

Align and Smile Limited

Align and Smile Limited

Inspection Report

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Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 19 July 2016 to ask the practice the following key questions; Are services safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led?

Our findings were:

Are services safe?

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

Are services effective?

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

Are services caring?

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

Are services responsive?

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

Are services well-led?

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

Background

Align and Smile Limited located in Tower Hamlet provides a mix of NHS and private dental treatment including oral surgery, general dentistry, endodontics and periodontics and the placement of dental implants. The practice also provides under contract with NHS England orthodontics and minor oral surgery services.

Practice staffing consists of the principal dentist, four associate dentists, two orthodontists, one oral surgeon, one endodontist, one Hygienist, seven dental nurses, two receptionists, one assistant practice manager and the practice manager,

The principal dentist is the registered manager. A registered manager is a person who is registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the practice is run.

The practice is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.00am to 5.30pm, Tuesday and Thursday 9.00am to 7.30pm.

The practice facilities include four treatment rooms, two reception and waiting areas, consultation room, decontamination room, one office and a staff room/kitchen.

Summary of findings

65 patients provided feedback about the service. Patients we spoke with and those who completed comment cards were very positive about the care they received about the service. Patients told us that they were happy with the treatment and advice they had received.

Our key findings were:

- Staff had received safeguarding children and adults training and knew the processes to follow to raise any concerns. The practice had whistleblowing policies and procedure and staff were aware of these and their responsibilities to report any concerns.
- Staff had been trained to handle medical emergencies, and appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were readily available.
- We found the dentists regularly assessed each patient's gum health and took X-rays at appropriate intervals.
- There were systems in place to reduce the risk and spread of infection. Dental instruments were cleaned and sterilised in line with current guidance.
- There were systems in place to ensure that all equipment was maintained in line with manufacturer's guidelines.
- The practice ensured staff were trained and that they maintained the necessary skills and competence to support the needs of patients.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect and confidentiality was maintained.
- Patients received clear explanations about their proposed treatment, costs, benefits and risks and were involved in making decisions about it.
- Governance systems were effective and there were a range of policies and procedures in place which underpinned the management of the practice.
- The practice sought feedback from staff and patients about the services they provided and acted on this to improve its services.
- The practice had not carried out an audit in a key area, such as radiography.
- The practice had a procedure for handling and responding to complaints, which were displayed and available to patients. However improvements could be made to establish an accessible system for identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to complaints by patients.

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

- Review its audit protocols to ensure radiography audits are undertaken at regular intervals, and where applicable learning points are documented and shared with all relevant staff.
- Review its complaint handling procedures and establish an accessible system for identifying, receiving, recording, handling and responding to complaints by patients.

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 systems in place for identifying, investigating and learning from incidents relating to the safety of patients. The infection prevention and control practices at the surgery followed current national guidance. All equipment at the practice was regularly maintained, tested and monitored for safety and effectiveness.

Patients were protected against the risks of abuse or harm through the practice policies and procedures. Staff were trained to recognise and report concerns about patients' safety and welfare and had access to contact details for the local safeguarding team.

There were procedures in place for recruiting new staff and these were followed consistently. All of the appropriate checks including employment references, proof of identification and security checks were carried out when new staff were employed. The staff were suitably trained and skilled to meet patient's needs and there were sufficient numbers of staff available at all times.

The practice had undertaken a risk assessment in relation to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002 (COSHH) regulations.

No action



Are services effective?

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

The practice provided evidence-based care in accordance with relevant, published guidance, for example, from the Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP), National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Department of Health (DH) and the General Dental Council (GDC).

Health education for patients was provided by the dentists, information leaflets were available within the practice. They provided patients with advice to improve and maintain good oral health. We received feedback from patients who told us that they found their treatment successful and effective.

The practice ensured that patients were given sufficient information about their proposed treatment to enable them to give informed consent.

No action



Are services caring?

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

Patients were complimentary about the practice and how the staff treated them. Patients commented positively on how caring and helpful staff were, describing them as friendly, compassionate and professional.

Patients felt listened to and were given appropriate information and support regarding their care or treatment. They felt their dentist explained the treatment they needed in a way they could understand. Staff had a good awareness of how to support patients who may lack capacity to make decisions about their dental care and treatment.

No action



Summary of findings

Are services responsive to people's needs?

