

Whitestone Surgery

Inspection report

82 Bulkington Lane
Whitestone
Nuneaton
Warwickshire
CV11 4SB

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Date of inspection visit: 27/11/2018
Date of publication: 14/01/2019

This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

Ratings

Overall rating for this location

Good 

Are services safe?

Good 

Are services effective?

Good 

Are services caring?

Good 

Are services responsive?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

Overall summary

This practice is rated as Good overall. (Previous rating November 2015 – Good)

The key questions at this inspection are rated as:

Are services safe? – Good

Are services effective? – Good

Are services caring? – Good

Are services responsive? – Good

Are services well-led? – Good

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection at Whitestone Surgery on 16 October 2018 as part of our inspection programme.

At this inspection we found:

- Urgent same day patient appointments were available when needed. All patients we spoke with and those who completed comment cards before our inspection said they were always able to obtain same day appointments and access care when needed.
- Patients' needs were assessed and care delivered in line with current guidelines. Staff had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and treatment.
- Results from the national GP patient survey revealed a high level of patient satisfaction about the care given at the practice and access to services which was either in-line with or above local and national averages. For

example, 87% of patients who responded said that the last time they had a general practice appointment, the healthcare professional was good or very good at treating them with care and concern and 96% had confidence and trust in the healthcare professional they saw or spoke to.

- Patients said GPs gave them enough time and treated them with dignity and respect.
- The practice was actively engaged with the local community. The Patient Participation Group was involved with a number of community projects. This included an allotment project, an information technology group and a locally run carer's café.

However there were areas of practice where the provider should make improvements:

- The practice should continue to carefully review events as they occur to determine whether they meet the threshold to be a significant event.
- The practice should ensure all meetings are consistently minuted.
- Review the patients on the palliative care register to ensure they all have an appropriate care plan in place

Professor Steve Field CBE FRCP FFPH FRCGP
Chief Inspector of General Practice

Please refer to the detailed report and the evidence tables for further information.

Population group ratings

Older people	Good	
People with long-term conditions	Good	
Families, children and young people	Good	
Working age people (including those recently retired and students)	Good	
People whose circumstances may make them vulnerable	Good	
People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia)	Good	

Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a Care Quality Commission (CQC) lead inspector. The team included a GP specialist adviser.

Background to Whitestone Surgery

- The practice name is Whitestone Surgery.
- Located at 82 Bulkington Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, CV11 4SB.
- Telephone number: 024 7664 1911. Website: www.whitestonesurgery.org
- The practice has a General Medical Services (GMS) contract with NHS England. The GMS contract is the contract between general practices and NHS England for delivering primary care services to local communities.
- The practice is a partnership with the lead GP and the practice manager.
- At the time of our inspection, 2,695 patients were registered at the practice.
- The practice has one lead GP (male), one locum GP who is regularly employed at the practice (male), one practice nurse, a locum respiratory nurse and a healthcare assistant. They are supported by a practice manager and administrative staff.
- Please see the evidence table for details of opening hours and extended hours provision.
- Whitestone Surgery is located in a semi-rural area with a level of deprivation that is below the national and county average.

Are services safe?

We rated the practice as requires improvement for providing safe services.

Safety systems and processes

Whitestone Surgery had clear systems to keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse.

- The practice had appropriate systems to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse. All staff received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate at a higher level (level three for children). They knew how to identify and report concerns. Learning from safeguarding incidents was available to staff. All staff, including those who acted as chaperones were trained for their role and had received a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. (DBS checks identify whether a person has a criminal record or is on an official list of people barred from working in roles where they may have contact with children or adults who may be vulnerable.)
- Staff took steps, including working with other agencies, to protect patients from abuse, neglect, discrimination and breaches of their dignity and respect.
- The practice's safeguarding policies were based on guidelines issued by Warwickshire's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and in conjunction with the local authority.
- The practice carried out appropriate staff checks at the time of recruitment and on an ongoing basis.
- There was an effective system to manage infection prevention and control. This included an annual infection control audit.
- The practice had a variety of other risk assessments in place to monitor safety of the premises such as control of substances hazardous to health and infection control and Legionella (Legionella is a term for a particular bacterium which can contaminate water systems in buildings).
- The practice had arrangements to ensure that facilities and equipment were safe and in good working order. Equipment had been calibrated and PAT (portable appliance) tested.
- Arrangements for managing waste and clinical specimens kept people safe. A contract for its disposal was in place with an appropriate organisation.

