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Walthamstow Dental Centre

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 25 May 2017 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

Walthamstow Dental Centre is in Walthamstow High Street in the London Borough of Waltham Forest and provides NHS and private treatment to patients of all ages.

The dental practice is located on the ground and first floor of an adapted residential property and there is level access for people who use wheelchairs and pushchairs. Pay and Display car parking spaces are available nearby.

Summary of findings

The dental team includes the principal dentist and three associate dentists, six dental nurses, two hygienists, a trainee practice manager and two receptionists. The practice has five treatment rooms, three of which are located on the ground floor.

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.

On the day of inspection we collected 18 CQC comment cards filled in by patients and spoke with three other patients. This information gave us a positive view of the practice.

During the inspection we spoke with three dentists, two dental nurses, two receptionists and the trainee practice manager. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open between 8am and 5pm on Mondays to Fridays (excluding Bank Holidays) and between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays by pre-arranged appointment.

Our key findings were:

- The practice was clean and well maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance and these were regularly audited to ensure their effectiveness.
- Staff were trained in basic life support and knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk.
- The practice had suitable safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children.
- The practice had thorough staff recruitment procedures which were followed when employing new staff.
- 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.
- The appointment system met patients' needs including patients who required emergency dental treatment.
- The practice had effective leadership. 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 had systems to deal with complaints positively and efficiently.

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 where these occurred 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 assessed patients' needs and provided care and treatment in line with recognised guidance. Patients described the treatment they received as exceptional and excellent. Patients commented that the dentists took pride in their work. 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 21 people including three patients who we spoke with on the day of the inspection. Patients were positive about all aspects of the service the practice provided. They told us staff were courteous, polite and welcoming and friendly. They said that they were given detailed information about their treatment and aftercare, time to consider their treatment options and said their dentist listened to them.

Patients commented that they made them feel at ease, especially when they were anxious about visiting the dentist and that they were particularly kind and sensitive when treating children.

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 met patients' needs. Patients could get an appointment quickly if in pain and dedicated time was allocated each day to see patients who needed emergency treatment.

Staff considered patients' different needs. This included providing step free access for wheelchair users and families with children. The practice could access to telephone interpreter services and had arrangements to help patients with sight or hearing loss.

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 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. There was a clearly defined management structure and staff felt supported and appreciated.

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

The practice 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

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

The practice had policies and procedures to report, investigate, respond and learn from accidents, incidents and significant events. Staff knew about these and understood their role in the process.

The practice recorded, responded to and discussed all incidents to reduce risk and support future learning.

The practice received national patient safety and medicines alerts from the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA). Relevant alerts were discussed with staff, acted on and stored for future reference. Staff were able to tell us about recent safety alerts which were relevant to dental practices and how they had reviewed and acted on these to help ensure patients and staff safety. There was also a system to alert national agencies of patient safety incidents involving medical devices, medicines and materials used in the dental practice.

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

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. There was a dedicated safeguarding lead to oversee and monitor the practice procedures.

Posters were displayed throughout the dental practice to advise staff and visitors how to report concerns. We saw evidence that staff received safeguarding training. Staff knew about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and how to report concerns. The practice had a whistleblowing policy. Staff told us they felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

We looked at the practice's arrangements for safe dental care and treatment. These included risk assessments which staff reviewed every year or more often in line with relevant guidance and guidelines. The practice followed relevant safety laws when using needles and other sharp dental items. The dentists used rubber dams in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment.

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

Medical emergencies

Staff knew what to do in a medical emergency and completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year. Typical medical emergency scenarios were discussed during periodic training talks to help ensure that staff felt confident should they need to deal with these.

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

Staff recruitment

The practice had a staff recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. This reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at three staff recruitment records. These showed the practice followed their recruitment procedure and that the appropriate checks had been carried out before new staff started work at the practice. Employment references, where applicable and proof of identity were sought as part of the recruitment process and staff underwent an interview to help determine their suitability to work at the practice.

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

Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

The practice's health and safety policies and risk assessments were up to date and reviewed to help manage potential risk. These covered general workplace and specific dental topics. Risks associated with the premises and equipment were assessed and staff were aware of these and the plans to minimise them. There was a fire safety risk assessment and procedures for dealing with an outbreak of fire and the safe evacuation of people from the building.

