

Dr. Roger Bromley

# North Park Dental Practice

## Inspection Report

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Date of inspection visit: 29 February 2016  
Date of publication: 01/04/2016

### Overall summary

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection on 29 February 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**

North Park Dental Practice is located close to the centre of Harrogate and offers general dentistry services to NHS patients, Denplan and private treatment options are also available. The practice employs four dentists (one of which is a foundation training dentist), supported by a practice manager, six dental nurses (one of which is a trainee) and two receptionists.

The practice has three surgeries, one on the ground floor where the reception and staff facilities are location and the other two on the first floor where the decontamination room is also located and patient toilets.

The practice is open:

Monday – Friday 09:00 – 13:00 & 14:00 – 17:30

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

On the day of inspection we received 22 CQC comment cards providing feedback and spoke to eight patients. The patients who provided feedback were very positive about the care and attention to treatment they received at the practice. They told us they were involved in all

# Summary of findings

aspects of their care and found the staff to be excellent, great at responding to responding to pain requirements, helpful and they were treated with dignity and respect in a clean and tidy environment.

## **Our key findings were:**

- Staff had received safeguarding training, knew how to recognise signs of abuse and how to report it.
- There were sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of patients.
- Staff had been trained to manage medical emergencies.
- Staff demonstrated knowledge about whistleblowing and were confident they could raise a concern about another staff member's performance if it was necessary.
- Infection control procedures were in accordance with the published guidelines.
- Patient care and treatment was planned and delivered in line with evidence based guidelines, best practice and current regulations.
- Patients received clear explanations about their proposed treatment, costs, benefits and risks and were involved in making decisions about it.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect and confidentiality was maintained.
- The appointment system met patients' needs. Appointments were easy to book and emergency slots were available each day for patients requiring urgent treatment.
- There was a complaints system in place. Staff recorded complaints and cascaded learning to staff.
- The governance systems were effective.
- The practice sought feedback from staff and patients about the services they provided.

# 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 effective systems and processes in place to ensure all care and treatment was carried out safely. For example, there were systems in place for infection prevention and control, clinical waste control, dental radiography and management of medical emergencies. All emergency equipment and medicines were in date and in accordance with the British National Formulary (BNF) and Resuscitation Council UK guidelines.

We saw all staff had received a variety of training in infection prevention and control. There was a decontamination room and guidance for staff on effective decontamination of dental instruments.

Staff had received training in safeguarding patients and knew how to recognise the signs of abuse and who to report them to including external agencies such as the local authority safeguarding team. The practice actively contacted high risk patients if they had not attended an appointment with them or for a referral appointment to ensure care for all patients was available.

Staff were appropriately recruited and suitably trained and skilled to meet patients' needs and there were sufficient numbers of staff available at all times. Staff induction processes were in place and had been completed by all staff. We reviewed the newest member of staff's induction file and evidence was available to support the policy and process.

We reviewed the legionella risk assessment dated March 2011 and had been reviewed in house in April 2015, evidence of regular water testing was being carried out in accordance with the assessment and regular dip slip testing was in place.

### **Are services effective?**

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

Consultations were carried out in line with best practice guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). For example, patients were recalled after an agreed interval for an oral health review, during which their medical histories and examinations were updated and recorded also any changes in risk factors were also discussed and recorded.

The practice followed the best practice guidelines when delivering dental care. These included guidance from the Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP) and NICE. The practice focused strongly on prevention and the dentists were aware of the 'Delivering Better Oral Health' toolkit (DBOH) with regards to fluoride application and oral hygiene advice.

Patients dental care records provided contemporaneous information about their current dental needs and past treatment. The dental care records we looked at included discussions about treatment options, relevant X-rays including grading and justification. The practice monitored any changes to the patients oral health and made referrals for specialist treatment or investigations where indicated in a timely manner.

Staff were registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and maintained their registration by completing the required number of hours of continuing professional development (CPD). Staff were supported to meet the requirements of their professional registration.

### **Are services caring?**

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

# Summary of findings

Staff told us enough time was allocated in order to ensure the treatment and care was fully explained to patients in a way which patients understood.