Risks to patients

There were adequate systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety.

- There were arrangements for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed. There was a rota system in place for all the different staffing groups to ensure enough staff were on duty. Staff were able to cover for each other when absent and a staffing needs assessment was in place.
- There was an effective induction system for temporary staff tailored to their role. This included locum GPs used by the practice.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies on the premises and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention. The practice had a defibrillator (which provided an electric shock to stabilise a life threatening heart rhythm) available on the premises and oxygen with adult and children's masks. There was a first aid kit and accident book available. Clinicians knew how to identify and manage patients with severe infections, for example, sepsis.
- When there were changes to services or staff the practice assessed and monitored the impact on safety.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Staff had the information they needed to deliver safe care and treatment to patients.

- Staff described how care records contained information needed to deliver safe care and treatment was available to staff. However, there were some gaps with care planning, for example, with some patients on the palliative care register.
- The practice had systems for sharing information with staff and other agencies to enable them to deliver safe care and treatment.
- Clinicians made timely referrals in line with protocols. Referral letters included all of the necessary information and patients were followed up if they failed to attend these appointments.

Appropriate and safe use of medicines

The practice had reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

Are services safe?

- The systems for managing medicines, including vaccines, medical gases, and emergency medicines and equipment minimised risks. The practice kept prescription stationery securely and monitored its use. This included forms used in computer printers.
- Staff prescribed, administered or supplied medicines to patients and gave advice on medicines in line with legal requirements and current national guidance. Processes were in place for the handling of repeat prescriptions and the practice carried out regular medicines audits, to ensure prescribing was in line with best practice guidelines for safe prescribing.
- Patients' health was monitored to ensure medicines were being used safely and followed up appropriately. The practice involved patients in regular reviews of their medicines.

Track record on safety

The practice had a good track record on safety.

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues.
- The practice monitored and reviewed safety using information from a range of sources.
- The practice monitored and reviewed activity. This helped it to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture that led to safety improvements. For example, the practice had recently reviewed and changed its process for identifying patients with similar names.

Lessons learned and improvements made

The practice learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

- Staff understood their duty to raise concerns and report incidents and near misses. Leaders and managers supported them when they did so.
- There were systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The practice learned and shared lessons, identified themes and took action to improve safety in the practice. However, the practice had only recorded one significant event within the last 12 months. We discussed this at length with all clinical staff and the practice manager. They were all correctly able to identify the types of incidents that should be recorded and the action the practice should take as a result. This was in line with the practice procedures however this needed to be embedded further. The practice acted on and learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts.
- Significant events and incidents were reviewed in a monthly practice meeting.
- There was a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts. Alerts were received by email from external agencies such as Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Searches were made to identify any patients affected by alerts and they were discussed in clinical meetings. The practice learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts.

Please refer to the evidence tables for further information.

Are services effective?

We rated the practice and all of the population groups as good for providing effective services.

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

Whitestone Surgery had systems to keep clinicians up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw that clinicians assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

- Patients' needs were fully assessed. This included their clinical needs and their mental and physical wellbeing in line with relevant and current evidence based guidance and standards, including National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) best practice guidelines. NICE is the organisation responsible for promoting clinical excellence and cost-effectiveness and for producing and issuing clinical guidelines to ensure that every NHS patient gets fair access to quality treatment.
- The practice used the Warwickshire North Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) care pathway guidance.
- Data available for the practice showed it performed in-line with local and national averages and had no outliers (significant variations).
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- Staff advised patients what to do if their condition got worse and where to seek further help and support, including local out of hours services if necessary.

Older people:

- Older patients received a full assessment of their physical, mental and social needs. Those who were frail and vulnerable received appropriate help and signposting to other services if appropriate. This included an annual clinical review with a medicines review.
- All patients aged over 75 were invited for a health check. Over a 12 month period the practice had provided health checks on 90% of patients aged over 75.
- The practice followed up on older patients discharged from hospital. Discharge summaries were reviewed and the practice ensured medicines and care plans, if in place, were amended to reflect any extra or changed needs.

