

SDS Dental Ltd

Smallthorne Family Dental Practice

Inspection Report

85-87 Ford Green Road
Smallthorne
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 1NT
Tel: 01782 837819

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Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 30 July 2015 to ask the practice the following key questions; Are services safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led?

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 not providing well-led care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Background

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 30 July 2015 at Smallthorne Family Dental Practice.

The practice provides dental care and treatment to registered patients from Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm. At the time of the inspection the practice had around 15,000 registered patients the majority of whom are NHS funded. The practice has seven dentists working a variety of clinical sessions over a week. The practice manager is one of two qualified dental nurses, there are also three trainee dental nurses employed, all undergoing recognised training leading to professional registration. A receptionist and business manager assist in the day to day running of the practice.

The principal dentist is the registered provider. A registered provider is registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Registered providers have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the practice is run.

Sixteen patients provided feedback about the practice. They were all positive about access to appointments, their care and treatment and made complimentary remarks about their overall experience of the practice.

Summary of findings

Our key findings were:

- Patients told us that their care and treatment was explained and they felt involved in decisions about their treatment.
- The appointments system met the needs of patients.
- The practice had effective infection control procedures.
- Although the practice managed most risks robustly. We saw the way the practice investigated and recorded incidents or near misses was not comprehensive.
- Patients received clear explanations and written information about their proposed treatment, costs, benefits and risks and were involved in making decisions about them.
- The practice sought feedback from staff and patients about the services they provided.

We identified regulations that were not being met and the provider must:

- Ensure that incidents that may affect the health and safety of people using the service are thoroughly recorded and investigated. Action should be taken to monitor and minimise further occurrences.

You can see full details of the regulations not being met at the end of this report.

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

- Review the decision not to provide staff with recognised training in safeguarding children to the level suggested in the intercollegiate guidance by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health on safeguarding children and young people (March 2014).
- Provide practice staff with immediate access to an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) as recommended in The Resuscitation Council (UK) Quality standards for cardiopulmonary resuscitation practice and training.

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 a policy for recording significant events. We reviewed records that indicated significant events had occurred although they had not been recorded or investigated as per the practice policy.

Staff knew their individual responsibilities for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, although staff had not received recognised training in safeguarding children as suggested in nationally recognised guidance.

Infection prevention and control procedures were in place and staff were knowledgeable on good working practice. The practice had trained staff and had emergency procedures in place for emergencies such as fire and sudden illness, although the practice did not have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) available as recommended by the Resuscitation Council UK.

Risks from X-ray and other equipment were mitigated by operating procedures and regular servicing and maintenance of equipment. There were sufficient quantities of equipment available for use.

Are services effective?

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

Patients received a full assessment of their oral health needs including the taking of a full medical history at each consultation. Records showed that treatments had been relevant to the symptoms or findings, treatment options were explained and that adequate follow up had been arranged.

Patients who used the practice had been given clear information on their treatment. We saw that information to support patients to understand proposed treatments and actions had been explained and recorded.

Staff received training appropriate to their roles. Staff were supported through training, appraisals and continuous professional development. Patients were referred to other services in a timely manner.

Are services caring?

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

Patients were treated with kindness, dignity, respect and compassion whilst under the care of the practice. Patients who used the practice had been given clear information on their treatment including cost. Issues of urgent dental need and those in pain were responded to in a timely manner.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

Services were planned and delivered to meet the needs of patients. Patients told us that the practice had good access to appointments at times convenient to them. Facilities within the practice were sufficient and well maintained. The practice sought the views of patients continuously.

Patients with poor mobility had been accommodated by modification to the building including automatic opening doors, disabled access toilets and treatment facilities on the ground level.

The practice operated a publicised complaints system and responded appropriately if complaints were raised.

Summary of findings

Are services well-led?

We found that this practice was not providing well-led care in accordance with the relevant regulations. We have told the provider to take action (see full details of this action in the Requirement Notices at the end of this report).

Governance was not always well managed; we saw examples of specific risks that had not been mitigated.

The practice had a leadership structure and staff felt well supported by the principal dentist and practice manager. Staff met regularly and were supported to maintain and enhance their professional development and skills. Patients had the opportunity to give feedback on their experience

Smallthorne Family Dental Practice

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

The inspection took place on 30 July 2015. It was led by a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspector who was accompanied by a dentist specialist advisor.

We informed the NHS England Area Team and Healthwatch that we were inspecting the practice; however we did not receive any information of concern from them.