Comments on the 22 completed CQC comment cards we received included statements saying they were involved in all aspects of their care and found the staff to be excellent, great at responding to responding to pain requirements, helpful and they were treated with dignity and respect in a clean and tidy environment. Patients we spoke to on the day confirmed this.

We observed patients being treated with respect and dignity during interactions at the reception desk and during conversations over the telephone. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained for patients using the service on the day of the inspection. We also observed the staff to be welcoming and caring towards the patients.

## **Are services responsive to people's needs?**

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

Patients could access routine treatment and urgent care when required. The practice offered daily access for patients experiencing dental pain which enabled them to receive treatment quickly.

The practice had limited disability access and the practice but worked closely with other practices to ensure patients could be seen somewhere else if required. The downstairs surgery would be used if a patient had limited mobility by all staff and would swap surgery to help meet the patients' needs.

The practice had a complaints process which was easily accessible to patients who wished to make a complaint. Staff recorded complaints and cascaded learning to staff. They also had patients' advice leaflets and practice information leaflets available on reception.

## **Are services well-led?**

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

There was a clearly defined management structure in place and all staff felt supported and appreciated in their own particular roles. The practice manager was responsible for the day to day running of the practice.

The practice held various staff meetings including dentist meetings, nurses meeting and structured away days to review policies in depth. All the meetings were minuted and gave everybody an opportunity to openly share information and discuss any concerns or issues which had not already been addressed during their daily interactions.

The practice undertook various audits to monitor their performance and help improve the services offered. The audits included infection control, patient dental care records and X-rays. The X-ray audit findings were within the guidelines of the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB).

They conducted patient satisfaction surveys, were currently undertaking the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT) and there was a comments book in the waiting room for patients to make suggestions to the practice.

# North Park Dental Practice

## Detailed findings

### Background to this inspection

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

The inspection was carried out on 29 February 2016 and was led by a CQC Inspector and a specialist advisor.

We informed the NHS England area team and Healthwatch that we were inspecting the practice; however we did not receive any information of concern from them.

The methods we used to collect information at the inspection included interviewing staff, observations and reviewing documents.

During the inspection we spoke with two dentists, three dental nurses, one receptionist, the practice owner and the practice manager. We saw policies, procedures and other records relating to the management of the service. We reviewed 22 CQC comment cards that had been completed.

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 policies and procedures in place to investigate, respond to and learn from significant events and complaints. Staff were aware of the reporting procedures in place and were encouraged to raise safety issues to the attention of colleagues and the registered provider.

Staff understood the process for accident and incident reporting including their responsibilities under the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). The practice manager told us any accident or incidents would be discussed at practice meetings or whenever they arose. We saw the practice had an accident book which had six entries recorded in the last 12 months, all of these had been responded to in line with the practice guidelines.

The practice manager told us they received alerts by email and from NHS England regarding the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the UK's regulator of medicines, medical devices and blood components for transfusion, responsible for ensuring their safety, quality and effectiveness. Relevant alerts were discussed with staff, actioned and stored for future reference.

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

The practice had child and adult safeguarding policies and procedures in place. These provided staff with information about identifying, reporting and dealing with suspected abuse. They included the contact details for the local authority safeguarding team, social services and other relevant agencies. The policies were readily available to staff. The registered provider was the lead for safeguarding. This role included providing support and advice to staff and overseeing the safeguarding procedures within the practice.

We saw all staff had received safeguarding training in adults and children. Staff could easily access the safeguarding policy. Staff demonstrated their awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. They were also aware of the procedures they needed to follow to address safeguarding concerns.

The practice had a system to review and follow up any concerns raised from someone that may be at risk, who had not attended for an appointment within the practice or if they had been referred elsewhere. The practice contacted the patients directly to discuss if they could help in any way to ensure easy access to services. The practice had protocols in place to review, record and discuss any concern they found throughout the process.

The dentists told us they routinely used a rubber dam when providing root canal treatment to patients. A rubber dam is a small square sheet of latex (or other similar material if a patient is latex sensitive) used to isolate the tooth operating field to increase the efficacy of the treatment and protect the patient.

The practice had a whistleblowing policy which staff were aware of. Staff told us they felt confident that they could raise concerns about colleagues without fear of recriminations. The staff told us they felt they all had an open and transparent relationship and they felt all staff would have someone to go to if they had any concerns at all.

