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The Witterings Dental Practice

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 14 March 2019 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.

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

The Witterings Dental Practice is in East Wittering, West Sussex and provides NHS and private treatment to patients of all ages.

Summary of findings

The practice is accessible via a ramp for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. Parking spaces for blue badge holders are available close to the practice.

The dental team includes one principal dentist, one associate dentist, a visiting prosthodontist, one dental hygiene therapist, two dental nurses, one receptionist and a practice manager. The practice has two treatment rooms.

The practice is owned by an individual who is the principal dentist there. They have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations about how the practice is run.

We collected feedback about the practice from 25 patients.

During the inspection we spoke with the principal dentist, the associate dentist, one dental nurse 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 to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm

Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared clean and well maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.

- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk.
- The provider had suitable safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children.
- The practice had thorough staff recruitment procedures.
- 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 were providing preventive care and supporting patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
- The practice had effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported; and worked well as a team.
- The practice asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided.
- The practice staff dealt with complaints positively and efficiently.
- The practice staff had suitable information governance arrangements.

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.

Staff were qualified for their roles and the practice completed essential recruitment checks.

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 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 and hygienists assessed patients' needs and provided care and treatment in line with recognised guidance. Patients described the treatment they received as always excellent, gentle and professional. They said that treatment was a positive experience. 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 very efficient and helpful and that they enjoyed attending the practice.

They said that they were always given full explanations of treatment and options available. Patients commented that they felt listened to and the whole practice team 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



Summary of findings

Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

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

Staff considered patients' different needs. This included providing facilities for patients with a disability and families with children. The practice had access to interpreter service.

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

No action



Are services well-led?

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

The practice had thorough and effective 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. Staff understood their roles and responsibilities and felt supported and appreciated.

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

The provider 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

Safety systems and processes, including staff recruitment, equipment & premises and radiography (X-rays)

The practice 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 practice had safeguarding policies and procedures to provide staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. We saw evidence that staff received safeguarding training. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns, including notification to the CQC.

The practice had a system to highlight vulnerable patients on records e.g. adults where there were safeguarding concerns, people with a learning disability or a mental health condition, or who require other support such as with mobility or communication.

The practice had a whistleblowing policy. Staff told us they felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of retribution.

The dentists used dental rubber dams when providing root canal treatment in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society.

The practice had a business continuity plan describing how the practice would deal with events that could disrupt the normal running of the practice.

The practice had a staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff and had checks in place for agency staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at six staff recruitment records. These showed that the practice followed their recruitment procedure.

We noted that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and had professional indemnity cover.

The practice ensured that facilities and equipment were safe and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including electrical and gas appliances.

Improvements were underway to the records to show that fire detection equipment, such as smoke detectors were regularly tested and firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers, were regularly serviced.

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

We saw evidence that the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits every year following current guidance and legislation.

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

The practice had a Cone beam computed tomography machine. Staff had received training and appropriate safeguards were in place for patients and staff.

Risks to patients

There were 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 practice had current employer's liability insurance.

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. The staff followed 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 the vaccination to protect them against the Hepatitis B virus, and that the effectiveness of the vaccination was checked.

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

Emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in recognised guidance. Staff kept records of their checks of these to make sure these were available, within their expiry date, and in working order.

Are services safe?

A dental nurse worked with the dentists when they treated patients, in line with GDC Standards for the Dental Team. A dental nurse was available to provide chairside support to the dental hygiene therapist when required and also assisted with the decontamination of instruments.

The provider had suitable risk assessments to minimise the risk that can be caused from substances that are hazardous to health and we saw that these were updated regularly.

The practice occasionally used agency staff. We noted that these staff received an induction to ensure that they were familiar with the practice's procedures.

The practice 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 (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health and Social Care. Staff completed infection prevention and control training and received updates as required.

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

The practice had in place systems and protocols to ensure that any dental laboratory work was disinfected prior to being sent to a dental laboratory and before treatment was completed.

The practice had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems, in line with a risk assessment. All recommendations had been actioned and records of water testing and dental unit water line management were in place.

