

Dr Joanne Finn

The Village Dental Practice

Inspection Report

Warrington Road
Culcheth
WA3 5HH
Tel: 01925 764296
Website: www.culchethvillagedental.co.uk

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Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 19 July 2016 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 providing well-led care in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Background

The Village Dental Practice is located close to the centre of Culcheth and comprises a reception and waiting room,

three treatment rooms, a decontamination room, storage and staff rooms. Parking is available outside the practice. The practice is accessible to patients with disabilities, impaired mobility and to wheelchair users.

The practice provides general dental treatment to patients on an NHS or privately funded basis. The opening times are Monday to Wednesday 8.30am to 5.00pm, Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.00pm. The practice is staffed by a practice manager, a principal dentist, two associate dentists, a dental therapist, a dental hygienist, four dental nurses, one of whom is a trainee, and a receptionist.

The principal dentist is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as an individual. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the practice is run.

We received feedback from 30 people during the inspection about the services provided. Patients commented that they found the practice exemplary and that staff were welcoming, friendly kind and caring. Several patients commented that staff go out of their way to help. Patients commented that they were always given good and helpful explanations about dental treatment and that the dentists listened to them. Patients reported that the practice was clean and comfortable.

Our key findings were:

Summary of findings

- The practice had procedures in place to record and analyse significant events and incidents.
- Staff had received safeguarding training and knew the process to follow to raise concerns.
- There were sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and skilled staff to meet the needs of patients.
- Staff had been trained to deal with medical emergencies, and emergency medicines and equipment were available.
- The premises and equipment were clean, secure and well maintained.
- Infection control procedures were in place and the practice followed current guidelines.
- Patients' needs were assessed, and care and treatment were delivered, in accordance with current legislation, standards and guidance.
- Patients received information about their care, proposed treatment, costs, benefits and risks and were involved in making decisions about it.
- Staff were supported to deliver effective care, and opportunities for training and learning were available.
- Patients were treated with kindness, dignity and respect, and their confidentiality was maintained.
- The appointment system met the needs of patients, and emergency appointments were available.
- Services were planned and delivered to meet the needs of patients and reasonable adjustments were made to enable patients to receive their care and treatment.
- The practice gathered the views of patients and took into account patient feedback.
- Staff were supervised, felt involved and worked as a team.
- Governance arrangements were in place for the smooth running of the practice and for the delivery of high quality person centred care.
- Infection control procedures were in place.

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

- Review the practice's infection control procedures and protocols having due regard to guidelines issued by the Department of Health - Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices and The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice about the prevention and control of infections and related guidance, in relation to the storage of instruments and the security of the decontamination room.
- Review the storage of paper dental care records to ensure that all items are stored securely.

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 provider had effective systems and processes in place to ensure that care and treatment were carried out safely, for example, there were systems in place for the management of medical emergencies, dental radiography, and investigating and learning from incidents and complaints. There was guidance for staff on effective decontamination of dental instruments which staff were following; however current guidance was not being followed in relation to the storage of some sterilised instruments and the security of the decontamination room.

Staff had received training in safeguarding adults and children, knew how to recognise the signs of abuse and who to report them to.

Staff were appropriately recruited, suitably trained and skilled, and there were sufficient numbers of staff. Regular appraisals were carried out and we saw evidence of inductions for new staff.

We found the equipment used in the practice, including medical emergency and radiography equipment, was well maintained and tested at regular intervals. The practice had emergency medicines and equipment available, including an automated external defibrillator. Staff were trained in dealing with medical emergencies.

The premises was secure and properly maintained. The practice was cleaned regularly and there was a cleaning schedule in place identifying tasks to be completed.

The practice was following current legislation and guidance in relation to X-rays to protect patients and staff from unnecessary exposure to radiation.

No action



Are services effective?

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

Staff followed current guidelines when delivering dental care and treatment to patients. This included assessing and recording their medical history. Patients received an assessment of their dental needs, and treatment provided focused on their individual needs. Explanations were given to patients in a way they understood, and risks, benefits, options and costs were fully explained. Patients' consent was obtained before treatment was provided. Patients were given a written treatment plan which detailed the treatments considered and agreed together with the fees involved. The clinicians kept detailed dental records.

Staff provided oral health advice and guidance to patients and monitored changes in their oral health. Patients were referred to other services where necessary, in a timely manner.

