

Dr. Shakti Gandecha

Bulwell Dental Practice

Inspection report

1 St Albans Road
Bulwell
Nottingham
NG6 9JQ
Tel: 01159171444

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced focussed inspection on 14 May 2021 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 asked the following three questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- 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 well-led?

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

Summary of findings

Background

Bulwell Dental Practice is located in the Bulwell area of Nottingham and provides NHS dental care and treatment for adults and children.

There is level access to the practice for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs, and a removable ramp is available internally to overcome a small step. There is roadside car parking available near the practice.

The dental team includes one dentist, and three dental nurses who also work as receptionists. The practice has two treatment rooms, one of which is on the ground floor.

The practice is owned by an individual. They have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations about how the practice is run.

During the inspection we spoke with one dentist, and two dental nurses. We looked at practice policies and procedures and other records about how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday: 10am to 6pm

Tuesday to Friday: 10am to 1pm.

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.
- Improvements could be made to the system for the security of NHS prescription pads.
- The provider had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- The provider had effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked as a team.

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

- Improve the security of NHS prescription pads in the practice and ensure there are systems in place to track and monitor their use.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We asked the following question(s).

Are services safe?	No action	✓
Are services effective?	No action	✓
Are services well-led?	No action	✓

Are services safe?

Our findings

We found that 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. There was a designated lead person for safeguarding alerts within the practice. They had completed safeguarding training to the required level.

The provider had a system to highlight vulnerable patients and patients who required other support such as with mobility or communication, within dental care records.

The provider also had a system to identify adults that were in other vulnerable situations for example, those who were known to have experienced female genital mutilation.

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. There was a lead for infection control as recommended by the published guidance. The lead had undertaken infection control training in line with their continuing professional development and had the necessary training certificates in their file.

The provider had introduced procedures to minimise the risks to patients and staff related to COVID-19. These included reduced patient numbers, social distancing, personal protective equipment for staff, and face coverings for patients and any chaperones. In line with the standard operating procedure produced by the Chief Dental Officer additional measures had been introduced when completing aerosol generating procedures (AGP's). These are procedures which will produce a splatter (for example drilling into a tooth) and therefore increase the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Increased cleaning regimes had been introduced and the time between procedures had also increased to allow any air borne particles to settle and be cleaned.

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.

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 identified for action, this had been delayed by COVID-19, but were now being arranged. Records of water testing and dental unit water line management were maintained. The risk assessment had been completed by an external company and kept under review. The most recent review was in February 2020.

We saw effective cleaning schedules to ensure the practice was kept clean. During the inspection we saw the practice was visibly clean.

Are services safe?

The provider had policies and procedures in place to ensure clinical waste was segregated and stored appropriately in line with guidance. Measures were taken to ensure clinical waste was stored securely, and bags were marked so that their source at the practice could be identified.

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 a Speak-Up 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 and had checks in place for agency and locum staff. These reflected the relevant legislation. We looked at three staff recruitment records. These showed the provider followed their recruitment procedure.

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 appliances.

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements. This had been completed in-house and had last been reviewed in October 2020. An external company with expertise in fire safety have been booked to carry out a new assessment in the coming weeks. Training records showed all staff had completed fire awareness training within the last twelve months. We saw there were fire extinguishers and fire detection systems throughout the building and fire exits were kept clear.

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

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

We saw evidence the dentist justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The provider carried out radiography audits every six months following current guidance and legislation. The provider had registered with the Health and Safety Executive in line with changes to legislation relating to radiography. Local rules for the X-ray units were available in line with the current regulations. The provider used also rectangular collimation on the X-ray machines and digital X-rays to reduce the risks to patients.

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.

A Covid-19 risk assessment had been completed. We observed staff were wearing personal protective equipment and a social distancing regime was in place.

Are services safe?

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, with the last review in December 2020.

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.

Staff had completed sepsis awareness training. This helped ensure staff triage appointments effectively to manage patients who present with dental infection and where necessary refer patients for specialist care. Sepsis posters and prompts were available in the waiting room and staff areas of the practice.

Staff knew how to respond to a medical emergency and had completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year. Staff had training certificates in their files as evidence of their training.

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 and product data safety sheets 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 the clinician 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.

Medical histories were a hard copy, but information was updated and transferred directly into the dental care records and were checked by the dentist at each visit.