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

The practice provided friendly and personalised dental care. Patients had good access to appointments, including emergency appointments, which were available on the same day. In the event of a dental emergency outside of normal opening hours patients were directed to the mobile number of the principal dentist and '111' out of hours service and the contact details were available for patients' reference.

Patients who had difficulty understanding care and treatment options were suitably supported.

The practice had a procedure in place for dealing with complaints.

No action



Are services well-led?

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

There was a pro-active approach to identify safety issues and make improvements in procedures. There was candour, openness, honesty and transparency amongst all staff we spoke with.

Patients' views were regularly sought by way of a patient survey and these were acted upon as required. Staff commented that the principal dentist and practice manager were open to feedback regarding the quality of the care.

The practice had suitable clinical governance and risk management structures in place. Staff told us they enjoyed working at the practice and felt part of a team. Opportunities existed for staff for their professional development. Staff we spoke with were confident in their work and felt well-supported.

No action



Align and Smile Limited

Detailed findings

Background to this inspection

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

The inspection took place on the 19 July 2016 and was undertaken by a CQC inspector and a dental specialist advisor. Prior to the inspection we reviewed information submitted by the provider.

The methods used to carry out this inspection included speaking with principal dentist, practice manager, two dentists, two dental nurses and one receptionist on the day of the inspection; reviewing documents, completed patient feedback forms and undertaking observations.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following five questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions therefore formed the framework for the areas we looked at during the inspection.

Are services safe?

Our findings

Reporting, learning and improvement from incidents

The practice had systems in place to receive safety alerts, such as those from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and NHS England by email and ensure they were shared with staff working in the practice. This included forwarding them to relevant staff, discussing in meetings and also printing them for all staff reference.

The practice had an incidents and accident reporting procedure. All incidents and accidents would be reported in the incident log and accident books. There had been two accidents in the past 12 months. These were dealt with in line with the practice protocol. All staff we spoke with were aware of reporting procedures including who and how to report an incident to.

The practice manager and staff demonstrated a good understanding of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 2013) and had the appropriate documents in place to record if they had an incident. There had been no RIDDOR incidents within the past 12 months.

Reliable safety systems and processes (including safeguarding)

The practice manager was the safeguarding leads. The practice had policies and procedures in place for safeguarding adults and child protection. All staff including non-clinical staff had completed child protection and adult safeguarding training. Details of the local authority safeguarding teams were readily available, as were the relevant safeguarding escalation flowcharts and diagrams for recording incidents. This information was also displayed for staff reference. Staff we spoke with demonstrated an understanding of safeguarding issues including how to respond to suspected and actual safeguarding incidents.

The system for managing medical histories was comprehensive and robust. All patients were requested to complete medical history forms including existing medical conditions, social history and medication they were taking. Medical histories were updated at each subsequent visit. During the course of our inspection we checked dental care records to confirm the findings and saw that medical histories had been updated appropriately.

We noted that rubber dams were being routinely used in root canal treatment in line with current guidance. (A rubber dam is a thin, rectangular sheet, usually latex rubber, used in dentistry to isolate the operative site from the rest of the mouth and protect the airway. Rubber dams should be used when endodontic treatment is being provided. On the rare occasions when it is not possible to use rubber dam the reasons should be recorded in the patient's dental care records giving details as to how the patient's safety was assured).

Medical emergencies

There were emergency medicines in line with the British National Formulary (BNF) guidance for medical emergencies in dental practice, these were stored securely. Staff also had access to emergency equipment on the premises including medical oxygen. The practice had an automated external defibrillator (AED) in line with Resuscitation Council UK guidance and the General Dental Council (GDC) standards for the dental team. [An AED is a portable electronic device that analyses life threatening irregularities of the heart and delivers an electrical shock to attempt to restore a normal heart rhythm]. We saw records of the weekly checks that were carried out to ensure the medicines were not past their expiry dates and there were daily and weekly checks to ensure equipment was in working order.

All staff had completed recent basic life support training which was updated annually. All staff were aware of where medical equipment was kept and knew how to use the AED and medical oxygen.

Staff recruitment

Practice staffing consists of the principal dentist, four associate dentists, two orthodontists, one oral surgeon, one endodontist, one Hygienist, seven dental nurses, two receptionists, one assistant practice manager and the practice manager.

The practice manager told us that the current staffing numbers were sufficient to meet the needs of their patients.