Qualified staff were registered with their professional body, the General Dental Council. Staff received training and were supported in meeting the requirements of their professional regulator.

No action



Summary of findings

Are services caring?

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

Patients commented that staff were caring and friendly. They told us that they were treated with respect and that they were happy with the care and treatment given.

Staff understood the importance of emotional support when delivering care to patients who were nervous of dental treatment. Patient feedback on CQC comment cards confirmed that staff were understanding and made them feel at ease.

The practice had separate rooms available if patients wished to speak in private.

We found that treatment was clearly explained and patients were provided with information regarding their treatment and oral health. Patients were given time to decide before treatment was commenced. Patients commented that information given to them about options for treatment was helpful.

No action



Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

Patients had access to appointments to suit their preferences, and emergency appointments were available on the same day. Patients could request appointments by telephone or in person. The practice opening hours and out of hours appointment information was provided at the entrance to the practice, in the patient leaflet and on the practice website.

The practice captured social and lifestyle information on the medical history forms completed by patients which helped the clinicians to identify patients' specific needs and direct treatment to ensure the best outcome was achieved for the patient. Staff were prompted to be aware of patients' specific needs or medical conditions via the use of a flagging system on the dental care records.

The provider had taken into account the needs of different groups of people, for example, people with disabilities, impaired mobility, and wheelchair users and made the practice accessible. Staff had access to interpreter services where patients required these.

The practice had a complaints policy in place which was outlined in the practice leaflet and on the practice website. Complaints were thoroughly investigated and responded to appropriately.

No action



Are services well-led?

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

The provider had effective systems and processes in place for monitoring and improving services.

The practice had a management structure in place. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities. Staff reported that the provider was approachable and helpful, and took account of their views. The culture of the practice encouraged openness and honesty and staff told us they were encouraged to raise any issues or concerns.

No action



Summary of findings

The provider had put in place a range of policies, procedures and protocols to guide staff in undertaking tasks. Policies, procedures and protocols were regularly reviewed.

The provider used a variety of means to monitor quality and safety at the practice and to ensure continuous improvement, for example learning from complaints, carrying out audits and gathering patient feedback.

Staff were aware of the importance of confidentiality and understood their roles in this. Dental care records were complete, accurate and securely stored. Patient information was handled confidentially.

The practice held regular staff meetings and these were used to share information to improve future practice and gave everybody an opportunity to openly share information and discuss any concerns or issues.

The Village Dental Practice

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

We carried out this inspection under Section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions. This inspection was planned to check whether the practice was meeting the legal requirements and regulations associated with the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

The inspection took place on 19 July 2016 and was led by a CQC Inspector assisted by a dental specialist adviser.

Prior to the inspection we asked the practice to send us some information which we reviewed. This included details of complaints they had received in the last 12 months, their latest statement of purpose, and details of their staff members including their qualifications and proof of registration with their professional body. We also reviewed information we held about the practice.

During the inspection we spoke to the dentists, dental nurses and receptionists. We reviewed policies, protocols and other documents and observed procedures. We reviewed 28 CQC comment cards which we had sent prior to the inspection for patients to complete about the services provided at the practice.

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.

Are services safe?

Our findings

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

The provider had procedures in place to report, record, analyse and learn from significant events and incidents. No significant events had been reported. We discussed with staff examples of significant events which could occur in a dental practice and were assured that should any occur they would be reported and analysed in order to learn from them, and improvements would be put in place to prevent re-occurrence.

Staff had an understanding of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 and were aware of how and what to report. The provider had procedures in place to record and investigate accidents, and we saw examples of these in the accident book.

Staff had an understanding of their responsibilities under the Duty of Candour. Duty of Candour means relevant people are told when a notifiable safety incident occurs and in accordance with the statutory duty are given an apology and informed of any actions taken as a result. The provider knew when and how to notify CQC of incidents which could cause harm.

The practice received safety alerts from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and Department of Health. These alerts identify problems or concerns relating to a medicine or medical and dental equipment, or detail protocols to follow, for example, in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza. The provider brought relevant alerts to the attention of the staff and we saw that copies of alerts were retained and actions taken in response to them were recorded. Clinicians were able to discuss examples of recent alerts with us.

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

We saw that the practice had systems, processes and practices in place to keep people safe from abuse.

