complaints in the practice. Staff told us they would tell the practice manager about any formal or informal comments or concerns straight away so patients received a quick response.

Staff told us they aimed to settle complaints in-house and invited patients to speak with them in person to discuss these.

We looked at comments, compliments the practice had received in the year up to this inspection. We noted there had not been any formal complaints since 2014. We saw that historically complaints had been handled in line with the practice complaints policy and actions and learning points had been identified and recorded.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

The principal dentist had responsibility for the management and 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 practice had policies, procedures and risk assessments to support the management of the service and to protect patients and staff. These included arrangements to monitor the quality of the service and make improvements. We saw that policies and risk assessments had been reviewed regularly throughout the calendar year.

The practice had information governance arrangements and staff were aware of the importance of these in protecting patients' personal information.

Leadership, openness and transparency

Staff were aware of the duty of candour requirements to be open, honest and to offer an apology to patients if anything went wrong. There was a duty of candour policy and staff were prompted to offer an apology when things had gone wrong. Discussions with staff identified they understood the principles which underpinned the duty of candour.

Staff told us there was an open, no blame culture at the practice. They said they were encouraged them to raise any issues and felt confident they could do this. They knew who to raise any issues with and told us that managers within the organisation were approachable, would listen to their concerns and act appropriately. If staff had any concerns these were discussed at staff meetings and it was clear the practice worked as a team and dealt with issues professionally.

The practice held regular meetings where staff could raise any concerns and discuss clinical and non-clinical updates. Meetings were minuted and those records were available to all staff. Immediate discussions were arranged to share urgent information.

Learning and improvement

The practice had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included audits of dental care records, infection control and radiography. The principal dentist showed a commitment to improvement and identified areas of the practice where improvements had taken place. Such as the move from paper to electronic dental care records and the introduction of digital X-rays. In addition the principal dentist identified areas where current improvements were taking place such as the refurbishment of the practice.

Staff 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. We saw evidence of completed appraisals in the staff folders.

Staff told us they completed essential training, including medical emergencies and basic life support, each year. The General Dental Council requires clinical staff to complete continuous professional development.

We saw evidence that staff were completing a range of training courses, and this was supported by the practice to ensure the development of staff skills.

Practice seeks and acts on feedback from its patients, the public and staff

The practice used a range of means including patient surveys and verbal comments to obtain staff and patients' views about the service.

Patients were encouraged to complete the NHS Friends and Family Test. There were comment cards and a response box in the waiting room to allow them to do this. We saw records going back to May 2016. This information showed positive feedback with 100% of patients who responded saying they would recommend the practice to family and friends.

There were no patient reviews recorded on the NHS Choices website. We saw 10 Google reviews of the practice had been recorded in the year before this inspection. Nine reviews provided positive feedback. There were 35 Google reviews in total and 33 provided positive feedback.