### Medical emergencies

The practice had procedures in place for staff to follow in the event of a medical emergency and all staff had received training in basic life support including the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (An AED is a portable electronic device that analyses life threatening irregularities of the heart including ventricular fibrillation and is able to deliver an electrical shock to attempt to restore a normal heart rhythm).

The practice kept medicines and equipment for use in a medical emergency. These were in line with the 'Resuscitation Council UK' and British National Formulary guidelines. All staff knew where these items were kept.

We saw the practice kept logs which indicated that the emergency equipment, emergency medical oxygen cylinder, emergency drugs and AED were checked weekly. This helped ensure the equipment was fit for use and the medication was within the manufacturer's expiry dates. We checked the emergency medicines and found that they were of the recommended type and were all in date.

### Staff recruitment

The practice had a recruitment policy which included a process to be followed when employing new staff. This

# Are services safe?

included obtaining proof of their identity, checking their skills and qualifications, registration with relevant professional bodies and taking up references. We reviewed the newest members of staff's recruitment file which confirmed that the processes had been followed. All personal information was stored securely.

We saw all staff had been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). 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.

We recorded all relevant staff had personal indemnity insurance (insurance professionals are required to have in place to cover their working practice). In addition, there was employer's liability insurance which covered employees working at the practice.

The practice manager was aware each individual's training needs could be very different and some people learn in different ways. Induction packages were put in place for each new member of staff to ensure all training was provided at the right level. Systems were in place to review the progress of a member of staff and restrict some of the daily processes until adequate training had been implemented.

## **Monitoring health & safety and responding to risks**

The practice had undertaken a number of risk assessments to cover the health and safety concerns that arise in providing dental services generally and those that were particular to the practice. The practice had a Health and Safety policy which included guidance on fire safety, manual handling and dealing with clinical waste. We saw this policy was reviewed in September 2015. The practice had a process to ensure each member of staff had completed an annual assessment around Health and Safety, questions included asking about stress, if more support is required, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training, decontamination room processes, lone working and chemical care. All staff were given the opportunity to review the practice process and training and feedback any areas of concern or ideas on how to improve. This was also incorporated in to the yearly appraisal systems. We believe this to be notable practice and is worth sharing.

The practice had maintained a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) folder. COSHH was

implemented to protect workers against ill health and injury caused by exposure to hazardous substances - from mild eye irritation through to chronic lung disease. COSHH requires employers to eliminate or reduce exposure to known hazardous substances in a practical way. If any new materials were implemented into the practice a new risk assessment was put in place.

We saw the practice had implemented its own fire risk assessment and this had been shown to an assessor and deemed acceptable. There was evidence a fire drill had been undertaken with staff and discussion about the process reviewed at practice meetings. Staff had received further training through courses to enhance their knowledge of their responsibilities and fire equipment. These and other measures were taken to reduce the likelihood of risks of harm to staff and patients.

## **Infection control**

The practice had a decontamination room that was set out according to the Department of Health's guidance, Health Technical Memorandum 01-05 (HTM 01-05), decontamination in primary care dental practices. There were two separate sinks for decontamination work in the decontamination room. All clinical staff were aware of the work flow in the decontamination areas from the 'dirty' to the 'clean' zones. The procedure for cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising the instruments was clearly displayed on the wall to guide staff. We observed staff wearing appropriate personal protective equipment when working in the decontamination area this included disposable gloves, aprons and protective eye wear.

We found instruments were being cleaned and sterilised in line with published guidance (HTM01-05). The dental nurses were knowledgeable about the decontamination process and demonstrated they followed the correct procedures. For example, instruments were placed in a washer disinfectant, examined under illuminated magnification and sterilised in an autoclave. Sterilised instruments were correctly packaged, sealed, stored and dated with an expiry date. For safety, instruments were transported between the surgeries and the decontamination area in lockable boxes.



# Are services safe?

We saw records which showed the equipment used for cleaning and sterilising had been maintained and serviced in line with the manufacturer's instructions. Appropriate records were kept of the decontamination cycles of the autoclaves to ensure that they were functioning properly.

We saw from staff records all staff had received various infection prevention and control training at different intervals over the last year covering a range of topics including hand washing techniques.