The practice had a whistleblowing policy in place and there was a procedure in place to enable staff to raise issues and concerns.

The practice had a policy for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Staff demonstrated a good

understanding of the policy. The principal dentist had a lead role for safeguarding and provided advice and support to staff on safeguarding. Staff were trained to the appropriate level in safeguarding and were aware of how to identify abuse and follow up on concerns. We noted that the principal dentist had been trained to a higher level in safeguarding. We saw that the practice had follow-up arrangements in place should children and vulnerable adults fail to attend their dental appointments.

The clinicians were assisted at all times by a dental nurse.

We observed that the dental care and treatment of patients was planned and delivered in a way that ensured patients' safety and welfare. Records contained a medical history which was completed or updated by the patient and reviewed by the clinician prior to the commencement of dental treatment and at regular intervals of care. The clinical records we saw were well structured and contained sufficient detail to demonstrate what treatment had been prescribed and completed, what was due to be carried out next and details of alternatives.

We saw that the practice followed recognised guidance and current practice to keep patients safe. For example, we checked whether the dentists used dental dam routinely to protect the patient's airway during root canal treatment. A dental dam is a thin, rectangular sheet used in dentistry to isolate the operative site from the rest of the mouth. The dentists told us that a dental dam was routinely used in root canal treatments. This was documented in the dental records we reviewed.

Medical emergencies

The provider had procedures in place for staff to follow in the event of a medical emergency. All staff had received basic life support training as a team and this was updated annually. Two staff were also trained in the provision of first aid. Staff described to us how they would deal with a variety of medical emergencies.

The practice had emergency medicines and equipment available in accordance with the Resuscitation Council UK and British National Formulary guidelines. Staff had access to an automated external defibrillator (AED) on the premises, in accordance with Resuscitation Council UK guidance and the General Dental Council standards for the dental team. [An AED is a portable electronic device that

Are services safe?

analyses life threatening irregularities of the heart and delivers an electrical shock to attempt to restore a normal heart rhythm]. We saw records to show that the medicines and equipment were checked regularly.

The practice stored emergency medicines and equipment centrally in the practice and staff were able to tell us where they were located.

Staff recruitment

The provider used the skill mix of staff in a variety of clinical roles, for example, dentists, dental therapists and hygienists and dental nurses, to deliver care in the best possible way for patients.

The provider had recruitment procedures in place, which reflected the requirements of current legislation. The practice maintained recruitment records for each member of staff. We reviewed a number of these records and saw most of the prescribed information was present, for example, evidence of registration with their professional body, the General Dental Council, where required, evidence of indemnity and evidence that Disclosure and Barring checks had been carried out where appropriate; however the provider did not have evidence of qualifications available for all staff. Staff employment records were stored securely to prevent unauthorised access.

The practice had a comprehensive induction programme in place. The most recently recruited member of staff confirmed an induction had taken place and described what was included in it.

Staff were aware of their own competencies and skills and abilities.

Monitoring health and safety and responding to risks

The provider had systems in place to assess, monitor and mitigate risks, with a view to keeping staff and patients safe.

The practice had an overarching health and safety policy in place, underpinned by several specific policies and risk assessments. A range of other policies, procedures, protocols and risk assessments were in place to inform and guide staff in the performance of their duties and to manage risks at the practice. Policies, procedures and risk assessments were regularly reviewed.

The provider had a control of substances hazardous to health risk assessment and associated procedures in place.

Staff maintained records of products used at the practice and retained details to inform staff what action to take in the event of a chemical spillage, accidental swallowing or contact with the skin. Measures were identified to reduce risks associated with these products, for example, the use of personal protective equipment for staff and patients.

We saw that the practice had carried out a sharps risk assessment. The provider had implemented measures to mitigate the risks associated with the use of sharps, for example, a sharps policy identifying responsibility for the dismantling and disposal of sharps, and a safer sharps system to dispose of used needles. Sharps bins were suitably located in the clinical areas to allow appropriate disposal. The sharps policy also detailed procedures to follow in the event of a sharps injury. These procedures were displayed in the treatment rooms for quick reference. Staff were familiar with the procedures and able to describe the action they would take should they sustain an injury.