We saw cleaning schedules for the premises. The practice was visibly clean when we inspected.

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

The practice carried out infection prevention and control audits twice a year. The latest audit showed the practice was meeting the required standards.

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 dentists how information to deliver safe care and treatment was handled and recorded. We looked at a sample of dental care records to confirm our findings and noted that individual records were clearly typed and managed in a way that kept patients safe. Dental care records we saw were accurate, complete, and legible and were kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) protection requirements.

Patient referrals to other service providers contained specific information which allowed appropriate and timely referrals in line with practice protocols and current guidance.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

The practice stored and kept records of NHS and private prescriptions as described in current guidance. Improvements were underway to ensure that a log of prescriptions was maintained.

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

Track record on safety and lessons learned and improvements

There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues; these were updated regularly. There were effective systems for monitoring the risk of safety incidents and reviewing when things went wrong.

In the previous 12 months there had been no safety incidents. We were told that any incident or near miss would be thoroughly recorded and discussed to learn and improve.

There was a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts. The practice 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.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep dental professionals up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw that the dentists assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

The practice had access to an intra-oral camera to enhance the delivery of care.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

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

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 children and adults based on an assessment of the risk of tooth decay.

The dentists told us that where applicable they discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and diet with patients during appointments. The practice had a selection of dental products for sale and provided health promotion leaflets to help patients with their oral health.

The dentists described to us the procedures they used to improve the outcome of periodontal treatment. This involved preventative advice, taking plaque and gum bleeding scores and detailed charts of the patient's gum condition.

Patients with more severe gum disease were recalled at more frequent intervals for review and to reinforce home care preventative advice.

Additionally, the practice visited local schools and scout groups to deliver oral health education sessions. These sessions were aimed to encourage children to have confidence in visiting the dentist and provided a fun, informative and interactive way of raising awareness of the importance of oral health in children including raising awareness of sugar consumption. Children also received 'goody bags' with toothbrushes and timers.

Consent to care and treatment

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

The practice team understood the importance of obtaining and recording patients' consent to treatment. 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.

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 may 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 can consent for themselves. The 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.

We saw the practice audited patients' dental care records on an annual basis to check that all necessary information was recorded.

Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles. Staff new to the practice had a period of induction based on a structured and comprehensive induction programme. We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

Staff discussed their training needs at annual appraisals, one to one meetings and during clinical supervision. We saw evidence of completed appraisals and how the practice addressed the training requirements of staff.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

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 if they needed treatment the practice did not provide.

The practice had systems and processes to identify, manage, follow up and where required refer patients for specialist care when presenting with dental infections.

The practice also had systems and processes for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two week wait arrangements. This was initiated by NICE in 2005 to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist.

The practice monitored all referrals on a daily basis to make sure they were dealt with promptly.

Are services caring?

Our findings

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. Patients commented positively that staff were caring, considerate and made them feel relaxed. We saw that staff treated patients respectfully and were kind towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

The practice information folder contained relevant information such as on fees and complaints procedures. Magazines and information leaflets on oral health were available for patients to read.

Privacy and dignity

The practice respected and promoted patients' privacy and dignity. Patients commented that their privacy and dignity were respected at all times.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. The layout of reception and the patient waiting area provided limited privacy when reception staff were dealing with patients. Staff told us that if a patient asked for more privacy they would provide this. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave patients' personal information where other patients might see it.

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

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

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

Staff were aware of the requirements under the equality act. Improvements were underway to review the Accessible Information Standards (a requirement to make sure that patients and carers can access and understand the information they are given).

Staff communicated with patients in a way that they could understand and told us that they would review the format of information in order to meet patient's specific needs. Practice information was available in large print. The practice had access to language interpreter services.

The practice gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices. The dentists described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included, for example, pictures, videos, models and radiograph images. The intra-oral camera enabled photographs to be taken of the tooth being examined or treated and shown to the patient/relative to help them better understand the diagnosis and treatment.

Patients confirmed that staff listened to them and discussed options for treatment with them in a clear and accessible way.