The provider had an appropriate policy in place for the selection and employment of staff. This included requiring applicants to provide proof of address, proof of identification, references, and proof of professional qualifications and registrations. All prospective staff

Are services safe?

completed an application form and were interviewed as part of the recruitment and selection process. All staff had a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check completed (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) and where relevant had to provide proof of immunisation against Hepatitis B (People who are likely to come into contact with blood products, or are at increased risk of needle-stick injuries should receive these vaccinations to minimise risks of blood borne infections). We reviewed staff recruitment records and found that all appropriate checks and documents were present. We saw confirmation of all clinical staffs' registration with the General Dental Council (GDC).

Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks

The practice had a health and safety policy and appropriate plans in place to deal with foreseeable emergencies. The health and safety policy covered identifying hazards and matters relating to staff and people who accessed the practice. There was a business continuity plan that outlined the intended purpose to help the practice overcome unexpected incidents and the responsibilities and duties. The plan outlined potential problems such as loss of computer system, loss of telephone and loss of electricity. Procedures were in place to enable them to respond to each situation. Where relevant contact telephone numbers of organisations to contact were listed in the policy.

The practice carried out risk assessments to ensure they were prepared to respond to safety issues. This included a practice risk assessment which had been completed in January 2016.

Infection control

The practice had an infection control policy that outlined the procedure for all issues relating to minimising the risk and spread of infections.

There was a separate decontamination area. The dental nurse gave a demonstration of the decontamination process which was in line with guidance issued by the Department of Health, namely 'Health Technical Memorandum 01-05 -Decontamination in primary care dental practices (HTM 01-05)'. This included placing all dirty instruments into the washer disinfectant, inspecting instruments under an illuminated magnifying glass to

visually check for any remaining contamination (and re-washed if required); then placing in the autoclave; pouching and then date stamping, so expiry date was clear. Staff wore the correct personal protective equipment, such as apron and gloves during the process.

We saw records of all the checks and tests that were carried out on the autoclaves and washer disinfectant to ensure it was working effectively. The checks and tests were in line with guidance recommendations.

Staff were immunised against blood borne viruses and we saw evidence of when they had received their vaccinations. The practice had blood spillage and mercury spillage kits. Clinical waste bins were assembled and labelled correctly in each surgery and waste was stored appropriately until collection by an external company.

The treatment rooms and decontamination room were visibly clean and tidy. However, some cabinetry and worktop in the decontamination rooms needed replacing this was confirmed by the principal dentist who assured us this was being addressed.

There were appropriate stocks of personal protective equipment such as gloves and disposable aprons for both staff and patients. There were enough cleaning materials for the practice. Paper hand towels and hand gel was available.

We were told the dental nurses were responsible for cleaning all surfaces and the dental chair in the surgery in-between patients and at the beginning and end of each session of the practice in the mornings/ evenings. External cleaning staff undertook domestic cleaning at the practice.

An up to date Legionella risk assessment had been carried out in February 2013 and the results were negative for bacterium [Legionella is a bacterium found in the environment which can contaminate water systems in buildings]. Hot and cold water temperature monitoring was being undertaken and documented and dental unit water lines were being maintained in line with current guidance. Water temperature checks were completed every month on water lines in the surgeries, toilets and decontamination room. Purified water was used in dental lines. Taps were flushed daily in line with recommendations.

An infection control audit had been carried out in February 2016.

Equipment and medicines

Are services safe?

There were appropriate arrangements in place to ensure equipment was suitably maintained. Service contracts were in place for the maintenance of the autoclave and washer disinfectant. The autoclaves were serviced in April 2016 and the washer disinfectant in June 2016. The practice had portable appliances and had carried out PAT (portable appliance testing). Appliances were last tested in December 2015.

The practice had an effective system in place regarding the management and stock control of the dental materials used in clinical practice; however improvements could be made to have in place a temperature monitoring of material stored in the fridge. The practice manager immediately put a logging system in place.

Prescription pads were stored securely; there were systems in place to monitor and track their use.

The dentists used the British National Formulary to keep up to date about medicines. The batch numbers and expiry dates for local anaesthetics and intravenous sedation, where used were recorded in patients' dental care records.

