

Mrs Rachael Slocombe

# Warren House Dental Practice

## Inspection Report

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### Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 30 January 2017 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**

Warren House Dental Practice operates from the first floor of a converted commercial property and provides private dentistry for adults and NHS treatment for children. The practice is situated in the town of Cranleigh, Surrey. The practice has four dental treatment rooms with decontamination procedures carried out in a designated area within each treatment room

The practice team consists of six dentists, two of whom have a specialist interest in a particular branch of dentistry; one dentist has a specialist interest in periodontics (gum problems) and another in surgical dentistry. There are also six dental nurses and two part-time dental hygienists.

The practice opens Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5pm.

There are arrangements in place to ensure patients receive urgent dental assistance when the practice is closed. This is provided by an out-of-hours service. If patients called the practice when it was closed, an answerphone message gives the telephone number patients should ring depending on their symptoms.

# Summary of findings

Mrs Rachael Slocombe is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as an individual provider. 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.

The inspection took place over one day and was carried out by a CQC inspector and a dental specialist advisor.

Before the inspection we sent Care Quality Commission (CQC) comments cards to the practice for patients to complete to tell us about their experience of the practice. We collected 14 completed cards. All the comments from patients were positive about the care they received from the practice. They were very complimentary about the friendly and caring attitude of the dental staff.

## **Our key findings were:**

- We found that the practice ethos was to provide patient centred dental care in a relaxed and friendly environment.
- Effective clinical leadership was provided by the practice owner
- Patients' needs were assessed and care was planned in line with current guidance such as from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).
- There were effective systems in place to reduce and minimise the risk and spread of infection.
- The practice had effective safeguarding processes in place and staff understood their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children living in vulnerable circumstances.

- Staff reported incidents and kept records of these and discussed information for shared learning.
- Equipment, such as the air compressor, autoclave (steriliser), fire extinguishers, and X-ray equipment had all been checked for effectiveness and had been regularly serviced.
- Patients indicated that they felt they were listened to and that they received good care from a helpful and caring practice team.
- The practice ensured staff maintained the necessary skills and competence to support the needs of patients.
- The practice had implemented clear procedures for managing comments, concerns or complaints.
- The provider had a clear vision for the practice and staff told us they were well supported by the management team.
- Governance arrangements and audits were robust and effective in improving the quality and safety of the services.

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

- Review the arrangements for providing the hygienists with the support of an appropriately trained member of the dental team whenever possible.
- Consider providing an annual statement in relation to infection prevention control required under The Health and Social Care Act 2008: 'Code of Practice about the prevention and control of infections and related guidance is prepared.

# Summary of findings

## The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We always ask the following five questions of services.

### Are services safe?

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

The practice had arrangements in place for infection control, clinical waste control, management of medical emergencies at the practice and dental radiography (X-rays). We found that all the equipment used in the dental practice was properly maintained. The practice took their responsibilities for patient safety seriously and staff were aware of the importance of identifying, investigating and learning from patient safety incidents. Staff received safeguarding training and were aware of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

No action



### Are services effective?

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

The dental care provided was evidence based and focused on the needs of the patients. The practice used current national professional guidance including that from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to guide their practice. We saw examples of positive teamwork within the practice and evidence of good communication with other dental professionals. The staff received professional training and development appropriate to their roles and learning needs. Staff where appropriate were registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and were meeting the requirements of their professional registration.

No action



### Are services caring?

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

Patients commented that the whole team were welcoming, professional, caring, respectful and friendly. They were very happy with the quality of treatment provided. During the inspection we observed the general atmosphere in the practice was calm, welcoming and friendly.

All the staff we spoke with were focussed on a 'patient centred' approach to treating patients. They were aware of the importance of protecting patients' privacy and dignity. We observed that staff always kept the treatment room doors closed when patients were in the room.

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 were able to access treatment within a reasonable time frame and had adequate time scheduled with the dentist to assess their needs and receive treatment. The practice treated everybody equally and welcomed patients from a range of different backgrounds, cultures and religions.

The practice had a complaints procedure that explained to patients the process to follow. The practice followed the correct processes to resolve any complaints.

No action



# Summary of findings

## Are services well-led?

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

Effective clinical leadership was evident during our inspection underpinned by an effective governance systems and processes.