There were arrangements to protect patients from exposure to substances which may be hazardous to health

Are services safe?

such as cleaning and other materials. Detailed information in relation to chemical and other substances were kept at the practice and details on how to deal with accidental exposure to harmful substances and materials.

The practice had current employer's liability insurance and checked each year that the clinicians' professional indemnity insurance was up to date.

A dental nurse worked with the dentists and dental hygienists when they treated patients.

Infection control

The practice had an infection prevention and control policy and procedures to keep patients safe. They followed guidance in The Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM01-05) published by the Department of Health. Staff completed infection prevention and control training every year.

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

The practice had recently started a process for carrying out infection prevention and control audits twice a year. The findings from these audits were shared with staff to help maintain appropriate staff practices and to identify and improve any areas as required. The latest audit showed the practice was meeting the required standards.

The practice had procedures to reduce the possibility of Legionella or other bacteria developing in the water systems. A legionella risk assessment was in place and

reviewed annually. Any areas for improvement were acted on promptly. There were procedures for flushing and disinfecting dental waterlines, checking hot and cold water temperatures and analysing water samples.

We saw cleaning schedules for the premises. The practice was clean when we inspected and patients confirmed this was usual. Patients told us that the practice was always clean and hygienic.

Equipment and medicines

We saw servicing documentation for the equipment used. Staff carried out checks in line with the manufacturers' recommendations.

The practice had suitable systems for prescribing, dispensing and storing medicines.

The practice stored and kept records of NHS prescriptions as described in current guidance.

Radiography (X-rays)

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

We saw evidence that the dentists justified, graded and reported on the X-rays they took. The practice carried out X-ray audits every year following current guidance and legislation. The results from the most recent audits showed that the quality of X-ray images were in line with guidance and the reason and findings from X-rays were recorded within the patients dental care record.

Clinical staff completed continuous professional development in respect of dental radiography.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

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 and recalled patients for reviews in line with recognised guidance.

We saw that the practice audited patients' dental care records to check that the dentists recorded the necessary information.

Health promotion & prevention

The practice was providing preventative 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 all children based on an assessment of the risk of tooth decay for each child.

The dentists told us they discussed smoking, alcohol consumption and diet with patients during appointments where this was appropriate. Two dental hygienists worked at the practice to provide preventive dental care and advice and to promote oral health. A range of health promotion advice leaflets were to help patients maintain oral health.

Staffing

Staff new to the practice had a period of induction based on a structured programme which included mentoring and support so that they could become familiar with the practice policies and procedures. We confirmed clinical staff completed the continuous professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

Staff told us that they were supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities within the practice. They said that

they had opportunities to discuss their training needs at annual appraisals. We saw evidence of completed appraisals, which included personal development plans and these were used to monitor and support staff development.

Working with other services

Dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care if they needed treatment the practice did not provide. This included 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 maintained a record of and monitored urgent referrals to make sure they were dealt with promptly.

Consent to care and treatment

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 this and said their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment. They told us that their dental treatment was explained in a way that they could understand before they gave their consent to treatment. The practice carried out audits to ensure that patients consent to their dental care and treatment was obtained and recorded appropriately.

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 and the dentists and dental nurses were aware of the need to consider this when treating young people under 16. Staff described how they involved patients' relatives or carers when appropriate and made sure they had enough time to explain treatment options clearly.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion and empathy

Staff we spoke with were aware of their responsibility to respect people's diversity and human rights. The practice had policies and procedures in place around respecting patients and treating them with dignity and compassion.

Patients commented positively that staff were kind, polite and friendly; they said that they were treated with respect and dignity. Patients told us that the receptionists were friendly and welcoming. We saw that staff treated patients sensitively, respectfully, and kindly and were friendly towards patients at the reception desk and over the telephone.

Nervous patients said staff were compassionate and understanding. A number of patients told us that the dentists were particularly kind and sensitive when treating children.

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality. The layout of reception and waiting areas provided privacy when reception staff were dealing with patients. We observed that staff were mindful when speaking with patients at the reception desk and on the telephone. Staff told us that if a patient asked for more

privacy they would take them into another room. The reception computer screens were not visible to patients and staff did not leave personal information where other patients might see it.

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

Information folders were available for patients to read.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The practice gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices. Patients confirmed that their dentist listened to them, did not rush them and discussed options for treatment with them. The dentists described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options. This information was recorded in the patients' dental record.