The provider also ensured that clinical staff had received a vaccination to protect them against the Hepatitis B virus, and that the effectiveness of the vaccination was identified. People who are likely to come into contact with blood products and are at increased risk of injuries from sharp instruments should receive these vaccinations to minimise the risks of acquiring blood borne infections.

We saw that a fire risk assessment had been carried out. The provider had arrangements in place to manage and mitigate the risks associated with fire, for example, one of the staff undertook a lead role for fire safety, safety signage was displayed and firefighting equipment was available. Staff were familiar with the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire; however fire drills were not carried out regularly. The provider assured us this would be reviewed.

Infection control

The practice had an overarching infection control policy in place underpinned by policies and procedures which detailed decontamination and cleaning tasks. Procedures were displayed in appropriate areas such as the decontamination room and treatment rooms for staff to refer to.

The principal dentist had a lead role for infection prevention and control.

Are services safe?

The practice undertook infection control audits six monthly and we saw evidence of these. No areas of concern were highlighted in the audits.

We observed that there were adequate hand washing facilities available in the treatment rooms, the decontamination room, and in the toilet facilities. Hand washing protocols were displayed appropriately near hand washing sinks.

We observed the decontamination process and found it to be in accordance with the Department of Health's guidance, Health Technical Memorandum 01-05 Decontamination in primary care dental practices, (HTM 01-05). The practice had a dedicated decontamination room. We observed that the external door to the room was open which did not prevent unauthorised access; however the provider assured us that this door was normally closed. We observed that a sign on the internal door instructed staff to ensure the door was closed at all times; however we noticed that it was left open on some instances. The external door of the room was a designated fire exit and the route to it was through the decontamination room. The provider assured us the security of the room would be reviewed.

The decontamination room and treatment rooms had clearly defined dirty and clean zones to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Staff used sealed boxes to transfer used instruments from the treatment rooms to the decontamination room. Staff followed a process of cleaning, inspecting, sterilising, packaging and storing of instruments to minimise the risk of infection. Staff wore appropriate personal protective equipment during the decontamination process.

We observed that instruments were stored in drawers in the treatment rooms. Instruments in the drawers were stored collectively, unpackaged and uncovered, which was not within the recommendations of HTM 01-05. The provider assured us this would be reviewed.

Staff showed us the systems in place to ensure the decontamination process was tested and decontamination equipment was checked, tested and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and HTM 01-05, and we saw records of these checks and tests.

Staff changing facilities were available and staff wore their uniforms inside the practice only.

The provider had carried out a Legionella risk assessment in 2011 to determine if there were any risks associated with the premises. (Legionella is a bacterium found in the environment which can contaminate water systems in buildings). The provider did not review the assessment regularly but assured us there had been no change to the water system since 2011. The provider agreed to review the risk assessment periodically. Actions were identified in the assessment and these had been carried out, for example, we saw records of checks and testing on water temperatures, which assisted in monitoring the risk from Legionella. The dental water lines and suction unit were cleaned and disinfected daily, in accordance with guidance, to prevent the growth and spread of Legionella bacteria.

The treatment rooms had sufficient supplies of personal protective equipment for staff and patient use.

The practice had a cleaning schedule in place identifying tasks to be completed, daily, weekly and monthly. Cleaning was the responsibility of the dental nurses. We observed that the practice was clean, and treatment rooms and the decontamination room were clean and uncluttered.

The segregation and disposal of dental waste was in accordance with current guidelines laid down by the Department of Health in the Health Technical Memorandum 07-01 Safe management of healthcare waste. The practice had arrangements for all types of dental waste to be removed from the premises by a contractor. Spillage kits were available for contaminated spillages. We observed that clinical waste awaiting collection was stored securely but the area was accessible to the public. The provider had risk assessed this and put in place CCTV cameras to monitor the area.

Equipment and medicines

We saw that the provider had systems, processes and practices in place to protect people from the unsafe use of materials, medicines and equipment used in the practice.

Staff showed us the recording system for the prescribing, storage and stock control of medicines.

We saw contracts for the maintenance of equipment, and recent test certificates for the decontamination equipment, the air compressor and the X-ray machines. The practice carried out portable appliance testing, (PAT); however this

Are services safe?

had not been carried out since 2011. The practice manager assured us testing would be arranged. PAT is the name of a process under which electrical appliances are routinely checked for safety.