The practice had arrangements in place for monitoring and improving the services provided for patients. Regular checks and audits were completed to ensure the practice was safe and patient's needs were being met.

Staff described an open and transparent culture where they were comfortable raising and discussing concerns with the management team. They were confident in their abilities to address any issues as they arose.

No action



# Warren House Dental Practice

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

We carried out an announced, comprehensive inspection on 30 January 2017. The inspection took place over one day and was carried out by a CQC inspector and a dental specialist advisor.

During our inspection visit, we reviewed policy documents and staff training and recruitment records. We spoke to six members of staff, conducted a tour of the practice and looked at the storage arrangements for emergency medicines and equipment. We were shown the decontamination procedures for dental instruments and the systems that supported the patient dental care records.

We reviewed 14 Care Quality Commission (CQC) comment cards that had been completed by patients in the two weeks prior to our inspection. All the comments were positive.

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

There was an effective system in place for reporting accidents and incidents. There was a practice policy for staff to follow for the reporting of incidents, which had been followed in the case of one incident reported during 2016. We found that the case had been appropriately investigated and discussed at a practice meeting and any learning shared. Staff understood the process for accident reporting, including the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). There had not been any such incidents in the past 12 months.

The dentists were aware of the Duty of Candour. They told us they were committed to operating in an open and transparent manner; they would always inform patients if anything had gone wrong and offer an apology in relation to this. [Duty of candour is a requirement under The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 on a registered person who must act in an open and transparent way with relevant persons in relation to care and treatment provided to service users in carrying on a regulated activity].

### Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

We spoke to a dental nurse about the prevention of needle stick injuries. They explained that the treatment of sharps and sharps waste was in accordance with the current EU directive with respect to safe sharp guidelines, thus helping to protect staff from blood borne diseases. The practice used a system whereby needles were not manually resheathed using the hands following administration of a local anaesthetic to a patient. The practice used a special safety syringe for the administration of dental local anaesthetics to prevent needle stick injuries from occurring. Dentists were responsible for the disposal of used sharps and needles. A practice protocol was in place should a needle stick injury occur. The systems and processes we observed were in line with the current EU directive on the use of safer sharps.

We asked the provider how they treated the use of instruments used during root canal treatment. They explained that these instruments were single patient use only. They also explained that root canal treatment was carried out where practically possible using a rubber dam.

(A rubber dam is a thin sheet of rubber used by dentists to isolate the tooth being treated and to protect patients from inhaling or swallowing debris or small instruments used during root canal work). Patients can be assured that the practice followed appropriate guidance issued by the British Endodontic Society in relation to the use of the rubber dam.

The practice had clear policies and procedures in place for child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults. This included contact details for the local authority safeguarding team, social services and other agencies, such as the Care Quality Commission. This information was displayed in the treatment rooms and on file in the reception area. The provider acted as the lead for safeguarding and all the staff we spoke with were aware of this. The staff demonstrated they had a good understanding of what they needed to do if they suspected potential abuse.

We saw evidence that staff had completed safeguarding training to the appropriate levels and were able to describe what might be signs of abuse or neglect and how they would raise concerns with the safeguarding lead. There had been no safeguarding issues reported by the practice to the local safeguarding team.

Staff were aware of the procedures for whistleblowing if they had concerns about another member of staff's performance. Staff told us they were confident about raising such issues internally with a member of the management team.

### Medical emergencies

The practice had arrangements in place to deal with medical emergencies at the practice. The practice had an automated external defibrillator (AED), a portable electronic device that analyses life threatening irregularities of the heart and is able to deliver an electrical shock to attempt to restore a normal heart rhythm. Staff had received training in how to use this equipment. The practice had in place emergency medicines as set out in the British National Formulary guidance for dealing with common medical emergencies in a dental practice. The practice had access to oxygen along with other related items such as manual breathing aids and portable suction in line with the Resuscitation Council UK guidelines. The emergency medicines and oxygen we saw were all in date and stored in a central location known to all staff. The

# Are services safe?

practice held training sessions each year for the whole team so that they could maintain their competence in dealing with medical emergencies. Staff we spoke with demonstrated they knew how to respond if a person suddenly became unwell.

## Staff recruitment

The practice team consists of six dentists, two of whom have a specialist interest in a particular branch of dentistry; one dentist has a specialist interest in periodontics (gum problems) and another in surgical dentistry. There are also six dental nurses and two part-time dental hygienists.