People with long-term conditions:

- Patients with long-term conditions had a structured annual review to check their health and medicines needs were being met. For patients with the most complex needs, the GP worked with other health and care professionals to deliver a coordinated package of care. The reviews were carried out during the patient's birthday month to make these easier to manage and easier for patients to remember.
- Staff who were responsible for reviews of patients with long term conditions had received specific training.
- The practice was able to demonstrate how it identified patients with commonly undiagnosed conditions, for example diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), atrial fibrillation and hypertension.
- The practice's performance on quality indicators for long term conditions was in line with local and national averages. The practice reviewed its position on a monthly basis compared with other practices.

Families, children and young people:

- Childhood immunisation uptake rates were in line with the target percentage of 90% or above.
- The practice had arrangements for following up failed attendance of children's appointments following an appointment in secondary care or for immunisation.
- There were appointments outside of school hours and any child who needed an appointment was seen on the same day.
- The practice building was suitable for children and babies.
- We saw positive examples of joint working with midwives. Ante-natal appointments could be booked with the midwife team at the practice on a weekly basis.
- There was a good working relationship with the health visitor team who attended practice meetings when required.
- The practice had arrangements to identify and review the treatment of newly pregnant women on long-term medicines.

Working age people (including those recently retired and students):

- The practice's uptake for cervical screening was 74%, which was below the national target of 80% and similar to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) average of

Are services effective?

73% and the national average of 72%. The practice was working to improve these figures by encouraging eligible patients to be screened each time they had contact with the practice.

- The practice's uptake for breast and bowel cancer screening was above the national average.
- The practice had systems to inform eligible patients to have the meningitis vaccine, for example before attending university for the first time.
- Patients had access to appropriate health assessments and checks including NHS checks for patients aged 40-74. There was appropriate follow-up on the outcome of health assessments and checks where abnormalities or risk factors were identified.

People whose circumstances make them vulnerable:

- End of life care was delivered in a coordinated way which took into account the needs of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The practice had devised and used an end of life care questionnaire to establish the wishes of patients and family members.
- The practice held a register of patients living in vulnerable circumstances including homeless people, travellers and those with a learning disability.
- The practice had a system for vaccinating patients with an underlying medical condition according to the recommended schedule.

People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia):

- The practice assessed and monitored the physical health of people with mental illness, severe mental illness, and personality disorder by providing access to health checks, interventions for physical activity, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and access to 'stop smoking' services. There was a system for following up patients who failed to attend for administration of long term medication.
- When patients were assessed to be at risk of suicide or self-harm the practice had arrangements in place to help them to remain safe. We saw how the practice had recently reviewed this procedure.
- Patients at risk of dementia were identified and offered an assessment to detect possible signs of dementia. When dementia was suspected there was an appropriate referral for diagnosis.

- The practice offered annual health checks to patients with a learning disability and had signed up to a learning disabilities enhanced service.
- The practice's performance on quality indicators for mental health was in line with local and national averages.

Monitoring care and treatment

The practice had a comprehensive programme of quality improvement activity and routinely reviewed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the care provided. Where appropriate, clinicians took part in local and national improvement initiatives.

- The practice team had worked to ensure Quality Outcome Framework (QOF) results remained in-line with local and national averages following its takeover of the other practice located within its building. (QOF is a system intended to improve the quality of general practice and reward good practice. Exception reporting is the removal of patients from QOF calculations where, for example, the patients decline or do not respond to invitations to attend a review of their condition or when a medicine is not appropriate.)
- Latest published QOF results were 95% of the total number of points available compared with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) average of 97% and national average of 96%. The overall exception reporting rate was 9%; this was below the CCG and national averages of 10%.

Effective staffing

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

- Staff had appropriate knowledge for their role, for example, to carry out reviews for people with long term conditions, older people and people requiring contraceptive reviews.
- Staff whose role included immunisation and taking samples for the cervical screening programme had received specific training and could demonstrate how they stayed up to date. This was supported by evidence contained within the staff training records.
- The practice understood the learning needs of staff and provided protected time and training to meet them. Up to date records of skills, qualifications and training were maintained. Staff were encouraged and given opportunities to develop.

Are services effective?

- The practice provided staff with ongoing support. There was an induction programme for new staff. This included one to one meetings, appraisals, coaching and mentoring, clinical supervision and revalidation.
- There was a clear approach for supporting and managing staff when their performance was poor or variable.