We saw records to demonstrate that fire detection and fire-fighting equipment, for example, the fire alarm and extinguishers were regularly tested.

We saw that the practice was storing NHS prescription pads securely and in accordance with current guidance and operated a system for checking deliveries of blank NHS prescription pads. Private prescriptions were printed out when required following assessment of the patient.

Radiography (X-rays)

The practice maintained a radiation protection file which contained the required information.

The provider had appointed a Radiation Protection Advisor and a Radiation Protection Supervisor. We saw evidence that the Health and Safety Executive had been notified of the use of X-ray equipment on the premises; however the provider forwarded this to us immediately after the inspection.

We saw a critical examination pack for the X-ray machine. Routine testing and servicing of the X-ray machines had been carried out in accordance with the current recommended maximum interval of three years.

We observed that local rules were displayed in areas where X-rays were carried out. These included specific working instructions for staff using the X-ray equipment.

Dental care records confirmed that X-rays were justified, reported on and quality assured, and we saw evidence of regular auditing of the quality of the X-ray images which demonstrated the practice was acting in compliance with the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000, (IRMER), current guidelines from the Faculty of General Dental Practice of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and national radiological guidelines, and patients and staff were protected from unnecessary exposure to radiation.

We saw evidence of recent radiology training for relevant staff in accordance with IR(ME)R requirements.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The clinicians carried out consultations, assessments and treatment in line with current National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines, Faculty of General Dental Practice, (FGDP), guidelines, the Department of Health publication 'Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention' and General Dental Council guidelines. The dentists described to us how examinations and assessments were carried out. Patients completed a medical history form which included detailing health conditions, medicines being taken and allergies, as well as details of their dental and social history. The dentists then carried out a detailed examination. Patients were made aware of the condition of their oral health and whether it had changed since the last appointment. Following the examination the diagnosis was discussed with the patient and treatment options and costs explained. Follow-up appointments were scheduled to individual requirements.

We checked dental care records to confirm what was described to us and found that the records were complete, clear and contained sufficient detail about each patient's dental treatment.

Details of medicines used in the dental treatments were recorded which would enable a specific batch of a medicine to be traced to the patient in the event of a safety recall or alert in relation to a medicine.

We saw patients' signed treatment plans containing details of treatment and associated costs. Patients confirmed in CQC comment cards that dentists were clear about treatment needs and options, and treatment plans were informative.

We saw evidence that the dentists used current National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews, guidelines to assess each patient's risks and needs and to determine how frequently to recall them.

We saw the dentists participated in local peer review meetings and had participated recently in dementia awareness training for dental practices and the national antibiotic stewardship programme.

Health promotion and prevention

We saw that staff adhered closely to guidance issued in the Department of Health publication 'Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention' when providing preventive oral health care and advice to patients. This is used by dental teams for the prevention of dental disease in primary and secondary care settings. Tailored preventive dental advice and information on dental hygiene procedures, diet and lifestyle was given to the patients in order to improve health outcomes for them. Where appropriate fluoride treatments were prescribed. Tooth brushing techniques were explained to patients in a way they understood. Information in leaflet form was available in the waiting room in relation to improving oral health and lifestyles, for example, smoking cessation.

Staffing

We observed that staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and treatment.

The practice used a variety of training methods to deliver training to staff, for example lunch and learn sessions, external courses and online learning.

New staff and trainees undertook a programme of training and supervision before being allowed to carry out any duties at the practice unsupervised. Staff confirmed their colleagues were supportive.

The practice manager had obtained a formal qualification in practice management.

The practice carried out staff appraisals regularly. We noted the appraisals were a two way process with actions identified in them. Staff confirmed appraisals were used to identify training needs. The provider did not appraise the dentists but dentists confirmed that they participated in regular peer review.

All qualified dental professionals are required to be registered with the General Dental Council, (GDC), in order to practice dentistry. To be included on the register dental professionals must be appropriately qualified and meet the GDC requirements relating to continuing professional development, (CPD). We saw that the qualified dental professionals were registered with the GDC.

We saw staff were supported to meet the requirements of their professional registration. The GDC highly recommends certain core subjects for CPD, such as medical emergencies and life support, safeguarding, infection control and radiology. The practice had a training

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

plan in place which outlined details of training for staff and included the mandatory General Dental Council core topics, health and safety and a variety of generic and role specific topics. Checks to ensure dental professionals were up to date with their CPD were carried out by the practice. We reviewed a number of staff records and found these contained a wide variety of CPD, including the core GDC subjects.