Patient referrals to other service providers contained specific information which allowed appropriate and timely referrals in line with practice protocols and current guidance.

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.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

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

There was a stock control system of the emergency 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 was aware of current guidance with regards to prescribing medicines.

We saw the practice occasionally issued NHS prescriptions to patients. We noted there were no records of NHS prescriptions held in the practice as described in current guidance. The provider assured us a log would be introduced to give an audit trail and increase the security of prescription pads at the practice.

Antimicrobial prescribing audits were being completed which indicated the dentist was following current guidelines. The dentist told us the system was under review to ensure better data was captured and analysed.

Are services safe?

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 issues. Staff monitored and reviewed incidents. This helped staff to understand 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 practice had systems and processes to record, investigate and analyse any safety incidents that occurred. These were discussed with the rest of the dental practice team to prevent such occurrences happening again.

The provider had a system for receiving and acting on safety 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. The practice reviewed regular Coronavirus (COVID-19) advisory information and alerts. Information was provided to staff and displayed for patients to enable staff to act on any suspected cases. Patients and visitors were requested to carry out hand hygiene and wear a mask on entering the premises.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

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

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep the dental practitioner up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw the clinician assessed patients' needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols. This included involvement with the Local Area Team, where updates and clinical discussion were shared.

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.

Staff were aware of and were involved with national oral health campaigns and local schemes which supported patients to live healthier lives, for example, local stop smoking services. They directed patients to these schemes when appropriate.

The dentist described 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.

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. Patients confirmed their dentist listened to them and gave them clear information about their treatment.

The practice's consent policy 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. The team were aware of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and understood their responsibilities under the act when treating adults who might not be able to make informed decisions.

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

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

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 relevant information was recorded in a detailed and clear manner and was easily accessible for clinical staff. Clinical records were secure and either password protected on the computer or kept in locked cupboards.

We saw that dental care records were audited on a six-monthly basis.

Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles. Staff files contained training certificates and there was oversight of staff training by the dentist.

Staff new to the practice including agency staff 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. Staff monitored referrals through an electronic referral and tracking system to ensure they were responded to promptly.

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

We found the provider had the capacity, values and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

The provider was knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of the service. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.

The provider was visible and approachable. Staff told us they worked closely with them to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.

We saw the provider had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills.

The provider had a strategy for delivering the service which was in line with health and social priorities across the region. Staff planned the services to meet the needs of the practice population. The COVID-19 pandemic had reduced numbers of patients seen at the practice. However, the provider had taken steps to ensure the maximum number of patients who could receive an appointment, received one. Provided this could be done safely and giving due consideration to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. All staff had an individual COVID-19 risk assessment.

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. Managers had systems to identify and act on behaviour and performance that was not consistent with the vision and values of the practice. These included a range of human resources policies and procedures.

Staff discussed their training needs at annual appraisals and 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 where appropriate in the staff folders.

The practice held regular staff meetings to share information and support staff. Minutes were taken of the meetings as a record of discussions and for staff to be able to refer back to decisions taken at the meeting.

The dentist took part in regular formal clinical meetings with other dentists from the area, this included an annual appraisal.

The staff focused on the needs of patients. The ground floor treatment room had a removable ramp which made accessing treatment for patients with mobility issues easy.

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 provider 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 dentist had overall responsibility for the day to day running of the service and the management and clinical leadership of the practice. Staff knew the management arrangements and their roles and responsibilities.

Are services well-led?

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. We saw that policies and procedures were regularly reviewed and there was a quality assurance programme in place.

We saw there were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

Quality and operational information, for example surveys and audits were used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients. The patient surveys had been interrupted by COVID-19, but evidence showed that there were systems in place for monitoring of the service and for feedback from staff, patients and visitors.

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

Patients were encouraged to complete the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT). This is a national programme to allow patients to provide feedback on NHS services they have used. COVID-19 had meant this had been suspended, but there were plans to reintroduce the FFT when COVID-19 allowed.

Patients had tended to provide feedback using on-line sources in recent months, and this was becoming increasingly popular.

The practice gathered feedback from staff through meetings, surveys, 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.

The provider had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included regular audits of dental care records, radiographs and infection prevention and control. Staff kept records of the results of these audits and the resulting action plans and improvements.

The provider showed a commitment to learning and improvement and valued the contributions made to the team by individual members of staff. There were systems in place to support staff in training and meeting the requirements of their continuing professional development.

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