Coordinating care and treatment

Staff worked together and with other health and social care professionals to deliver effective care and treatment.

- We saw records that showed that all appropriate staff, including those in different teams and organisations, were involved in assessing, planning and delivering care and treatment. For example, minutes of meetings showed attendance by midwives, health visitors and palliative care team members when appropriate.
- The practice shared clear and accurate information with relevant professionals when discussing care delivery for people with long term conditions and when coordinating healthcare for care home residents. They shared information with, and liaised, with community services, social services and carers for housebound patients and with health visitors and community services for children who have relocated into the local area.
- Patients received coordinated and person-centred care. This included when they moved between services, when they were referred, or after they were discharged from hospital. The practice worked with patients to develop personal care plans that were shared with relevant agencies.
- The practice ensured that end of life care was delivered in a coordinated way which took into account the needs of different patients, including those who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances.
- The practice identified patients who may be in need of extra support and directed them to relevant services. This included patients in the last 12 months of their lives, patients at risk of developing a long-term condition and carers.
- Staff encouraged and supported patients to be involved in monitoring and managing their own health, for example through social prescribing schemes and through involvement with the local Fitter Futures scheme in conjunction with a local leisure centre.
- Staff discussed changes to care or treatment with patients and their carers as necessary.
- The practice supported national priorities and initiatives to improve the population's health, for example, stop smoking campaigns, tackling obesity.
- Patients in need of support to stop smoking were referred to the full programme of advice and support offered by the pharmacy located close to the practice.
- The practice was part of Happy Healthy and Involved, a project to develop the social wellbeing within Nuneaton and Bedworth. This was a partnership between the practice, Warwickshire County Council and Guideposts.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice obtained consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance.

- Clinicians understood the requirements of legislation and guidance when considering consent and decision making. This included the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- Clinicians supported patients to make decisions. Where appropriate, they assessed and recorded a patient's mental capacity to make a decision.
- The practice monitored the process for seeking consent appropriately.

Please refer to the evidence tables for further information.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

Staff were consistent and proactive in helping patients to live healthier lives.

Are services caring?

We rated the practice as good for caring.

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- Feedback from patients was positive about the way staff treat people. Both patient Care Quality Commission comment cards we received were positive about the service experienced. This was in line with the results of the NHS Friends and Family Test and other feedback received by the practice.
- Staff understood patients' personal, cultural, social and religious needs.
- The practice gave patients timely support and information.
- The practice's GP patient survey results were in line with local and national averages for questions relating to kindness, respect and compassion.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about care and treatment. They were aware of the Accessible Information Standard (a requirement to make sure that patients and their carers can access and understand the information that they are given.)

- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids, easy read materials and a translation service were available.

- Staff helped patients and their carers find further information and access community and advocacy services. They helped them ask questions about their care and treatment.
- The practice proactively identified patients who were carers when they first registered with the practice, through discussion and by information displayed in the waiting room. The practice's computer system alerted GPs if a patient was also a carer.
- Carers were given carer's assessments to determine any additional support that could be provided.
- The practice's GP patient survey results were in line with local and national averages for questions relating to involvement in decisions about care and treatment.

Privacy and dignity

The practice respected patients' privacy and dignity.

- When patients wanted to discuss sensitive issues or appeared distressed reception staff offered them a private room to discuss their needs.
- Staff recognised the importance of people's dignity and respect. They challenged behaviour that fell short of this.
- The practice complied with the Data Protection Act 1998 and staff had received appropriate training along with annual updates.

Please refer to the evidence tables for further information.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

We rated the practice, and all of the population groups, as good for providing responsive services.

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.

- The practice understood the needs of its population and tailored services in response to those needs. For example, patients who worked were given appointments outside of their working hours whenever possible and the practice actively encouraged the use of online services to book and cancel appointments.
- Telephone consultations were available which supported patients who were unable to attend the practice during normal working hours.
- The facilities and premises were appropriate for the services delivered.
- The practice made reasonable adjustments when patients found it hard to access services.
- The practice provided effective care coordination for patients who are more vulnerable or who have complex needs. They supported them to access services both within and outside the practice.
- Care and treatment for patients with multiple long-term conditions and patients approaching the end of life was coordinated with other services.