There was a recruitment policy in place and we reviewed the recruitment files for eight staff members. We saw that relevant checks to ensure that the person being recruited was safe and competent for the role had been carried out. This included DBS checks for all members of staff, a check of registration with the General Dental Council (GDC) where appropriate, references, ID checks and employment profiles. All staff were up to date with their Hepatitis B immunisations and records were kept on file. (The 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).

## Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

The practice had arrangements in place to monitor health and safety and deal with foreseeable emergencies. The practice maintained a comprehensive system of policies and risk assessments which included radiation, fire safety, general health and safety and those pertaining to all the equipment used in the practice. The practice had in place a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) file. This file contained details of the way substances and materials used in dentistry should be handled and the precautions taken to prevent harm to staff and patients.

The practice had a system in place to respond promptly to Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) advice. MHRA alerts, and alerts from other agencies. These were disseminated at staff meetings, where appropriate.

There was a business continuity plan in place to ensure continuity of care in the event that the practice's premises

could not be used for any reason, such as a flood or fire. The plan consisted of a detailed list of contacts and advice on how to continue care without compromising the safety of any patient or member of staff.

## Infection control

There were effective systems in place to reduce the risk and spread of infection within the practice. The practice had in place an effective infection control policy that was regularly reviewed. It was demonstrated through direct observation of the cleaning process and a review of practice protocols that HTM 01 05 (national guidance for infection prevention and control in dental practices) Essential Quality Requirements for infection control was being met. It was observed that audit of infection control processes carried out in May and December 2016 confirmed compliance with HTM 01 05 guidelines.

We saw that the four dental treatment rooms, waiting area, reception and toilets were visibly clean and tidy. Clear zoning demarking clean from dirty areas was apparent in all treatment rooms. Hand washing facilities were available including liquid soap and paper towel dispensers in each of the treatment rooms. Hand washing protocols were also displayed appropriately in various areas of the practice and bare below the elbow working was observed.

The drawers of a treatment room were inspected and these were clean, ordered and free from clutter. Each treatment room had the appropriate routine personal protective equipment available for staff use, this included protective gloves and visors.

The dental nurse we spoke with described to us the end-to-end process of infection control procedures at the practice. They explained the decontamination of the general treatment room environment following the treatment of a patient. They demonstrated how the working surfaces, dental unit and dental chair were decontaminated. This included the treatment of the dental water lines.

The dental water lines were maintained to prevent the growth and spread of Legionella bacteria (Legionella is a term for particular bacteria which can contaminate water systems in buildings); they described the method they used which was in line with current HTM 01 05 guidelines. We saw that a Legionella risk assessment had been carried out at the practice by a competent person in November 2016 and was subsequently reviewed by the practice on an



# Are services safe?

annual basis thereafter. The recommended procedures contained in the report were carried out and logged appropriately. These measures ensured that patients and staff were protected from the risk of infection due to *Legionella*.

The practice carried out instrument re-processing in a designated area in each treatment room. The dental nurse we spoke with demonstrated the process from taking the dirty instruments through to clean and ready for use again. The process of cleaning, inspection, sterilisation, packaging and storage of instruments followed a well-defined system of zoning from dirty through to clean.

The practice used a system of manual scrubbing using the two-bowl arrangement (one bowl for scrubbing and one bowl for rinsing) for the initial cleaning process, following inspection with an illuminated magnifier; the instruments were placed in an autoclave (a device for sterilising dental and medical instruments). When the instruments had been sterilised, they were pouched and stored until required. All pouches were dated with an expiry date in accordance with current guidelines.

We were shown the systems in place to ensure that the autoclaves used in the decontamination process were working effectively. It was observed that the data sheets used to record the essential daily and weekly validation checks of the sterilisation cycles were complete and up to date.

The segregation and storage of clinical waste was in line with current guidelines laid down by the Department of Health. We observed that sharps containers, clinical waste bags and municipal waste were properly maintained in accordance with current guidelines. The practice used an appropriate contractor to remove clinical waste from the practice. This was stored in a separate locked container adjacent to the practice prior to collection by the waste contractor. Waste consignment notices were available for inspection.