Working with other services

The practice had effective arrangements in place for referrals. Clinicians were aware of their own competencies and knew when to refer patients requiring treatment outwith these competencies. Clinicians referred patients to a variety of secondary care and specialist options where required. Information was shared appropriately when patients were referred to other health care providers. Urgent referrals were made in line with current guidelines.

We saw examples of internal referrals, for example, to the dental therapists and these followed recognised guidelines.

Consent to care and treatment

The clinicians described how they obtained valid informed consent from patients by explaining their findings to them and keeping records of the discussions. Patients were given a treatment plan after consultations and assessments, and prior to commencing dental treatment. The patient's dental care records were updated with the proposed treatment once this was finalised and agreed with the patient. The signed treatment plan and consent form were retained in the patients' dental care records. The plan and discussions

with the clinicians made it clear that a patient could withdraw consent at any time and that they had received an explanation of the type of treatment, including the alternative options, risks, benefits and costs.

The clinicians described to us how they obtained verbal consent at each subsequent treatment appointment. We saw this confirmed this in the dental care records.

NHS treatment costs were displayed in the waiting room along with information on dental treatments to assist patients with treatment choices.

The dentists explained that they would not normally provide treatment to patients on their examination appointment unless they were in pain or their presenting condition dictated otherwise. We saw that the dentists allowed patients time to think about the treatment options presented to them.

The clinicians told us they would generally only see children under 16 who were accompanied by a parent or guardian to ensure consent was obtained before treatment was undertaken. Clinicians demonstrated a good understanding of Gillick competency. (Gillick competency is a term used in medical law to decide whether a child of 16 years or under is able to consent to their own treatment).

The Mental Capacity Act 2005, (MCA), provides a legal framework for acting and making decisions on behalf of adults who lack the capacity to make decisions for themselves. The clinicians we spoke to had a good understanding and application of the MCA and staff confirmed they had received MCA training.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion and empathy

Feedback given by patients on CQC comment cards demonstrated that patients felt they were always treated with kindness and respect, and staff were friendly, caring and helpful. The practice had a separate room available should patients wish to speak in private. Treatment rooms were situated away from the main waiting area and we saw that the doors were closed at all times when patients were with the clinicians. Staff understood the importance of emotional support when delivering care to patients who were nervous of dental treatment. Several patients

confirmed in CQC comment cards that staff put them at ease. Three patients in vulnerable circumstances commented that staff acted above and beyond with help and advice.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The dentists discussed treatment options with patients and allowed time for patients to decide before treatment was commenced. We saw this documented in the dental care records. Patients commented in CQC comment cards that they were listened to. Patients confirmed that treatment options, risks and benefits were discussed with them and that they were provided with helpful information to assist them in making an informed choice.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

We saw evidence that services were planned and delivered to meet the needs of people.

The practice was well maintained and provided a comfortable environment.

We saw that the practice tailored appointment lengths to patients' individual needs and patients could choose from morning and afternoon appointments.

The practice captured social and lifestyle information on the medical history forms completed by patients. This enabled clinicians to identify any specific needs and direct treatment to ensure the best outcome was achieved for the patient. Staff were prompted to be aware of patients' specific needs or medical conditions via the use of a flagging system on the dental care records which helped them treat patients individually. Patients commented on CQC comment cards that they were always treated as an individual and that clinicians always have the patient's best interests at heart.

We saw that the provider gathered the views of patients when planning and delivering the service via comprehensive or targeted patient surveys, for example, the practice surveyed patients for their views on practice opening hours, the provision of smoking cessation and communicating with the practice by text. Staff told us that patients were always able to provide verbal feedback and this was captured and analysed by the practice.

The NHS Dental Services patient survey, provided the following information:-

- 92.9% of patients surveyed were satisfied with the dentistry they had received at the practice, based on 13 responses, compared with 93.8% for England overall
- 85.7% of patients surveyed were satisfied with the time they had to wait for an appointment based on 12 responses, compared with 90.0% for England overall.

The NHS Dental Services patient survey is carried out by the NHS to monitor the quality and integrity of NHS dental services.