Older people:

- All patients had a named GP who supported them in whatever setting they lived, whether it was at home or in a care home or supported living scheme.
- There was an urgent primary care assessment service to offer urgent care to older people within a two hour assessment window.
- The practice was responsive to the needs of older patients, and offered home visits and urgent appointments for those with enhanced needs. The GP and practice nurse also accommodated home visits for those who had difficulties getting to the practice due to limited local public transport availability.

People with long-term conditions:

- Patients with a long-term condition received an annual review to check their health and medicines needs were

being appropriately met. This was carried out more frequently if required. Multiple conditions were reviewed at one appointment. Patients who failed to attend for their annual health check were contacted by telephone.

- The practice held regular meetings with the local district nursing team to discuss and manage the needs of patients with complex medical issues and they were invited to practice staff meetings when required.

Families, children and young people:

- We found there were systems to identify and follow up children living in disadvantaged circumstances and who were at risk, for example, children and young people who had a high number of accident and emergency (A&E) attendances. Records we looked at confirmed this.
- All parents or guardians calling with concerns about a child under the age of 18 were offered a same day appointment when necessary. If possible, these were timed to avoid school hours.

Working age people (including those recently retired and students):

- The needs of this population group had been identified and the practice had adjusted the services it offered to ensure these were accessible, flexible and offered continuity of care. For example, extended opening hours were available on Mondays.
- The practice provided telephone consultations for patients unable to reach the practice during the day.

People whose circumstances make them vulnerable:

- The practice held a register of patients living in vulnerable circumstances including homeless people, travellers and those with a learning disability.
- People in vulnerable circumstances were easily able to register with the practice, including those with no fixed abode.

People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia):

- Staff interviewed had a good understanding of how to support patients with mental health needs and those patients living with dementia.
- The practice held mental health and dementia clinics. Patients who failed to attend were proactively followed up by a phone call from a GP.
- Patients could be referred to counselling through Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT).

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Timely access to care and treatment

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

- Patients had timely access to initial assessment, test results, diagnosis and treatment.
- Waiting times, delays and cancellations were minimal and managed appropriately.
- Through the information technology training offered by the practice, 58% of patients were enrolled on the online appointment system and 52% enrolled on the online prescription management system.
- Patients with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.
- Patients reported that the appointment system was easy to use.
- The practice's GP patient survey results were in line with local and national averages for questions relating to access to care and treatment.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

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

- Information about how to make a complaint or raise concerns was available. Staff explained how they would treat patients who made complaints with compassion. Two complaints had been received in the last year and both had been dealt with according to the practice complaints procedure.
- The complaint policy and procedures were in line with recognised guidance and included verbal complaints.

Please refer to the evidence tables for further information.

Are services well-led?

We rated the practice as good for providing a well-led service.

Leadership capacity and capability

- Leaders had the experience, capacity and skills to deliver the practice strategy and address risks to it.
- They were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services. They understood the challenges and were addressing them, for example by planning future measures to accommodate more patients as programmes for building new houses were planned for the local area
- Leaders at all levels were visible and approachable. They worked closely with staff and others to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership. Staff we spoke with were complimentary about GPs and practice management and told us they were well supported.
- The practice had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the practice and a future need to provide increased clinical capacity.

Vision and strategy

The practice had a clear vision and credible strategy to deliver high quality care and promote good outcomes for patients.

- There was a clear vision and set of values which placed treating patients with dignity and respect at its core. This was based on the values of providing the highest quality healthcare to patients and develop a mutually encouraging relationship within the Whitestone community. The practice developed its vision, values and strategy jointly with patients, staff and external partners. This included the local authority and other local NHS services.
- A business development plan was in place. Plans included examining options to re-locate the practice within the local area as it would not be possible to develop the existing building. With local partner organisations, an Assisted Care Village was proposed, which would house the practice within a Health & Wellbeing Hub.
- Staff were aware of and understood the vision, values and strategy and their role in achieving them. Practice performance was reviewed in the light of this at a practice meeting held every four to six weeks.

- The practice monitored progress against delivery of the strategy.

