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Treetops Dental Surgery & Norwich Dental Implant Centre

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 16 January 2024 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.

Summary of findings

- 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.
- 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

Treetops Dental Surgery & Norwich Dental Implant Centre is in Norwich and provides NHS and private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

The practice has made reasonable adjustments to support patients with access requirements. The practice is not wheelchair accessible due to the age and status of the building (grade II listed). Patients who require wheelchair access are signposted to a nearby practice which is fully accessible and also offers NHS and private care. Car parking spaces, including dedicated parking for disabled people, are available near the practice in a public car park.

The dental team includes 5 dentists, 2 dental nurses, 3 trainee dental nurses, 2 dental hygienists, 1 practice manager and 3 receptionists. The practice has 5 treatment rooms.

During the inspection we spoke with 3 dentists, 3 dental nurses, 1 dental hygienist, 2 receptionists and the practice manager. We looked at practice policies, procedures and other records to assess how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday to Friday 8.30am until 5.15pm.

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

- Improve the practice's protocols and procedures for the use of X-ray equipment in compliance with The Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 and Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 and taking into account the guidance for Dental Practitioners on the Safe Use of X-ray Equipment, in particular regarding the use of rectangular collimators on intra-oral units.
- Take action to ensure that, where appropriate, audits have documented learning points and the resulting improvements can be demonstrated.

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. However, not all staff were up to date with their training. Following the inspection, we saw that this training had been completed.

The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance. Improvements could be made to ensure adequate airflow is achieved in the main decontamination room as the ventilation system did not appear to be working. The practice told us that an engineer had been arranged and, in the meantime, staff would use the second decontamination room only.

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, including for agency or locum staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at recruitment records for 4 staff members and found that 1 did not contain evidence of conduct in previous employment (references). Therefore, improvements could be made to ensure the procedure was consistently followed, in particular ensuring that evidence of conduct in previous employment (references) are obtained at the point of employment.

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 in January 2022. This had advised that the emergency escape route at the rear of the practice was investigated for safety and accessibility. This had not yet been carried out. Following the inspection, the practice told us that the rear exit was no longer going to be used as a fire escape and the fire evacuation plan and signage had been changed to direct occupants to the front door in the case of an emergency.

The practice had arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment and the required radiation protection information was available. This included cone-beam computed tomography (CBCT). However, only 3 out of 5 intra-oral radiography units had a rectangular collimator attached. A rectangular collimator reduces the effective dose to patients and guidance states these should always be used.

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.

Are services safe?

Staff knew how to respond to a medical emergency and had completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year. Immediate life support training (or basic life support training plus patient assessment, airway management techniques and automated external defibrillator training) was also completed by staff providing treatment to patients under sedation.

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

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 2-week wait arrangements.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The practice had some systems for the safe handling of medicines, and we saw that records of medicines that were dispensed to patients were kept. However, improvements could be made to ensure all antibiotics were accounted so any missing medicines would be easily identified. The practice told us they would implement changes immediately. In addition, improvements could be made to ensure that clinicians followed the relevant guidance for antimicrobial prescribing. We noted that amoxicillin 500mg was prescribed on multiple occasions for 7 or 10 days, or 250mg was prescribed. This was not in line with the 'Antimicrobial Prescribing in Dentistry' guidance published by the College of General Dentistry (CG Dent). Following the inspection, the practice told us that they had reviewed the guidance which will be adhered to in the future.

Antimicrobial prescribing audits were carried out, but there was no discussion of the findings with no actions or areas for improvement. Following the inspection, we saw that the audit findings were evaluated and actions and areas for improvement had been recorded.

Improvements could be made to stock control, as we saw multiple items which had expired for example temporary filling material, a fluoride varnish and some implant fixtures. Following the inspection, the practice told us that a process had been formalised to ensure implant stock is checked and any out of date stock is removed from the surgery.

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.

The practice offered conscious sedation for patients. The practice's systems included checks before and after treatment, emergency equipment requirements, medicines management, sedation equipment checks, and staff availability and training.

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. 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 or adults and children with a learning disability.

We saw evidence the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits. However, improvements could be made to these audits as there was no summary of the results, no discussions and no actions recorded.

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.

The practice was a referral clinic for dental implants and procedures under sedation.

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.

On the day of inspection, we spoke with patients who told us that staff were caring and kind and they were happy with the treatment they had received.

Patients said 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 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 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 hearing loop for patients with access requirements. Staff had carried out a disability access audit. Due to the lack of wheelchair accessibility in the practice, patients who required this adjustment were referred to a nearby practice which was fully accessible.

Timely access to services

The practice displayed its opening hours and provided information on their website.

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

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

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

Systems and processes were embedded, and staff worked together in such a way that the inspection did not highlight any significant issues or omissions.

The information and evidence presented during the inspection process was clear and well documented.

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

Culture

Staff could show how they ensured high-quality sustainable services and demonstrated improvements over time.

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

Staff discussed their training needs during annual appraisals. 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 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 and effective processes 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 and innovation

The practice had systems and processes for learning, quality assurance, continuous improvement and If applicable; innovation. These included audits of patient care records, disability access, radiographs, antimicrobial prescribing and infection prevention and control, however, improvements could be made to ensure all audits resulted in learning and improvements.