Radiography (X-rays)

The practice had a radiation protection file that was up to date and demonstrated appropriate maintenance of X-ray equipment. Local rules were in place and had been signed and dated by all members of staff. In-house training regarding local rules had been given to all staff. The principal dentist was the radiation protection supervisor (RPS) and the practice had an external radiation protection adviser (RPA). We also saw evidence of staff qualifications for radiation training. An inventory of all equipment being used was present and maintenance records were up to date, with equipment last being serviced in April 2014.

The critical examination test, risk assessment and quality assurance documentation were present. However, an X-ray audit had not been carried out. The Principal dentist assured us this would be addressed immediately.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

During the course of our inspection we checked a sample of dental care records to confirm the findings. Patients' needs were assessed and care and treatment was delivered in line with current guidance. This included following the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP) guidance. Staff were using the 'Delivering Better Oral Health toolkit which is evidence based toolkit used by dental teams for the prevention of dental disease in a primary and secondary care setting. The dentist told us they regularly assessed each patient's gum health and took X-rays at appropriate intervals.

Health promotion & prevention

The dentists we spoke with said they provided patients with advice to improve and maintain good oral health, including advice and support relating to diet, alcohol and tobacco consumption and informed patients about the beneficial use of fluoride paste and the ill-effects of smoking on oral health.

The dental team provided advice to patients about the prevention of decay and gum disease including advice on tooth brushing technique and oral hygiene products. Information leaflets on oral health were available. There were a variety of different information leaflets available in the reception areas.

Staffing

All clinical staff had current registration with their professional body - the General Dental Council, and were all up to date with their continuing professional development requirements, and working through their five year cycle. [The GDC require all dentists to carry out at least 250 hours of CPD every five years and dental nurses must carry out 150 hours every five years]. However some areas of training for staff was not available on the day of inspection, but this was forwarded to us the following day.

Working with other services

The practice was a referral centre for complex treatment and services and maintained and monitored the process to ensure patients had access to dental care and treatment in a timely manner. Dentists explained how they would work with other services if they could not provide all the necessary treatment for patients. They were able to refer patients to a range of specialists in secondary and tertiary care services if the treatment required was not provided by the practice.

Referral letters were prepared and then sent to the hospital with full details of the dentist's findings and was stored on the practice's computer dental software system. When the patient had received their treatment they would be discharged back to the practice for further follow-up and monitoring.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice had a consent policy for staff to refer to. The policy outlined how consent could be obtained and how it should be documented. The practice also had a folder with information relating to mental capacity, outlining how to assess if a person lacked capacity and what to do in such circumstances. Staff had received formal training and all clinical staff whom we spoke with demonstrated understanding of the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005, including the best interest principle and Gillick competence. Staff gave us examples of when the MCA could be used and how the role related to them in their role. [The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a legal framework for health and care professionals to act and make decisions on behalf of adults who lack the capacity to make particular decisions for them].

Dental care records we checked demonstrated that consent was obtained and recorded appropriately. Patients who provided feedback confirmed that their consent was obtained for treatment.

Are services caring?

Our findings

Respect, dignity, compassion & empathy

We saw records which showed that the practice sought patient's views through the practice patient satisfaction survey and the NHS Friends and Family test. We reviewed 65 CQC comment cards completed by patients in the two weeks prior to our inspection. Patients were complimentary of the care, treatment and professionalism of the staff and gave a positive view of the service. Patients commented that the team were courteous, friendly and kind. Patients commented that they were listened to and treated with dignity and respect.

During the inspection we observed staff in the reception area. They were polite, courteous, welcoming and friendly towards patients.

A data protection and confidentiality policy was in place of which staff were aware and had signed. This covered disclosure of and the secure handling of patient information. We observed the interaction between staff and patients and found that confidentiality was being maintained. Dental care records were held securely.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

The dentists explained how they involved patients in decisions about their care and treatment. Discussions with patients and efforts to involve them were clearly documented in dental care records. The dentist told us they used a number of different methods including tooth models, intraoral cameras, pictures, X-rays and leaflets to demonstrate what different treatment options involved so that patients fully understood. The principal dentist showed us leaflets such as on veneers, fillings, bridges and root canal treatment.

Staff told us the dentists took time to explain care and treatment to individual patients clearly and were always happy to answer any questions. Patients told us that treatment was discussed with them in a way that they could understand and were given time to think about their options including being given a copy of their treatment plan.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

Our findings

Responding to and meeting patients' needs

The practice had an appropriate appointments system that responded to the needs of their patients. Emergency appointments were available every day and fitted in as add-ons to scheduled appointments. If a patient had a dental emergency they were asked to come in and would be seen as soon as possible.