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 therefore formed the framework for the areas we looked at during the inspection. Before the inspection we asked the practice to send us information to assist us in our checks. This included a summary of complaints from the previous year, details of staff; their qualifications and proof of professional registration. We also reviewed the information we held about the practice and had no areas of concern.

On the day of our inspection the principal dentist who was also the registered manager was not available as they were on annual leave and not in the country.

During the inspection we spoke with a dentist, the practice manager, a dental nurse, a trainee dental nurse and the practice business manager. We received feedback from 16 patients who shared their experiences of the care and treatment provided at the practice.

Are services safe?

Our findings

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

The practice had a policy and held reporting forms for recording significant events. Significant events can be described as occurrences that can have a positive or negative outcome for patients. Learning from significant events may help to prevent negative ones reoccurring and encourage the replication of ones that had positive outcomes. The practice had not recorded any significant events. We saw other records in the form of an accident recording book which contained occurrences that would be classed as significant events. For example, one incident involving a patient had led to a reported injury. The practice had recorded this in the accident reporting book, although no recorded steps had been taken to establish the cause of the accident and if any action was required to minimise the risk of the accident occurring again. Staff were aware of their individual responsibility to report incidents, accidents and near-misses. They told us this was normally verbally and then issues were discussed within the team.

Alerts for potential problems with medicines or equipment were received by the principal dentist and disseminated to relevant staff.

The practice had up to date risk assessments in place for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 2002. COSHH requires employers to eliminate or reduce exposure to known hazardous substances in a practical way.

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

We reviewed staff training files and saw that staff had not received training in safeguarding children to the level suggested in the intercollegiate guidance by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health on safeguarding children and young people, March 2014. The guidance suggests that dentists and dental care professionals should have level two training as a minimum. The practice manager told us safeguarding had been discussed at the most recent practice meeting and training had been cascaded through internal staff training. There were no records available to confirm the content of the training.

We spoke with staff about the actions that would take if they had concerns about a child or vulnerable adult displaying signs of neglect or abuse. Staff were able to describe appropriate actions they would take and referred to the contact details for local safeguarding agencies that were displayed within the treatment and staff areas of the practice.

We asked how the practice treated the use of instruments which were used during root canal treatment. A dentist explained that these instruments were single use only. They also explained that root canal treatment was carried out using a rubber dam. A rubber dam is a thin sheet of rubber used by dentists to isolate the tooth being treated and to protect patients from inhaling or swallowing debris or small instruments used during root canal work. Patients could be assured that the practice followed appropriate guidance by the British Endodontic Society in relation to the use of the rubber dam.

Medical emergencies

Training records showed that staff had received annual basic life support training.

The practice did not have an automated external defibrillator (AED). An AED provides an electric shock to stabilise a life threatening heart rhythm. The Resuscitation Council (UK) Quality standards for cardiopulmonary resuscitation practice and training state that all clinical dental areas should have immediate access to an AED. The practice manager told us the decision to have a defibrillator within the practice would be made by the principal dentist who was not available on the day of our inspection. They were not aware if there was an AED available locally and told us that ambulance response times were generally good. The non-formal arrangements in place at the practice may increase the time taken to provide a shock to stabilise a life threatening heart rhythm. The arrangements also did not take account of if an ambulance response was delayed. The practice had all other emergency equipment as suggested within the Resuscitation Council (UK) guidance including oxygen and suction (to clear an airway).

Emergency medicines to treat conditions such as anaphylaxis (allergic reaction) and hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar) were stored within a secure area of the practice. The medicines were regularly checked and staff we spoke with knew their location.

Are services safe?

Staff recruitment

Records we looked at contained evidence that appropriate recruitment checks had been undertaken prior to a staff member commencing employment. For example proof of identification, references, qualifications and professional registration.

The practice had undertaken criminal records checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on all staff. (DBS checks identify whether a person has a criminal record or is on an official list of people barred from working in roles where they may have contact with children or adults who may be vulnerable). The practice manager told us this was due to a number of staff having dual roles in both clinical and administrative settings.

Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

The practice had a health and safety policy and had identified members of staff with responsibility for health and safety. A number of risk assessments had been carried out including fire safety and infection control.

The practice had a business continuity plan in place to deal with events that may disrupt the operation of services. The plan contained details of actions to take in the event of equipment failure, issues with premises or staffing difficulties.

All staff had been trained in fire safety and the practice carried out regular testing of firefighting equipment and warning systems.

Infection control

Staff were aware of the Department of Health issued guidance called Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM01-05). The document gives detailed guidance to minimise the risks of the transmission of infection.