Culture

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

- Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice. They told us how leadership had an 'open door' policy and were always approachable.
- The practice focused on the needs of patients.
- Leaders and managers had procedures in place to act on behaviour and performance inconsistent with the vision and values of the practice, although they had not been needed in recent years.
- Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated when responding to incidents and complaints. We saw evidence to demonstrate that patients were fully communicated with when incidents occurred or complaints were made. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the duty of candour.
- Staff we spoke with told us they were able to raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed and they would be treated fairly.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they need. This included appraisal and career development conversations. All staff received annual appraisals. Staff were supported to meet the requirements of professional revalidation where necessary and all professional registrations were up to date.
- Clinical staff, including nurses, were considered valued members of the practice team. They were given protected time for professional development and evaluation of their clinical work.
- The practice actively promoted equality and diversity. It identified and addressed the causes of any workforce inequality. Staff had received equality and diversity training. Staff felt they were treated equally and fairly.

Governance arrangements

There were clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

Are services well-led?

- The staff structure was clearly defined and staff were aware of their own roles and responsibilities and who they reported to. The practice provided additional support and training to ensure staff were developed within those roles.
- A programme of continuous clinical and internal audit was used to monitor quality and to make improvements.
- Policies and procedures were tailored to the practice and were available to all staff. They were reviewed annually and staff were informed of any changes.
- Staff were clear on their roles and accountabilities including in respect of safeguarding and infection prevention and control.
- Practice leaders had established policies, procedures and activities to ensure safety and assured themselves that they were operating as intended.

Managing risks, issues and performance

There were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

There was an effective process to identify, understand, monitor and address current and future risks including risks to patient safety. This included future demand that would be placed on the practice as the local population grew.

The practice had processes to manage current and future performance. Performance of employed clinical staff could be demonstrated through audit of their consultations, prescribing and referral decisions. Practice leaders had oversight of Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) alerts, incidents, and complaints. When we discussed the management of these with practice staff, it was clear procedures were appropriately followed.

Clinical audit had a positive impact on quality of care and outcomes for patients. There was clear evidence of action to change practice to improve quality.

The practice had plans in place and had trained staff for major incidents. A business continuity plan detailed what would happen in a range of emergency situations, including the sudden unavailability of the practice building. Copies of this were kept by key staff off-site for use in emergency.

The practice implemented service developments and where efficiency changes were made this was with input from clinicians to understand their impact on the quality of care.

Appropriate and accurate information

The practice acted on appropriate and accurate information.

- Quality and operational information was used to ensure and improve performance which was regularly reviewed in practice meetings and clinical meetings. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.
- The practice used performance information which was reported and monitored and management and staff were held to account. This was linked to staff appraisal and training.
- The information used to monitor performance and the delivery of quality care was accurate and useful. There were plans to address any identified weaknesses.
- The practice used information technology systems to monitor and improve the quality of care. For example, the practice had started to encourage a greater use of its on-line services by discussing it with patients who had not registered.
- The practice submitted data or notifications to external organisations as required.
- There were robust arrangements in line with data security standards for the availability, integrity and confidentiality of patient identifiable data, records and data management systems.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The practice involved patients, the public, staff and external partners to support high-quality sustainable services.

- A full and diverse range of patients', staff and external partners' views and concerns were encouraged, heard and acted on to shape services and culture.
- The practice had an active patient participation group (PPG) which ran or worked with a large number of community projects. This included an allotment project, an information technology group and a locally run carer's café. The practice's projects had recently been featured on BBC Midlands Today. The practice had been awarded the 2018 Warwickshire County Councillors Award for Volunteering Group Achievements.

Are services well-led?

- The service was transparent, collaborative and open with stakeholders about performance.
- Many members of staff were long-serving and the practice had a low staff turnover rate.

Continuous improvement and innovation

There were systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

- The lead GP had been selected for the NHS England GP Coaching Programme and invited by NHS England to join the Virtual Academy of Leading Larger Scale Change.
- NHS England had recognised Whitestone Surgery as a lead practice for digital inclusion.
- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels within the practice. GPs had a clear plan of future developments and a 'wish list' which had been openly discussed with staff.
- The practice made use of internal and external reviews of incidents and complaints. Learning was shared and used to make improvements.
- The practice aimed to provide 'joined up' healthcare'. The lead GP and practice management encouraged a 'whole person' approach to care to ensure patients' needs could be met medically, holistically and socially.
- A 'Weekly Book of Innovations' was used to capture ideas and suggestions.
- The practice was developing a mobile phone app to automate the 'annual health MOT' and allow patients to log health data on a daily basis. This would be designed to work alongside and complement (not replace) existing online appointment and prescription management systems.

Please refer to the evidence tables for further information.