The services provided include preventative advice and treatment, cosmetic, restorative dental care, surgical procedures and orthodontics was available. We found the practice had an efficient appointment system in place to respond to patients' needs. The practice manager told us the majority of patients who requested an urgent appointment would be seen on the day.

Tackling inequity and promoting equality

The practice had equality and diversity and disability policies to support staff in understanding and meeting the needs of patients. Staff members told us that longer appointment times were available for patients who required extra time or support, such as patients who were particularly nervous or anxious. Staff we spoke with explained to us how they supported patients with additional needs such as young children. They ensured patients were supported by a parent and that there was sufficient time to explain fully the care and treatment they were providing in a way the patient and parent understood.

The practice manager told us that the local population was diverse with a mix of patients from various cultures and background. Staff at the practice spoke a range of different languages including; Greek, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Hindi, Bangla, French, Shona and Punjabi. The practice also has access to someone that comes in to support deaf patients by using sign language. A hearing loop was also available for patients who had hearing difficulties.

Access to the service

Appointments were arranged by the practice for patients that have been referred to them for treatment or sedation. In the event of a patient needing an appointment outside of the opening times, patients were directed to an out of hour's service (via recorded message on the practice answer machine).

Patients told us that they could access care and treatment in a timely way and the appointment system met their needs. This was reflected in the positive comments in the practice patient survey and the results of the NHS Friends and Family Test. 100% of patients who completed the Friends and Family Test said that indicated that they would be "extremely" or "likely" to recommend the practice to friends and family.

Concerns & complaints

The practice had a complaints policy which provided staff with clear guidance about how to handle a complaint. Patients were provided with information, which explained how they could make complaints and how these would be dealt with and responded to. Patients were also advised how they could escalate their concerns should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or if they felt their concerns were not dealt with fairly. This information was displayed in the practice waiting room.

We looked at the practice procedure for acknowledging, recording, investigating and responding to complaints, concerns and suggestions made by patients. We found improvements could be made as there was not an effective system in place which helped ensure a timely response. The practice had received two complaints within the last 12 months. Not all information relating to the complaint was available. The principal dentist assured us this would be addressed immediately.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

Governance arrangements

The practice had a range of policies and procedures for the smooth running of the service. There was a system in place for policies to be reviewed periodically. Staff we spoke with confirmed that they knew how to access policies and found them useful to enable them to work effectively. Staff were fully supported to meet their continuing professional development needs.

Some audits had been completed recently, including infection control and record keeping; However, an X-ray audit had not been completed. However the principal dentist confirmed this would be completed immediately.

The practice had a very well-defined management structure throughout the practice which all the staff were aware of and understood. All staff members had defined roles and were all involved in areas of clinical governance.

Leadership, openness and transparency

Leadership was very clear in the practice and we saw clear examples of how the principal dentist and practice manager led by example and promoted an atmosphere of openness amongst staff. For example, we saw that meetings were used to discuss issues related to staffing issues, incident and errors. Staff we spoke with told us that leaders were open and transparent in their discussions and they felt confident going to them regardless of what the situation was.

We discussed the Duty of Candour requirement in place on providers and the practice manager demonstrated understanding of the requirement. They gave us explanations of how they ensured they were open and transparent with patients. The explanations were in line

with the expectations under the duty of candour. [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].

Learning and improvement

The practice had processes in place to ensure staff were supported to develop and continuously improve. Appraisals were carried out every year for all staff. This process included setting objectives and highlighting areas for development. We reviewed staff appraisals that had been completed and saw they supported learning outcomes. Training such as safeguarding, infection control and life support was arranged centrally for all staff. Other training opportunities were available for staff and this was identified through the appraisal process and staff discussion, staff could also request if they desired any additional training.

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

The practice had a procedure for monitoring the quality of the service provided to patients. We saw records that showed that the practice collected patient's response to the practice patient satisfaction survey and NHS Friends and Family test. The results of the NHS Friends and Family test were displayed in the reception area.

Staff we spoke with confirmed their views were sought about practice developments through the staff meetings. They also said that the principal dentist and practice manager were approachable and they could share with them if they had suggestions for improvement to the service.