

Walker-Finch Limited

Smiles in Tandem

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 21 November 2022 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 adviser.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we ask five key 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 practice appeared to be visibly clean and well-maintained.
- The provider had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies.
- Appropriate emergency equipment and medicines were available. The disposing of out-of-date stock needed review.
- The provider had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff, we noted that a lone working risk assessment needed to be in place.

Summary of findings

- 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.
- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- 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 had information governance arrangements.

Background

Smiles in Tandem is on the outskirts of Huddersfield and provides NHS and private dental care for adults and children.

There is level access to the practice with a ground floor surgery and disabled bathroom on the ground floor. The practice has its own car parking at the rear of the building and local transport routes are nearby.

The dental team includes 3 dentists, 1 dental hygienist, 1 dental therapist, 4 dental nurses and a practice manager. The practice has 3 treatment rooms.

During the inspection we spoke with the owner (principal dentist) the practice manager and 2 nurses. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and twice a month on a Tuesday until 7pm.

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

- Improve the practice's protocols for medicines management and ensure all medicines are stored and disposed of safely and securely.
- Improve the process for tracking and monitoring the use of NHS prescription pads in the practice.
- Implement a lone working policy for staff who work at the practice out of normal working hours.
- Ensure that the hand-held X-ray equipment is securely stored.

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

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

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

We saw the practice was visibly clean and there was an effective cleaning schedule to ensure the practice was kept clean.

The provider had a recruitment policy and procedure in place and checks were done on all staff before they commenced employment. However, not all clinical staff had an enhanced DBS check in line with current guidance. The provider assured us that this was an oversight and would be attended to immediately.

We noted a risk assessment was not in place for members of staff who worked alone out of normal working hours.

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

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

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements and the management of fire safety was effective.

The practice had arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment and we saw the required radiation protection information was available. However, we noted that the handheld X-ray machine was stored within the treatment room, not securely. The provider assured us the equipment would now be stored safely in a lockable cupboard.

Risks to patients

The provider had implemented systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety. This included sharps safety and sepsis awareness.

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 on site 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

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

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

Are services safe?

We found out of date medicines were stored near to current in date medicine. We discussed with the provider that responsible and safe disposal was required.

We confirmed that NHS prescription pads were stored securely, but the introduction of a monitoring system was needed to ensure all prescriptions can be accounted for.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The practice had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating 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.

We saw the provision of dental implants was in accordance with national guidance.

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.

Staff 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 dental care records in line with recognised guidance.

We saw evidence the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits every six months.

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 treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

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

We saw staff treated patients, respectfully, kindly and were friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

Information was displayed for patients and suggestions or concerns were encouraged. The provider conducted patient satisfaction surveys.

Privacy and dignity

Staff respected and promoted patients' privacy and dignity.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. The layout of reception and waiting areas provided some privacy when reception staff were dealing with patients. If a patient asked for more privacy, the practice would respond appropriately. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave patients' personal information where other patients might see it.

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about their care.

Staff gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment. We saw evidence that staff discussed options for treatment with the patients. The principal dentist described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options.

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

The dentist described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included for example photographs, computer images, 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. It took account of patient needs and preferences.

Staff were clear about the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care.

The practice currently had some patients for whom they needed to make adjustments to enable them to receive treatment.

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

Timely access to services

Patients could access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs.

The practice displayed its opening hours both at the practice and on their website

The practice had an appointment system to respond to patients' needs. Patients who requested an urgent appointment were offered an appointment the same day.

The practice's website and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

Staff told us the provider took complaints and concerns seriously and responded to them appropriately to improve the quality of care.

The provider had a policy providing guidance to staff about how to handle a complaint. The complaints process was displayed in the patient's information leaflet and on the web site.

The provider aimed to settle complaints in-house and invited patients to speak with them in person to discuss these. Information was available about organisations patients could contact if not satisfied with the way their concerns had been dealt with.

We discussed comments and compliments the practice received in the last 12 months. These showed the practice responded in a timely way to patients and where appropriate discussed outcomes with staff 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 demonstrated a transparent and open culture in relation to people's safety.

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

Culture

Staff discussed their training needs during one to one meetings. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development. The practice had arrangements to ensure staff training was up-to-date and reviewed at the required intervals.

Governance and management

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

The practice 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.

Appropriate and accurate information

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

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

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

The practice gathered feedback from staff 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.

Continuous improvement and innovation

The practice had robust systems and processes for learning and improvement. These included comprehensive and detailed audits of several areas including, oral cancer, patient satisfaction, dental care records, disability access, and radiography. Staff kept detailed records of the results of these audits and these were shared with the staff team for additional learning and improvements.