We saw that general environmental cleaning was carried out according to a cleaning plan developed by the practice. Cleaning materials and equipment were stored in accordance with current national guidelines.

## Equipment and medicines

Equipment checks were regularly carried out in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. For example, the three autoclaves had been serviced and calibrated in May 2016. The practice's X-ray machine had been serviced and calibrated as specified under current national regulations in December 2016. Portable appliance testing (PAT) had been carried out in February 2015 and was due to be carried out again in February 2017. We observed that the practice had equipment to deal with minor first aid problems such as minor eye problems and body fluid. Prescription pads were stored in a safe overnight to prevent theft or misuse by staff or unauthorised persons. The practice also dispensed their own medicines as part of a patients' dental treatment for certain oral surgery procedures. These medicines were a range of antibiotics, the dispensing procedures were in accordance with current secondary dispensing guidelines and medicines were stored according to manufacturer's instructions.

## Radiography (X-rays)

We were shown documentation in line with the Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999 and Ionising Radiation Medical Exposure Regulations 2000 (IRMER). Included in this documentation were the names of the Radiation Protection Advisor and the Radiation Protection Supervisor and the necessary documentation pertaining to the maintenance of the X-ray equipment and a copy of the local rules.

We saw that a radiological audit had been carried out in during 2015-16 for all dentists. Dental care records we saw where X-rays had been taken showed that dental X-rays were justified, reported on and quality assured. These findings showed that practice was acting in accordance with national radiological guidelines and patients and staff were protected from unnecessary exposure to radiation. We saw training records that showed all staff where appropriate had received training for core radiological knowledge under IRMER 2000 Regulations.



# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

## Our findings

### Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The dentist we spoke with carried out consultations, assessments and treatment in line with recognised general professional guidelines. The dentist described to us how they carried out their assessment of patients for routine care. The assessment began with the patient completing a medical history questionnaire disclosing any health conditions, medicines being taken and any allergies suffered. We saw evidence that the medical history was updated at subsequent visits. This was followed by an examination covering the condition of a patient's teeth, gums and soft tissues and the signs of mouth cancer. Patients were then made aware of the condition of their oral health and whether it had changed since the last appointment. Following the clinical assessment, the diagnosis was then discussed with the patient and treatment options explained in detail.

Where relevant, preventative dental information was given to improve the outcome for the patient. This included dietary advice and general oral hygiene instruction such as tooth brushing techniques or recommended tooth care products. The patient dental care record was updated with the proposed treatment after discussing options with the patient. A treatment plan was then given to each patient and this included the cost involved. Patients were monitored through follow-up appointments and these were scheduled in line with their individual requirements.

Dental care records that were shown demonstrated that the findings of the assessment and details of the treatment carried out were recorded appropriately. We saw details of the condition of the gums using the basic periodontal examination (BPE) scores and soft tissues lining the mouth. (The BPE tool is a simple and rapid screening tool used by dentists to indicate the level of treatment need in relation to a patient's gums). These were carried out where appropriate during a dental health assessment.

The practice also employed dental hygienists to improve the outcomes for patients. The hygienist we spoke with worked within their scope of practice to prescriptions provided by the dentist which included the treatment of patients suffering from moderate to severe forms of gum disease.

### Health promotion & prevention

The practice was very focussed on the prevention of dental disease and the maintenance of good oral health. To facilitate this aim the practice appointed a number of dental hygienists to work alongside of the dentists in delivering preventative dental care. The dentist we spoke with explained that children at high risk of tooth decay were identified and were offered fluoride varnish applications or the prescription of high concentrated fluoride tooth paste to keep their teeth in a healthy condition. They also placed fissure sealants (special plastic coatings on the biting surfaces of permanent back teeth in children) where teeth were particularly vulnerable to dental decay. Other preventative advice included tooth brushing techniques explained to patients in a way they understood and dietary, smoking and alcohol advice was given to them where appropriate. This was in line with the Department of Health guidelines on prevention known as 'Delivering Better Oral Health'. Dental care records we observed demonstrated that dentists and dental hygienists had given oral health advice to patients. The practice also sold a range of dental hygiene products to maintain healthy teeth and gums; these were available in the reception area.

### Staffing

Staff we spoke with told us staffing levels were suitable for the size of the service and they received appropriate professional development and training. We checked some of the staff recruitment files and saw that this was the case. The training covered all of the mandatory requirements for registration issued by the General Dental Council. This included responding to emergencies, safeguarding, infection control and X-ray training.