Patients told us staff were kind and helpful when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

The practice provided patients with information about the range of treatments available at the practice. These included general dentistry and treatments for gum disease and preventive treatments.

Each treatment room had a screen so the dentists could show patients photographs and X-ray images when they discussed treatment options.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

Patients described high levels of satisfaction with the responsive service provided by the practice.

The practice had an efficient appointment system to respond to patients' needs.

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

Staff told us that they currently had some patients for whom they needed to make adjustments to enable them to receive treatment.

Promoting equality

The practice had conducted an assessment and made reasonable adjustments for patients with disabilities. These included step free access and a hearing loop. The patient toilet facilities were situated on the first floor and patients who required adapted facilities were directed to public toilets within the shopping centre opposite the dental practice.

The practice provided some information in different formats and languages to meet individual patients' needs. Staff working at the practice spoke a number of languages including Urdu, Spanish, Russian and Romanian. The practice staff also could access to external telephone interpreter and translation services should these be required.

Access to the service

The practice displayed its opening hours in the premises and in the patient information leaflet.

We confirmed the practice kept waiting times and cancellations to a minimum.

The practice was committed to seeing patients experiencing pain on the same day and kept a number of appointments free for same day appointments. They had a 'sit and wait' system where patients requiring emergency appointments could be seen between 9am and 11am; and between 2pm and 4pm each day.

The information leaflet and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open. Patients confirmed they could make routine and emergency appointments easily and were rarely kept waiting for their appointment.

Concerns & complaints

The practice had a complaints policy providing guidance to staff on how to handle a complaint. The practice also had a patient complaints information leaflet which explained how to make a complaint, how complaints would be dealt with and responded to and how patients could escalate their concerns should they remain dissatisfied. The principal dentist and practice manager shared responsibility for dealing with complaints. 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 manager told us they aimed to settle complaints in-house and invited patients to speak with them in person to discuss these and we saw records from these meetings and the outcomes of these meetings.

We looked at comments, compliments and complaints the practice received within the previous 12 months. These showed that the practice had received no complaints within this time.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

The principal dentist had overall responsibility for the management and clinical leadership of the practice. The practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the service. Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities. Some staff had identified lead roles and oversight for areas including safeguarding, infection control and staff training and the practice had systems to support staff in these roles.

The practice had policies, procedures and risk assessments to support the management of the service and to protect patients and staff. These included arrangements to monitor the quality of the service and make improvements. The outcomes from risk assessments, audits and reviews were shared and action plans implemented to maintain and improve quality and safety within the practice.

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

Leadership, openness and transparency

Staff were aware of the duty of candour requirements to be open, honest and to offer an apology to patients if anything went wrong. This was reflected in the discussions we had with staff and the way in which complaints and any other incidents were dealt with.

Staff told us there was an open, no blame culture at the practice. They said the dentists and the practice manager encouraged them to raise any issues and felt confident they could do this. They knew who to raise any issues with and told us the dentists and the practice manager were approachable, would listen to their concerns and act appropriately. The practice manager discussed compliments and concerns at staff meetings and it was clear the practice worked as a team and dealt with issues professionally.

The practice held regular meetings where staff could raise any concerns and discuss clinical and non-clinical updates. Immediate discussions were arranged to share urgent information.

Learning and improvement

The practice had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included audits of dental care records, X-rays and infection prevention and control.

The dentists, practice manager and all staff who we spoke with showed a commitment to learning and improvement and that they set high standards for treating patients and the general management of the service. Staff told us that the dentists valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff. The whole staff team had annual appraisals of their performance. We saw evidence of completed appraisals in the staff folders. These included staff learning and development needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development.

Staff told us they completed mandatory training, including medical emergencies and basic life support, each year. The General Dental Council requires clinical staff to complete continuous professional development. Staff told us the practice provided support and encouragement for them to do so.

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

The practice used patient's verbal comments and a suggestion box to obtain staff and patients' views about the service. The results from the patient surveys were analysed and shared with staff to help improve patient's experience. The results from patient surveys were also displayed in the patient waiting area.

Patients were encouraged to complete the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT). This is a national programme to allow patients to provide feedback on NHS services they have used. We reviewed the results of these surveys from the previous four months and these showed that 100% of patients who participated were either 'extremely likely' or 'likely' to recommend the dental practice to their family and friends.