There were adequate supplies of liquid soap and paper hand towels in the decontamination area and surgeries and a poster describing proper hand washing techniques was displayed above all the hand washing sinks. Paper hand towels and liquid soap was also available in the toilet.

We saw all sharps bins were being used correctly and located appropriately in all surgeries. Clinical waste was stored securely for collection in a container outside of the practice. The registered provider had a contract with an authorised contractor for the collection and safe disposal of clinical waste.

The staff files we reviewed showed all clinical staff had received inoculations against Hepatitis B. It is recommended that 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 acquiring blood borne infections. New members of staff new to healthcare had received the required checks as stated in the Green Book, Chapter 12, Immunisation for healthcare and laboratory staff.

We reviewed the last legionella risk assessment report dated March 2011 and an in-house review had been completed in April 2015. All recommended testing including hot and cold water temperature checks were being carried out in accordance to the risk assessment. Staff had received legionella training to raise awareness and the registered provider who was the lead gave authorised responsibility to a member of staff for testing and reporting any concerns. Legionella is a term for particular bacteria which can contaminate water systems in buildings.

## Equipment and medicines

We saw the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) (PAT is the term used to describe the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use) was undertaken annually and had been completed in December 2015 and the practice kept an up to date book with each piece of equipment logged to prevent anything being missed.

We saw the fire extinguishers had been checked in November 2015 to ensure they were suitable for use if required.

We saw maintenance records for equipment such as autoclaves, compressors and X-ray equipment which showed they were serviced in accordance with the manufacturers' guidance. The regular maintenance ensured the equipment remained fit for purpose.

Local anaesthetics were stored appropriately and a log of batch numbers and expiry dates was in place.

## Radiography (X-rays)

The X-ray equipment was located in each of the surgeries. X-rays were carried out safely and in line with the rules relevant to the practice and type and model of equipment being used.

We reviewed the practice's radiation protection file. This contained a copy of the local rules which stated how each X-ray machine needed to be operated safely. The local rules were displayed in each of the surgeries. The file also contained the name and contact details of the Radiation Protection Advisor.

We saw all the staff were up to date with their continuing professional development training in respect of dental radiography. The practice also had a maintenance log which showed that the X-ray machines had been serviced regularly. The registered provider told us they undertook annual quality audits of the X-rays taken. We saw the results of the November 2015 audit and the results were in accordance with the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB). Action plans and learning outcomes were in place to continuously improve the procedure and reduce future risks.



# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

## Our findings

### Monitoring and improving outcomes for patients

The practice kept up to date detailed electronic dental care records. They contained information about the patient's current dental needs and past treatment. The dentists carried out an assessment in line with recognised guidance from the Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP). This was repeated at each examination in order to monitor any changes in the patient's oral health. The dentists used NICE guidance to determine a suitable recall interval for the patients. This takes into account the likelihood of the patient experiencing dental disease. The practice recorded the medical history information within the patients' dental care records for future reference. In addition, the dentists told us they discussed patients' lifestyle and behaviour such as smoking and drinking and where appropriate offered them health promotion advice, this was recorded in the patients' dental care records.

There was evidence patient dental care records had been audited annually to ensure they complied with the guidance provided by the Faculty of General Dental Practice. The last audit was undertaken in November 2015 where an action plan was in place and was clinician specific, this helps address any issues that arise and sets out individual learning outcomes more easily.

During the course of our inspection we discussed patient dental care records with the dentists and checked dental care records to confirm the findings. We found they were in accordance with the guidance provided by the Faculty of General Dental Practice. For example, evidence of a discussion of treatment needs with the patient was routinely recorded. The practice recorded medical histories had been up dated prior to treatment. Soft tissue examinations, diagnosis and a basic periodontal examination (BPE) – a simple and rapid screening tool used by dentists to indicate the level of treatment need in relation to a patient's gums, had also been recorded.

At subsequent appointments patients were always asked to review and update a medical history form. This ensured the dentists were aware of the patients' present medical condition before offering or undertaking any treatment.

The dentists told us they always discussed the diagnosis with their patients and, where appropriate, offered them

any options available for treatment and explained the costs. By reviewing the dental care records we found these discussions were recorded and signed treatment plans were scanned into the patients' dental care records.