Staff told us they were engaged in an appraisal process on a yearly basis. This reviewed their performance and identified their training and development needs. We reviewed some of the notes kept from these meetings and saw that each member of staff had the opportunity to put a personal development plan in place.

The dental hygienist we spoke with did not always work with chairside support in accordance with the guidance set out in the General Dental Council's guide 'Standards for the Dental Team' specifically standard 6.2.2 working with other members of the dental team.

### Working with other services

Dentists could refer patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary services if the treatment required

# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

was not provided by the practice. The practice used referral criteria and referral forms developed by other primary and secondary care providers such as oral surgery and orthodontic providers.

## **Consent to care and treatment**

The dentist explained how they implemented the principles of informed consent; all the dentists had a very clear understanding of consent issues. They explained how individual treatment options, risks, benefits and costs were discussed with each patient and then documented in a written treatment plan. They stressed the importance of communication skills when explaining care and treatment to patients to help ensure they understood their treatment options. They went on to say that patients would be given time to think about the treatment options presented to them.

The dentist went on to explain how they would obtain consent from a patient who suffered with any mental impairment that may mean that they might be unable to fully understand the implications of their treatment. If there was any doubt about their ability to understand or consent to the treatment, then treatment would be postponed. They went on to say they would involve relatives and carers if appropriate to ensure that the best interests of the patient were served as part of the process. This followed the guidelines of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Staff were familiar with the concept of Gillick competence in respect of the care and treatment of children under 16. Gillick competence is used to help assess whether a child has the maturity to make their own decisions and to understand the implications of those decisions.

# Are services caring?

## Our findings

### **Respect, dignity, compassion & empathy**

Treatment rooms were situated away from the main waiting areas and we saw that doors were closed always when patients were with dentists and dental hygienist. Conversations between patients and dentists could not be heard from outside the treatment rooms which protected patient's privacy. Patients' clinical records were stored electronically and in paper form. Computers were password protected and regularly backed up to secure storage with paper records stored in a secure area of the practice to prevent unauthorised access by the public. Practice computer screens were not overlooked which ensured patients' confidential information could not be viewed at reception. Staff we spoke with were aware of the importance of providing patients with privacy and maintaining confidentiality.

The Care Quality Commission comments cards we received all made positive remarks about the staff's caring and helpful attitude. They all described a very positive view of the service the practice provided. Patients indicated that they felt comfortable and relaxed with their dentist/dental hygienist and that they were made to feel at ease during consultations and treatments. Patients who were nervous about dental treatment indicated that the dentist/dental hygienist was calm, listened to their concerns, and gave them reassurance throughout the processes of the dental treatments. We also observed staff were welcoming and helpful when patients arrived for their appointment or made enquiries over the phone.

Patients commented that the whole team were welcoming, professional, caring, respectful and friendly. They were very happy with the quality of treatment provided. During the inspection we observed the general atmosphere in the practice was calm, welcoming and friendly.

All the staff we spoke with were focussed on a 'patient centred' approach to treating patients. They were aware of the importance of protecting patients' privacy and dignity. We observed that staff always kept the treatment room doors closed when patients were in the room.

### **Involvement in decisions about care and treatment**

The practice provided clear treatment plans to their patients that detailed possible treatment options and indicative costs. A poster detailing NHS was displayed on the patient notice board in the waiting area. Information was also available in the waiting area and on the practice website that detailed the costs of private treatment. The dentist we spoke with paid attention to patient involvement when drawing up individual care plans. We saw evidence in the records we looked at that the dentists recorded the information they had provided to patients about their treatment and the options open to them.

The patient feedback we received via comments cards confirmed that patients felt appropriately involved in the planning of their treatment and were satisfied with the descriptions given by staff.

# Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

## Our findings

### Responding to and meeting patients' needs

We looked at examples of information available to people. We saw that the practice waiting area displayed a wide variety of information including leaflets about the services the practice offered, how to make a complaint and information about maintaining good oral health. The practice website also contained useful information to patients such as details about each dentist and how to provide feedback on the services provided.