The practice had a dedicated decontamination room for cleaning and sterilisation of instruments. A dental nurse showed us the end to end process from receiving used instruments through cleaning, inspection, sterilisation, packaging and storage of instruments. We saw that the process in use was in line with the essential requirements of HTM01-05 and promoted an organised system to ensure cleaned instruments did not become contaminated.

A number of checks were carried out on the equipment used for decontaminating and sterilising instruments. For example, daily checks to ensure that the equipment used

for sterilising instruments had reached the required time, steam and temperature levels to ensure an instrument was sterilised were performed. The practice held records of all of the checks performed. We also saw that all equipment used in the decontamination process had been tested and serviced at regular intervals.

The practice carried out infection control audits at three monthly intervals to ensure that they were complying with infection prevention control guidance.

Staff showed us the processes in place for flushing water lines to help minimise the risk of legionella. Legionella is a bacterium which can contaminate water systems in buildings. The practice had completed a risk assessment for the management, testing and investigation of legionella.

The practice separate and stored waste appropriately. For example, clinical and domestic waste were separated and stored in line with requirements.

There were appropriate hand washing facilities for staff and we saw that suitable amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, aprons and eye shields were available for staff to use.

Equipment and medicines

We saw suitable records of calibration, testing, servicing and inspection of equipment within the practice. Staff were able to demonstrate the safe and effective use of equipment in operation including X-ray, instrument cleaning and sterilising machines.

Medicines used in dental procedures on site were stored in accordance with manufacturers' guidelines. All of the medicines we checked were in date, correctly stored and their use was recorded and audited. Blank prescription forms were stored securely.

The number of sterilised instruments available for use was sufficient for patients and sterilised instruments were packaged, dated and stored in accordance with guidance in HTM01-05.

Radiography (X-rays)

The practice had performed risk assessments and had procedures in place to minimise the risk of harm from radiation to staff, visitors and patients. All information had been collated in a radiation protection file. The radiation

Are services safe?

protection file met legislative requirements including the details of a radiation protection supervisor and a copy of the local rules (used to ensure working practices comply with legislative requirements).

Regular audits were undertaken to ensure that X-rays were clinically necessary also that when an X-ray had been taken the quality of the image was acceptable and could be used in diagnosis and development of a treatment plan.

We saw all staff had received training in operating safely in the X-ray area and that those who physically used the equipment had been appropriately trained.

All equipment had been maintained and serviced in line with manufacturer's instructions to ensure it was fit for purpose.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The practice stored detailed information about the assessment, diagnosis, treatment and advice of dental healthcare professionals provided to patients in computerised health records. We reviewed 12 dental care records covering all dentists working at the practice and spanning the patient need of both planned and emergency dental care provision. We found that an up to date medical history had been taken on each occasion.

Records showed comprehensive assessment of the periodontal tissues had been undertaken and was recorded using the basic periodontal examination (BPE) screening tool. (BPE is a simple and rapid screening tool used by dentists to indicate the level of treatment need in relation to a patient's gums).

We saw that the dentists used nationally recognised guidelines to base treatments and develop longer term plans for managing oral health. Records showed that treatments had been relevant to the symptoms or findings, treatment options were explained and that adequate follow up had been arranged.

Health promotion & prevention

Up to date medical histories were taken on each visit and these were recorded in patient records. Assessments about smoking, alcohol and sugar intake were made. Where appropriate staff promoted preventative measures as part of ongoing oral health. This included advice on reducing sugar intake, regular and effective teeth brushing and smoking cessation advice.

The practice provided fluoride application varnish to all children at intervals no less than twice yearly. Fluoride varnish provides extra protection against tooth decay when used in addition to brushing. We saw evidence that children and their parents/carers had been given advice on the measures to take to prevent deterioration in their oral health.

Staff at the practice were aware of, and followed, evidence based guidance contained in a document issued by Public Health England called Delivering better oral health. The document is an evidenced based toolkit to support dental teams to improve patient's oral and general health.

Staffing

Staff at the practice had the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and treatment. All staff had completed annual training in basic life support, infection control and fire safety. Staff had not undertaken safeguarding training to the level as suggested in the intercollegiate guidance by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health on safeguarding children and young people, March 2014. The guidance suggests that dentists and dental care professionals should have level two training as a minimum. Staff had undertaken learning by attending peer learning although this was not documented. The staff we spoke with were able to describe what they would do if they had concerns about the safety of a child.

The staff we spoke with were positive about the support they received after the identification of training that may equip them with extended skills or learning. For example, a qualified dental nurse told us they had been supported and funded to undertake further training in dental radiography.

