

Liberty Dentists Ltd

Liberty Dentists

Inspection Report

65 Redchurch Street
London
E2 7DJ
Tel: 0203 1379965
Website: www.libertydentists.com

Date of inspection visit: 11 December 2019
Date of publication: 08/01/2020

Overall summary

We carried out this announced inspection on 11 December 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 Care Quality Commission, (CQC), inspector who was supported by a specialist dental adviser.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we 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 this practice was providing safe care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Are services effective?

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

Are services caring?

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

Are services responsive?

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

Are services well-led?

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

Background

Liberty Dentists is located in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and provides private dental care and treatment for adults and children.

The dental team includes one dentist, one dental nurse, who also covers reception duties and one trainee dental nurse. The practice has one treatment room.

The practice is owned by a company and as a condition of registration must have a person registered with the CQC as the registered manager. Registered managers have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations about how the practice is run. The registered manager at Liberty Dentists is the principal dentist.

Summary of findings

On the day of inspection, we collected nine CQC comment cards filled in by patients. During the inspection we spoke with the principal dentist and the dental nurse.

We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open between:

9am and 5.30pm Mondays to Fridays

Appointments are also available by request during evenings and on alternate Saturdays.

Our key findings were:

- The practice appeared to be visibly clean and well-maintained.
- The provider had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- The provider had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff.
- The provider had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The provider had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Staff treated patients with dignity and respect and took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system took account of patients' needs.
- The provider had effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked as a team.
- The provider asked staff and patients for feedback about the services they provided.
- The provider dealt with complaints positively and efficiently.
- The provider had 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?	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)

Staff 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 provider had safeguarding policies and procedures to provide staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. We saw evidence that staff had 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 provider 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, (HTM 01-05), published by the Department of Health and Social Care. Staff completed infection prevention and control training and received updates as required.

The provider had arrangements for transporting, cleaning, checking, sterilising and storing instruments in line with HTM 01-05.

The records showed equipment used by staff for cleaning and sterilising instruments was validated, maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance. The provider had suitable numbers of dental instruments available for the clinical staff and measures were in place to ensure they were decontaminated and sterilised appropriately.

The staff had systems in place to ensure that patient-specific dental appliances were disinfected prior to being sent to a dental laboratory and before treatment was completed.

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

We saw effective cleaning schedules to ensure the practice was kept clean. When we inspected we saw the practice was visibly clean.

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

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

The provider had whistleblowing policy. Staff felt confident they could raise concerns without fear of recrimination.

The dentist used dental dam in line with guidance from the British Endodontic Society when providing root canal treatment. In instances where dental dam was not used, such as for example refusal by the patient, and where other methods were used to protect the airway, we saw this was documented in the dental care record and a risk assessment completed.

The provider had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at staff recruitment records for each of the three members of staff. These showed the provider followed their recruitment procedure. There were arrangements to carry out checks in relation to identity, conduct in previous employment and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. We observed that clinical staff were qualified and registered with the General Dental Council and had professional indemnity cover.

Staff ensured facilities and equipment were safe, and that equipment was maintained according to manufacturers' instructions, including electrical systems and appliances.

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements. Staff undertook training in fire safety and there were procedures for evacuation of the premises in the event of fire. Regular fire evacuation drills were carried out to test these procedures. We saw there were fire extinguishers and fire detection systems throughout the building and fire exits were kept clear.

The practice had arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment and we saw the required radiation protection information was available.

Are services safe?

We saw evidence the dentist justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. They carried out radiography audits every year and used the findings to monitor and where appropriate improve the quality of dental radiographs.

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

Risks to patients

The provider had implemented 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 provider had current employer's liability insurance.

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

Clinical staff had knowledge of the recognition, diagnosis and early management of sepsis and there were protocols and pathways available to staff.

Discussion with staff showed that there were systems to triage appointments effectively to manage patients who present with dental infection and where necessary refer patients for specialist care.

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

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

A dental nurse worked with the dentist when they treated patients in line with General Dental Council Standards for the Dental Team.

The provider had risk assessments to minimise the risk that can be caused from substances that are hazardous to health.

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 dentist how information to deliver safe care and treatment was handled and recorded. We looked at dental care records with clinicians to confirm our findings and observed that individual records were typed and managed in a way that kept patients safe. Dental care records we saw were complete, legible, were kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

The provider had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two-week wait arrangements. These arrangements were initiated by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to help make sure patients were seen quickly by a specialist. There were arrangements to log and follow up on urgent and routine referrals to ensure that patients received treatment promptly.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

There was a stock control system of medicines which were held on site. This ensured that medicines did not pass their expiry date and enough medicines were available if required.

The dentist were aware of current guidance with regards to prescribing and dispensing medicines.

Antimicrobial prescribing audits were carried out periodically. The most recent audit indicated the dentist were following current guidelines.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The provider had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety

Are services safe?

issues. Staff had systems to monitor and review incidents if they occurred. This helped staff to understand the potential risks which led to effective risk management systems in the practice as well as safety improvements.

In the previous 12 months there had been no safety incidents. The provider had a system for receiving and

acting on safety alerts. The dental nurse and the dentist were aware of recent relevant alerts. Staff 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

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

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep dental professionals up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw the dentist assessed patients' needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols. The dentist was aware of and following guidelines and protocols in relation to areas including prophylactic antibiotic prescribing, wisdom teeth extraction and patient recalls based upon an assessment of risk.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

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

The dentist prescribed high concentration fluoride products if a patient's risk of tooth decay indicated this would help them.