Patients' oral health was monitored throughout the practice and this was followed up accordingly; these were scheduled in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommendations. We saw from the dental care records the dentists were following the NICE guidelines on recalling patients for check-ups.

The practice used current guidelines and research in order to continually develop and improve their system of clinical risk management. For example, following clinical assessment, the dentists followed the guidance from the FGDP before taking X-rays to ensure they were required and necessary. Justification for the taking of an X-ray, a grade of each X-ray and a detailed report was recorded in the patient's dental care record.

Patients requiring specialist treatments that were not available at the practice such as conscious sedation or orthodontics were referred to other dental specialists. Their oral health was then monitored after the patient had been referred back to the practice. This helped ensure patients had the necessary post-procedure care and satisfactory outcomes.

### Health promotion & prevention

The patient reception and waiting areas contained a range of information that explained the services offered at the practice and the NHS and private fees for treatment. Staff told us they offered patients information about effective dental hygiene and oral care in the surgeries.

The dentists told us they offered patients oral health advice and provided treatment in accordance with the Department of Health's policy, the 'Delivering Better Oral Health' toolkit, this included fluoride applications. Fluoride treatments are a recognised form of preventative measures to help protect patients' teeth from decay.

Patients were given advice regarding maintaining good oral health. Patients who had a high rate of dental decay were also provided with a detailed diet advice leaflet which included advice about snacking between meals, hidden sugars in drinks and tooth brushing. Patients who had a high rate of dental decay were also prescribed high fluoride toothpastes to help reduce the decay process.

# Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

The practice had a selection of dental products on sale in the reception area to assist patients with their oral health.

The medical history form patients completed included questions about smoking and alcohol consumption. We were told by the dentists and saw in dental care records that smoking cessation advice was given to patients who smoked.

The practice also provided care and information to children including prevention advice through play and provided sessions to local schools. We believe this is notable practice because it demonstrates a commitment to tackling oral health inequalities by utilising the different skills within the practice.

## **Staffing**

New staff to the practice had a period of induction to familiarise themselves with the way the practice ran. The induction process included getting the new member of staff aware of the practice's policies, the location of emergency medicines and arrangements for fire evacuation procedures. We saw evidence of completed induction checklists in the personnel files.

Staff told us they had good access to on-going training to support their skill level and they were encouraged to maintain the continuous professional development (CPD) required for registration with the General Dental Council (GDC). The practice organised in-house training for medical emergencies and infection control to help staff keep up to date with current guidance on treatment of medical emergencies in the dental environment. The practice also held away days throughout the year to cover policies and procedures for staff. Records showed professional registration with the GDC was up to date for all staff and we saw evidence of on-going CPD.

Staff told us they had annual appraisals and training requirements were discussed at these. We saw evidence of completed appraisal documents. Staff also felt they could approach the registered provider or practice manager at any time to discuss continuing training and development as the need arose.

## **Working with other services**

The practice worked with other professionals in the care of their patients where this was in the best interest of the patient and in line with NICE guidelines where appropriate. For example, referrals were made to hospitals and specialist dental services for further investigations or specialist treatment including orthodontics and sedation.

The practice completed detailed proformas or referral letters to ensure the specialist service had all the relevant information required. A copy of the referral letter was kept in the patient's dental care records. Letters received back relating to the referral were first seen by the referring dentist to see if any action was required and then stored in the patient's dental care records. The practice manager kept a log of the referrals which had been sent and when a response had been received.

The practice had a process for urgent referrals for suspected oral cancer.

## **Consent to care and treatment**

Patients were given appropriate information to support them to make decisions about the treatment they received. Staff were knowledgeable about how to ensure patients had sufficient information and the mental capacity to give informed consent. Staff described how valid consent was obtained for all care and treatment and the role family members and carers might have in supporting the patient to understand and make decisions. Staff were clear about involving children in decision making and ensuring their wishes were respected regarding treatment.

Staff had completed training annually and had an understanding of the principles of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 and how it was relevant to ensuring patients had the capacity to consent to their dental treatment.

Staff ensured patients gave their consent before treatment began and a treatment plan was signed by the patient. We saw within the patient dental care records individual treatment options, risks, benefits and costs were discussed with each patient. Patients were given time to consider and make informed decisions about which option they preferred. The practice also gave patients with complicated or detailed treatment requirements more time to consider and ask any questions about all options, risks and cost associated with their treatment.