The practice had a system in place to schedule enough time to assess and meet patients' needs. The dentists and dental hygienists could decide on the length of time needed for their patient's consultation and treatment. The reception staff were provided with an appointment system on the practice computer that indicated the length of time that was generally preferred for any given treatment. The staff we spoke with told us they scheduled additional time for patients depending on their knowledge of the patient's needs, including scheduling additional time for patients who were known to be anxious or nervous.

Some of the feedback we received from patients confirmed that they could get an appointment within a reasonable time frame and that they did not feel rushed and had adequate time scheduled with the dentist to assess their needs and receive treatment.

### Tackling inequity and promoting equality

The practice had recognised the needs of different groups in the planning of its service. Staff told us they treated everybody equally and welcomed patients from a range of different backgrounds, cultures and religions. Staff told us they would access a translation service if required and that they could provide written information for people who were hard of hearing and use large print documents for patients with some visual impairment.

We asked staff how they would support patients that had difficulty with hearing or vision. They explained how they would face the patient and speak slowly and clearly

especially for someone who had hearing difficulties to allow the patient to lip read. Staff told us they would assist a blind patient or any patient who had difficulty with mobility by physically guiding and holding their arm if needed.

As the building was leased the provider was unable to make the necessary adjustments to meet wheelchair accessibility. Staff explained that any patient's using a wheelchair or with limited mobility were referred to a local practice that was within Cranleigh village.

### Access to the service

The practice opens Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5pm.

The practice displayed its opening hours on their premises, on the practice website and in the practice information leaflet available in the waiting area.

We asked the staff about access to the service in an emergency or outside of normal opening hours. They told us the answer phone message gave details about how to access out-of-hours emergency treatment.

The reception staff told us that patients, who needed to be seen urgently, for example, because they were experiencing dental pain, were seen on the same day that they alerted the practice to their concerns. The feedback we received via comments cards confirmed that patients had good access to the dentist in the event of needing emergency treatment.

### Concerns & complaints

There was a complaints policy which described how the practice handled formal and informal complaints from patients. Information about how to make a complaint was displayed on the website, in the reception area and in the practice information leaflet. The staff explained if patients were not happy they would discuss the issues with one of the members of the management team so the problem could be resolved quickly and amicably.

The provider told us they received no complaints in the last year.

# Are services well-led?

## Our findings

### **Governance arrangements**

The governance arrangements for this location were effective. There was a system of policies, protocols and procedures in place covering all the clinical governance criteria expected in a dental practice. The systems and processes were well maintained and files were kept that were regularly reviewed and updated. Records, including those related to patient care and treatments, as well as staff employment, were kept accurately.

The staff fully understood all of the governance systems because there was a clear line of communication running through the practice. This was evidenced through the effective use of staff meetings where relevant information was shared and recorded, and through the high level of knowledge about systems and processes which staff were able to demonstrate to us via our discussions on the day of the inspection.

There were regular informal practice meetings to discuss practice arrangements and audit results as well as providing time for staff training.

### **Leadership, openness and transparency**

Effective leadership was provided by the provider. The practice ethos focussed on providing patient centred dental care in a relaxed and friendly environment. The comment cards we saw reflected this approach. The staff we spoke with described a transparent culture which encouraged candour, openness and honesty. Staff said they felt comfortable about raising concerns with the practice owner. There was a no blame culture within the practice. They felt they were listened to and responded to

when they did raise a concern. We found staff to be hard working, caring and committed to the work they did. All the staff we spoke with demonstrated a firm understanding of the principles of clinical governance in dentistry and were happy with the practice facilities. Staff reported that the provider was proactive and resolved problems very quickly. As a result, staff were motivated and enjoyed working at the practice and were proud of the service they provided to patients.

### **Learning and improvement**

We saw evidence of systems to identify staff learning needs which were underpinned by a detailed log of completed training and a programme of clinical audit.

The practice carried out several clinical audits, these included infection control and X-ray quality. The audits demonstrated a process where the practice had analysed the results to discuss and identify where improvement actions may be needed.

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

The practice gathered feedback from patients on an ongoing basis through the Friends and Family test left at the reception desk. They reviewed responses and comments as they came in. Patients commented; they would recommend the practice to friends and family, the practice was clean, dental team were very friendly and professional.

Staff told us that the management team were open to feedback regarding the quality of the care. The appraisal system and staff meetings also provided appropriate forums for staff to give their feedback.