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

The dentist described to us the procedures they used to improve the outcomes for patients with gum disease. This involved providing patients with preventative advice, taking plaque and gum bleeding scores and recording detailed charts of the patient's gum condition.

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

Consent to care and treatment

Staff 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 staff were aware of the need to obtain proof of legal guardianship or Power of Attorney for patients who lacked capacity or for children who are looked after (under the

care of the Local Authority). The dentist gave patients information about treatment options and the risks and benefits of these, so they could make informed decisions. We saw this documented in patients' records.

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 might 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 may give consent for themselves in certain circumstances. 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 dentist assessed patients' treatment needs in line with recognised guidance.

The provider had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. Audits of dental care records were carried out periodically. Staff kept records of the results of these audits, the resulting action plans and improvements.

Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles.

Staff new to the practice had a structured induction programme. We confirmed clinical staff completed the 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 dentist confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care for treatment the practice did not provide. There were referral protocols and pathways to ensure that routine and urgent referrals were monitored and followed up to ensure that patients received treatment promptly.

Are services caring?

Our findings

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

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

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

Privacy and dignity

Staff respected and promoted patients' privacy and dignity.

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

Patients commented positively that staff were kind, caring and helpful.

Patients said staff were understanding.

Patients told us staff were compassionate when they were in pain, distress or discomfort.

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

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. They were aware of the requirements of the Equality Act.

The principal dentist told us that they did not have any patients who did not speak or understand English. They told us that they reviewed patients' needs, and interpreter services would be offered for patients who did not speak or understand English.

Staff communicated with patients in a way they could understand, and communication aids and easy-read materials could be made available if required.

Staff gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment, including discussing options for treatment with them. The dentist described the conversations they had with patients to satisfy themselves they understood their treatment options.

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

The dentist described to us the methods they used to help patients understand treatment options discussed. These included for example study models and X-ray images.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

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

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs. It took account of patient needs and preferences.

Staff were clear about the importance of emotional support needed by patients when delivering care. They conveyed a good understanding of supporting more vulnerable members of society such as patients with dementia, and adults and children with a learning difficulty.

Two weeks before our inspection, CQC sent the practice 50 feedback comment cards, along with posters for the practice to display, encouraging patients to share their views of the service.

Nine cards were completed, giving a patient response rate of 18%

100% of views expressed by patients were positive.

Common themes within the positive feedback were helpfulness and kindness of all staff, very high standard of treatment and access to appointments.

We shared this with the provider in our feedback.

The practice currently had no patients for whom they needed to make adjustments to enable them to receive treatment.

Staff had carried out a disability access audit and had formulated an action plan to continually improve where possible access for patients. The size and layout of the premises did not afford provision of step free access or accessible toilet facilities. Staff told us that patients' needs

were assessed when they contacted the practice and patients who were unable to climb the stairs or who needed accessible facilities would be referred to a nearby dental practice which was fully accessible.

Timely access to services

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

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

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

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

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The 1 dentist took complaints and concerns seriously and responded to them appropriately to improve the quality of care.

The provider had a policy providing guidance to staff about how to handle a complaint. Information was available to advise patients how to make a complaint.

The dentist was responsible for dealing with these. Staff told us they would tell the dentist about any formal or informal comments or concerns straight away so patients received a quick response.

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

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

Leadership capacity and capability

The provider demonstrated a transparent and open culture in relation to people's safety. There was strong leadership and emphasis on continually striving to improve. Systems and processes were embedded, and staff worked together in such a way that the inspection did not highlight any issues or omissions. The information and evidence presented during the inspection process was clear and well documented. They could show how they sustain high-quality sustainable services and demonstrate improvements over time.

Culture

The practice had a culture of high-quality sustainable care.

Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued.

Staff discussed their training needs during annual appraisals and periodic one to one meetings. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development. We saw evidence of completed appraisals and personal development plans in the staff folders.

The staff focused on the needs of patients. They carried out regular reviews and patient's satisfaction surveys and used comments to adapt or improve the service as needed.

We saw the provider had systems in place to deal with staff poor performance.

Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated when responding to incidents and complaints. The dentist was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Duty of Candour.

Staff could raise concerns and were encouraged to do so, and they had confidence that these would be addressed.

Governance and management

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

The principal dentist had overall responsibility for the management and clinical leadership of the practice. The dental nurse assisted in the day to day running of the service. Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities.

The provider had a system of clinical governance in place which included policies, protocols and procedures that were accessible to all members of staff and were reviewed on a regular basis. Staff meetings were used to share updates to policies and procedures so that staff were included and could contribute to the process.

There were systems and processes to assess and mitigate risks to the health, safety and welfare of patients and staff. Risk assessments were carried out regularly and the practice procedures were monitored to help identify and manage risks.

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

Quality and operational information, for example surveys, audits and external guidance and safety information was used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.

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

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The provider encouraged patients to give their views about the service.

Patients were encouraged to complete reviews online and these were monitored to assess patient's satisfaction and to make any amendments to the service as needed.

The provider gathered feedback from staff through meetings, performance reviews and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on.

Continuous improvement and innovation

The provider had systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

Are services well-led?

Audits of dental care records, antimicrobial prescribing, dental radiographs and infection prevention and control were carried out regularly as part of a process for quality monitoring. The results of audits were used to implement improvements where these were indicated.

Staff completed 'highly recommended' training as per General Dental Council professional standards. The provider supported and encouraged staff to complete continuing professional development.