The practice had three trainee dental nurses. All were enrolled on approved training courses at a local further educational establishment. The practice manager told us that recruiting qualified dental nurses had been challenging. The trainee we spoke with was positive about the support and mentorship they had received. They also displayed a thorough understanding of procedures in place at the practice.

All staff were up to date with their continuing professional development (CPD) and felt supported to meet the requirements of their professional registration. CPD is a compulsory requirement of registration with the General Dental Council (GDC).

Working with other services

The practice had clear guidelines in place for referring patients to specialist colleagues. We saw examples of occasions when patients were referred to other professionals including;

- Periodontists (A dentist who specialises in the treatment of gum disease)
- Oral surgery/medicine
- Sedation clinics for tooth removal

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Referrals were hand written and their progress had been tracked. Referral letters contained appropriate information about clinical presentation and findings. A comprehensive medical history was also documented.

Consent to care and treatment

Patients who used the practice had been given clear information on their treatment. We saw that information to support patients to understand proposed treatments and actions had been explained. Patients who we had contact with told us the practice team gave clear information and that their consent was sought before performing interventions.

Treatment costs were clearly displayed within the practice waiting areas. Information about the cost of treatment was also clearly itemised in patients' records.

The staff we spoke with were able to explain the key components of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and other relevant legislation. They gave examples of when patients may require additional support to obtain consent. For example, when a patient was unable to communicate their decision; carers or parents would be involved to arrive at a best interests decision. We saw that consent was documented in all of the records we reviewed.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion & empathy

Patients told us they were treated with dignity and respect at all times whilst receiving care and treatment at the practice.

The practice reception was situated in the main waiting area, with further waiting areas situated upstairs. Patients told us they felt that the practice maintained confidentiality. There were separate areas where patients could discuss confidential issues in private if so desired.

Appointment length was booked with consideration for the proposed examination or treatment. Staff told us this helped to ensure patients did not feel rushed. Patients told us that they did not feel rushed and that staff were reassuring and empathetic when dealing with them. They also told us that when they had urgent needs such as high levels of pain or discomfort they had been dealt with swiftly and with consideration.

The staff we spoke with understood the need for treating patients as individuals. For example, modifying their communication methods and body posture when dealing with children.

We received individual Care Quality Commission (CQC) cards from patients that indicated staff had responded appropriately when patients were distressed

Staff displayed values in keeping with respecting the diversity, and human rights, of patients registered at the practice.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The practice displayed information in the waiting areas to clearly explain the costs of treatment for both NHS and private patients. Staff told us they explained the treatment and cost with each patient. We saw that conversations about treatment options and cost were clearly recorded in patients' records.

Patients told us they felt that the members of the dental team listened to them and they felt involved in decisions about their care and treatment.

Options regarding treatment and cost had been clearly explained and were documented in care records.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

Patients were able to access information on services provided within a practice booklet and via posters displayed within the practice. The services included preventative advice and treatment and routine restorative dental care. If patients required services that were not provided at the practice, established referral pathways existed to ensure patients' care and treatment needs were met.

Appointments were offered with dentists and allied dental health professionals throughout the working week. Staff told us that arrangements were in place to ensure patients who needed to be seen urgently were done so and aimed for urgent issues to be dealt with within 24 hours. The feedback from patients about the availability of appointments was positive for both urgent and routine appointments.

On the day of our inspection we saw that patients and visitors were dealt by staff with in a professional and caring manner and received treatment and assessment in a timely way.

Tackling inequity and promoting equality

The practice had a policy for supporting staff to uphold the provision of providing services that were inclusive for all and respected diversity. Staff told us that discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion or belief were avoided when making care and treatment decisions.

The practice building had been adapted to ensure that it was suitable for those who had impaired mobility. This included the installation of automatic opening doors and a downstairs disabled access toilet. Doorways and corridors

were wide enough to accommodate those who used wheelchairs or prams. The treatment rooms were on different levels within the practice. Staff told us patients with poor mobility were seen in one of the two downstairs treatment rooms to avoid them using the stairs.

Access to the service

The practice displayed its opening hours and access arrangements in the practice booklet, on the NHS Choices website and on posters throughout the waiting areas.

The practice was open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm, the practice closed between 12:30pm and 1:30pm. During periods of closure, instructions on how to access out-of-hours dental care were provided by a telephone answering machine and within practice written information sources.

Patients told us that they were able to access appointments and advice at times that were convenient to them and they were seen without delay in urgent circumstances.

Concerns & complaints

The practice had a policy for handling complaints for staff with clear guidance about the process for dealing with complaints appropriately. All of the staff we spoke with were able to describe the practice complaints procedure. Information for patients on how to make a complaint and the process on handling complaints was available for patients within the practice booklet and in waiting areas.