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

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice took account of patients' needs and preferences in organising and delivering services. Patients described high levels of satisfaction with the responsive service provided by the practice.

A disability access audit had been completed and an action plan formulated to continually improve access for patients. The practice had made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. This included providing dental chairs with a knee break to provide more space around the dental chair for wheelchairs or patients with mobility aids.

Staff told us that the practice worked flexibly and made adjustments to enable patients to have their needs accommodated. For example, patients with complex needs were given additional time in appointments.

Staff were committed in ensuring that patients visiting the practice felt comfortable, respected and received a personalised service. Staff knew their patients well and were clear on the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care. For example, staff at the practice recognised when nervous patients needed additional emotional support and would spend time talking to patients in the waiting area to provide distraction and reassurance.

Staff told us that some patients were telephoned prior to their appointments to make sure they could get to the practice, and following complex or lengthy treatments to review their wellbeing.

Timely access to services

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

Staff told us that patients who requested an urgent appointment were always 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.

The practice displayed its opening hours in the premises, and included it on their website.

The practice's answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open. The dentists at the practice took part in an emergency on-call arrangement with some other local practices.

Patients confirmed they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice manager was responsible for dealing with complaints.

The practice manager told us that they would aim to settle complaints in-house and invite patients to speak with them in person to discuss these. 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.

The practice had a complaints policy providing guidance to staff on how to handle a complaint. The practice displayed its complaints policy in the patient waiting area. This explained how patients could make a complaint and contained information about organisations patients could contact if not satisfied with the way the practice dealt with their concerns.

We looked at comments, compliments and complaints the practice received within the previous 12 months.

These showed the practice responded to concerns appropriately and discussed outcomes with staff to share learning and improve the service.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Leadership capacity and capability

The principal dentist and practice manager had the experience, capacity and skills to lead on the delivery of high-quality, sustainable care and worked together with the whole staff team to deliver the practice strategy.

All staff worked closely to prioritise the quality of future services and address risks to it.

Staff spoke positively about leadership within the practice and told us that the principal dentist and practice manager were visible and approachable.

Vision and strategy

The practice vision was to provide patients with a personalised service which supported high-quality and compassionate dentistry.

Culture

The culture of the practice focused on the needs of patients. Staff shared and demonstrated a common set of values to ensure that dental services provided by the practice focused on providing an equitable, individually tailored approach.

Staff stated that they felt respected, supported and valued. They told us that they were able to raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed. The practice was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Duty of Candour.

Governance and management

The principal dentist had overall responsibility for the management and clinical leadership at the practice. The practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the service. All staff understood their roles and responsibilities and there were clear systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

The practice had an effective and organised 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.

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

Appropriate and accurate information

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

Systems and processes supported the confidentiality of people using the service.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

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

The practice subscribed to a service whereby patients were given satisfaction questionnaires to complete and home and sent to a company freepost to analyse the results. Additionally, on line reviews and verbal comments were used to collect feedback. We saw several examples of where the practice had acted on the feedback of patients to make improvements to the services offered. For example, the practice had refurbished the premises to provide a patient toilet.

The practice had effective systems to support open and transparent communication within the practice. Staff felt involved in the running of the practice.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings, informal discussions and annual appraisals. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on. For example, staff were involved in the redesign of the decontamination room to improve ease of use.

Continuous improvement and innovation

There were systems and processes for learning and encouraging improvements within the practice. These included audits of infection prevention and control, radiographs, hand hygiene and dental care records. They had clear records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.

The principal dentist and practice manager showed a strong commitment to learning and improvement and

Are services well-led?

strongly valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff. Staff were encouraged to develop their skills and explore areas of interest. Staff told us they felt motivated to achieve within their roles.

The whole staff team had annual appraisals with the exception of the dentists who had personal development plans in place. 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 'highly recommended' training as per General Dental Council professional standards. This included undertaking medical emergencies and basic life support training annually.

The General Dental Council also requires clinical staff to complete continuing professional development. Staff told us the practice provided support and encouragement for them to do so.