Tackling inequity and promoting equality

The provider had taken into account the needs of different groups of people, for example, people with disabilities, impaired mobility, and wheelchair users.

The practice was accessible to people with disabilities, impaired mobility and to wheelchair users. Parking was available outside the premises. The provider had installed a ramp at the front entrance to the practice and staff provided assistance should patients require it. The whole practice was located at ground floor level.

Toilet facilities were situated on the ground floor and were accessible to people with disabilities, impaired mobility, wheelchair users and patients with prams.

The practice offered interpretation services to patients whose first language was not English and to patients with impaired hearing.

The practice made provision for patients to arrange appointments by telephone or in person and patients could choose to receive appointment reminders by a variety of methods. Where patients failed to attend their dental appointments staff contacted them to re-arrange the appointment and to establish if the practice could assist by providing adjustments to enable patients to receive their treatment.

Access to the service

We saw evidence that patients could access treatment and care in a timely way. The practice opening hours and out of hours appointment information were displayed at the entrance to the practice, provided in the practice leaflet and on the practice website. Emergency appointments were available daily. Patients commented in feedback that emergency appointments were always available.

Concerns and complaints

The practice had a complaints policy and procedure which was available in leaflet form in the waiting room and on the practice website. Details as to further steps people could take should they be dis-satisfied with the practice's response to their complaint were included in the leaflet but not on the practice website. We saw that complaints were promptly and thoroughly investigated and responded to.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

The practice was managed by the principal dentist and a practice manager, The principal dentist currently undertook most lead roles but was considering allocating lead roles and responsibilities to staff. We saw that staff had access to suitable supervision and support in order to undertake their roles, and there was clarity in relation to roles and responsibilities.

The provider had systems and processes in place for monitoring and improving the services provided for patients and these were operating effectively.

The provider had arrangements in place to ensure risks were identified, understood and managed, for example, risk assessments had been carried out and measures implemented to mitigate risks. We saw that risk assessments and policies were regularly reviewed to ensure they were up to date with regulations and guidance.

The provider had arrangements in place to ensure that quality and performance were regularly considered and used a variety of means to monitor quality and performance and improve the service, for example, via the analysis of patient feedback and complaints, and the analysis of audits of X-rays, dental care records and antibiotic prescribing. We saw evidence that these arrangements were working well.

We saw that the provider had a training plan in place which supported staff in meeting the requirements of their professional registration. Dental professionals' continuing professional development was monitored by the provider to ensure they were meeting these requirements.

Staff were aware of the importance of confidentiality and understood their roles in this. Dental care records were complete and accurate. They were maintained electronically and on paper. Electronic records were password protected and data was backed up daily. Paper records were stored securely but some items were stored temporarily in unlocked drawers. The practice manager assured us this would be addressed.

Leadership, openness and transparency

We saw systems in place to support communication about the quality and safety of the service, for example, staff meetings.

The practice held quarterly staff meetings. We saw that staff were actively involved in contributing to the meetings, for example, staff could suggest and present their own agenda items. We saw recorded minutes of the meetings and noted that items discussed included clinical and non-clinical issues. The meetings were also used to deliver training updates. Regular informal meetings were also held to discuss issues as they arose.

The provider operated an open door policy and staff said they could speak to the manager or provider if they had any concerns and that both were approachable and helpful.

Learning and improvement

The provider used quality assurance measures, for example auditing, to encourage continuous improvement. The practice had a plan in place to audit quality and safety beyond the mandatory audits for infection control and X-rays. We saw that the audit process was functioning well. Audits had clearly identified actions and we saw that these had been carried out.

The provider gathered information on the quality of care from a range of sources, including patient feedback, surveys and the NHS Friends and Family Test and used this to evaluate and improve the service.

Staff confirmed that learning from complaints, incidents, audits and feedback were discussed at staff meetings to share learning to inform and improve future practice.

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

We saw that the staff and people who use the service were engaged and involved. The provider had a system in place to seek the views of patients about all areas of service delivery, and carried out structured patient surveys. We saw that NHS Family and Friends Test forms were available in the waiting room for patients to indicate how likely they were to recommend the practice.

Staff told us they felt valued and involved. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions during staff meetings and

Are services well-led?

staff said that suggestions for improvements to the service were listened to and acted on. Staff said they were encouraged to challenge any aspect of practice which raised concern.