We looked at how the practice handled complaints and concerns raised. We reviewed three complaints received within the previous year. All three complaints had been responded to within an acceptable timescale and had received an investigation and all had been answered. Details on how to escalate the complaint had also been provided.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

Governance was not always well managed, we saw examples of specific risks that had not been mitigated;

- The practice was not recording or investigating incidents such as significant events as they should. We saw examples of incidents that required further investigation to establish if action was required to minimise the risk of them happening again.
- An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) was not available for immediate use, should a patient, member of staff or visitor require it. The decision to not have an AED available was not risk assessed and not in line with guidance from The Resuscitation Council (UK).

On the day of our inspection the principal dentist who was also the registered manager was not available as they were on annual leave and not in the country. Staff told us that the principal dentist took an active lead in the day to day running of the practice. The practice also employed a full time practice manager who was also an experienced and qualified dental nurse to ensure the maintenance of service and operations. The practice manager demonstrated they had a thorough understanding of the day to day operation of the practice.

We saw that the practice operated a number of audits to identify issues where quality and safety may be compromised. Audits included completeness and accuracy of clinical records, infection prevention and the quality of radiological images. The audits had all been reviewed and any area that required changes to be made had been actioned. On review of the governance systems we saw that the practice system for recording significant events, which included near-misses and incidents was not used

The practice had a schedule of planned maintenance and inspection of all equipment which was well controlled and up to date. The practice also had a number of policies and procedures to provide guidance to staff. All of these policies had been reviewed regularly and the staff we spoke with knew where to locate them.

Leadership, openness and transparency

Staff told us that they felt the practice had an open, honest culture where they felt valued and supported. All staff said that the principal and associate dentists were approachable and they felt comfortable making suggestions and raising any concerns.

The practice manager told us about the arrangements for sharing information with staff. This included both informal lunchtime information sharing and formal practice staff meetings. Minutes of practice meetings were taken to assist in sharing information with members of staff who had been absent and to provide an audit trail of communication.

Learning and improvement

We saw that staff had been provided with the necessary training to help ensure a safe environment within the practice. For example, staff attended annual basic life support training.

Staff told us that they felt well supported to develop within the practice. One dental nurse told us that they had been supported to undertake further training in diagnostic X-ray imaging.

All dentists and nurses who worked at the practice were registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and the practice manager had an effective system for ensuring the registration they held was current and recorded. The GDC registers all dental care professionals to make sure they are appropriately qualified and competent to work in the UK. Staff we spoke with told us they were supported to maintain their continuous professional development (CPD) with the GDC.

The practice employed three apprentice trainee dental nurses who were all enrolled on an approved course with a local educational organisation to gain qualifications that would make them eligible for registration with the GDC. We spoke with one of the trainee dental nurses who told us they had received mentoring, support and regular constructive feedback whilst undergoing their training.

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

The practice undertook regular surveys of patients' satisfaction both internally and by promoting the NHS Friends and Family Test. The results of the NHS Friends and Family Test since introduction in the practice in April 2015 had been positive, with all submissions at least likely to recommend the care and treatment. The most recent

Are services well-led?

results from July 2015 showed that 14 patients stated they would be extremely likely to recommend the care or treatment they had received and three stated they would likely do so. The practice had a suggestions box for patients to provide feedback and staff told us that they welcomed feedback from patients and those close to them.

Staff told us that they felt valued and part of a team. They told us that the practice held regular meetings and they attended learning and professional events outside of the practice as a team. One member of staff described the practice team as a family.

Requirement notices

Action we have told the provider to take

The table below shows the legal requirements that were not being met. The provider must send CQC a report that says what action they are going to take to meet these requirements.

Regulated activity	Regulation
Diagnostic and screening procedures Surgical procedures Treatment of disease, disorder or injury	<p>Regulation 17 HSCA (RA) Regulations 2014 Good governance</p> <p>The registered person had not assessed, monitored and mitigated risks relating to the health, safety and welfare of service users and others.</p> <p>Regulation: 17 (2) (b)</p> <p>The practice did not follow its own policy for investigating and recording significant events, including incidents, accidents and near misses. Occurrences that may affect the safety of patients were not reviewed or thoroughly investigated. The practice had not recorded a significant event despite evidence in the practice accident book detailing they had occurred. There was no automated external defibrillator available (AED) for immediate use in an emergency. The practice had not performed a risk assessment to determine the impact this would have if an emergency situation arose and an AED was not available.</p>