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Barnbrook Dental Practice

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 4 July 2023 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 practice 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 advisor.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following 5 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:

- The dental clinic appeared clean and well-maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to manage risks for patients, staff, equipment and the premises.
- Safeguarding processes were in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- Clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect. Staff took care to protect patients' privacy and personal information.

Summary of findings

- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system worked efficiently to respond to patients' needs.
- The frequency of appointments was agreed between the dentist and the patient, giving due regard to National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.
- There was effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved, supported and worked as a team.
- Staff and patients were asked for feedback about the services provided.
- Complaints were dealt with positively and efficiently.
- The practice had information governance arrangements.

Background

Barnbrook Dental Practice is in Exeter and provides private dental care and treatment for adults and children. There is a small NHS contract.

There is a portable ramp to provide access for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs and a ground floor treatment room. The practice is not fully accessible, however. Car parking spaces, including dedicated parking for disabled people, are available near the practice. The practice has made reasonable adjustments to support patients with access requirements, given the building construction design and location.

The dental team includes 2 dentists, 1 dental hygienist, 3 dental nurses, 2 trainee dental nurses and 1 receptionist. The practice has 3 treatment rooms.

During the inspection we spoke with 2 dentists, 1 dental hygienist, 2 dental nurses, 1 trainee dental nurse and 1 receptionist. We looked at practice policies, procedures and other records to assess how the service is managed.

The practice is open: Monday to Thursday 8.45am – 1.00pm. 2.00pm – 5.30pm.

Friday 8.30am – 2.00pm.

The practice had taken steps to improve environmental sustainability. For example, there were secure facilities for patients or staff choosing to cycle to the practice and staff uniforms were laundered on-site at the end of the day, reducing the need for staff to complete individual hot wash laundry cycles at home.

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

- Take action to ensure the practice's fire safety risk assessment is completed by a competent person to ensure ongoing fire safety management is effective.
- Implement audits for prescribing of antibiotic medicines taking into account the guidance provided by the College of General Dentistry.
- Improve the system of monitoring patient referrals to other dental or health care professionals through centrally monitoring, to ensure they are received and acted upon in a timely manner.
- Develop staff awareness of autism and learning disabilities by ensuring all staff receive appropriate training in this.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

Are services safe?	No action ✓
Are services effective?	No action ✓
Are services caring?	No action ✓
Are services responsive to people's needs?	No action ✓
Are services well-led?	No action ✓

Are services safe?

Our findings

We found 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)

The practice had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.

The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance. We noted that local anaesthetics had been removed from their sterile packing when stored inside drawers in treatment areas. There was no thermometer to check the correct water temperature when handwashing dental instruments and some identifiers to distinguish between boxes intended for transporting clean or dirty dental instruments were missing. We saw, however, that there were active protocols for cleaning every box after each use. We brought the issues to the provider, who told us all the above actions would be addressed without delay.

The practice had procedures to reduce the risk of Legionella, or other bacteria, developing in water systems, in line with a risk assessment.

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

The practice appeared clean and there was an effective schedule in place to ensure it was kept clean.

The practice had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation.

Clinical staff were qualified, registered with the General Dental Council and had professional indemnity cover.

The practice ensured equipment was safe to use, maintained and serviced according to manufacturers' instructions. The practice ensured the facilities were maintained in accordance with regulations.

A fire safety risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements. However, we noted the annual risk assessment had been completed by a lay person. We raised this with the provider who told us they would make arrangements for a competent person to carry out another assessment.

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

Risks to patients

The practice had implemented systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient and staff safety. This included sharps safety, sepsis awareness and lone working.

Emergency equipment and medicines were available and checked in accordance with national guidance.

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

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

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Are services safe?

Patient care records were complete, legible, kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

The practice had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two-week wait arrangements. We noted clinicians maintained a log of their own referrals. We discussed with the providers the risks and benefits of maintaining individual logs compared with a centralised log for the purposes of monitoring that patients were seen in a timely manner. There was a possibility that individual logs could go unchecked in the event of staff absence.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

An antimicrobial prescribing audit had not yet been completed.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The practice had systems to review and investigate incidents and accidents. The practice had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.

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.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

The practice provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.

Consent to care and treatment

Staff obtained patients' consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance. They understood their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

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 patient care records in line with recognised guidance.

Staff conveyed an understanding of supporting more vulnerable members of society such as patients living with dementia. Not all staff had completed training in learning disability and autism awareness. The provider told us training would be scheduled for the whole staff team in the autumn.

We saw evidence the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits six-monthly following current guidance.

Effective staffing

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

Newly appointed staff had a structured induction and clinical staff completed 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 caring?

Our findings

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

Kindness, respect and compassion

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

Patients feedback indicated they considered staff were compassionate and understanding when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

Privacy and dignity

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality.

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

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about their care and gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment.

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

The dentists explained the methods they used to help patients understand their treatment options. These included photographs, study models and X-ray images.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Our findings

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

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs and preferences.

Staff were clear about the importance of providing emotional support to patients when delivering care.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments, including a portable ramp, for patients with access requirements. Staff had carried out a disability access audit and had formulated an action plan to continually improve access for patients.

Timely access to services

The practice displayed its opening hours and provided information on their website, patient information leaflet and on the front door.

Patients could access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs. The practice had an appointment system to respond to patients' needs. The frequency of appointments was agreed between the dentist and the patient, giving due regard to NICE guidelines. Patients had enough time during their appointment and did not feel rushed.

The practice's website, information leaflet and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open. Staff took part in an emergency on-call arrangement with another local practice and patients were directed to the appropriate out of hours service.

Patients who needed an urgent appointment were offered one in a timely manner. When the practice was unable to offer an urgent appointment, they worked with partner organisations to support urgent access for patients. Patients with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice responded to concerns and complaints appropriately. Staff discussed outcomes to share learning and improve the service.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

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

Leadership capacity and capability

The practice provider demonstrated a transparent and open culture in relation to people's safety.

There was emphasis on people's safety and continually striving to improve.

We saw the practice had effective processes to support and develop staff with additional roles and responsibilities.

Culture

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

Staff discussed their training needs during annual appraisals, or during clinical supervision. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development.

The practice had arrangements to ensure staff training was reviewed at the required intervals.

Governance and management

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

The practice had a governance system which included policies, protocols and procedures that were accessible to all members of staff and were reviewed on a regular basis.

We saw there were clear procedures for managing risks, issues and performance.

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

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

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

Staff gathered feedback from patients and demonstrated a commitment to acting on feedback.

Feedback from staff was obtained through meetings and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on where appropriate.

Continuous improvement

The practice had systems and processes for learning and quality assurance. These included audits of patient care records, disability access, radiographs, and infection prevention and control. Staff kept records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.