# Are services caring?

## Our findings

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

Feedback from the patient satisfaction survey was positive and they commented they were treated with care, respect and dignity. They said staff supported them and were quick to respond to any distress or discomfort during treatment. Staff told us they always interacted with patients in a respectful, appropriate and kind manner. We observed staff to be friendly and respectful towards patients during interactions at the reception desk and over the telephone.

We observed privacy and confidentiality were maintained for patients who used the service on the day of inspection. Staff said if a patient wished to speak in private, an empty room would be found to speak with them.

Patients' electronic care records were password protected and regularly backed up to secure storage. Any paper documentation was stored in locked cabinets.

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

The practice provided patients with information to enable them to make informed choices. Patients commented they felt involved in their treatment and it was fully explained to them. Staff described how they involved patients' relatives or carers when required and ensured there was sufficient time to explain fully the care and treatment they were providing in a way patients understood.

Staff told us how the dentists would provide treatment options including benefits and possible risks of each option.

Patients were also informed of the range of treatments available in information leaflets in the waiting room. The practice's website provided patients with information about the range of treatments which were available at the practice.

# Are services responsive to people's needs?

(for example, to feedback?)

## Our findings

### Responding to and meeting patients' needs

We found the practice had an efficient appointment system in place to respond to patients' needs. Staff told us patients who requested an urgent appointment would be seen the same day. We saw evidence in the appointment book there were dedicated emergency slots available each day for each dentist. If the emergency slots had already been taken for the day then the patient was offered to sit and wait for an appointment if they wished.

The dentists told us they offered patient information leaflets on oral care and treatments in the surgery to aid the patients' understanding if required or requested.

The patient commented they had sufficient time during their appointment and they were not rushed. We observed the clinics ran smoothly on the day of the inspection and patients were not kept waiting.

### Tackling inequity and promoting equality

Reasonable adjustments had been made to the premises to accommodate patients. However the practice could not accommodate patients who were wheelchair users. The practice did work closely with other local practices to ensure they could be registered elsewhere. A ground floor surgery was available so patients could be accommodated each day and see their own dentist if they could not climb the flight of stairs to the first floor.

The practice had equality and diversity policy to support staff had undertaken annual training to provide an understanding to meet the needs of patients. The practice also had access to translation services for those whose first language was not English.

### Access to the service

The practice displayed its opening hours in the premises, in the practice information leaflet and on the practice website. The opening hours are Monday – Friday 09:00 – 13:00 & 14:00 – 17:30.

The patients told us they were rarely kept waiting for their appointment. Where treatment was urgent patients would be seen the same day and if not within 24 hours. The patients told us when they had required an emergency appointment this had been organised the same day and they were very happy about the level of service they had received during these appointments. The practice had a system in place for patients requiring urgent dental care when the practice was closed. Patients were signposted to the NHS 111 service on the telephone answering machine

### Concerns & complaints

The practice had a complaints policy which provided staff with clear guidance about how to handle a complaint. The practice manager or the registered provider were in charge of dealing with complaints when they arose. Staff told us they raised any formal or informal comments or concerns with the practice manager or registered provider to ensure responses were made in a timely manner.

We looked at the practice's procedure for acknowledging, recording, investigating and responding to complaints, concerns and suggestions made by patients. This was in accordance with the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

The practice had received eight complaints in the last year and we found there was an effective system in place which helped ensure a timely response. This included acknowledging the complaint within two working days and providing a formal response within 10 working days. If the practice was unable to provide a response within 10 working days the patient would be made aware of this. The complaints procedure and other organisations to contact was displayed in the waiting room.

# Are services well-led?

## Our findings

### Governance arrangements

The practice manager was in charge of the day to day running of the service. There was a range of policies and procedures in use at the practice. We saw they had systems in place to monitor the quality of the service and to make improvements.

The practice had an approach for identifying where quality or safety was being affected and addressing any issues. Health and safety and risk management policies were in place and we saw a risk management process to ensure the safety of patients and staff members. For example, we saw risk assessments relating to the use of equipment and infection control.

The practice had governance arrangements in place such as various policies and procedures for monitoring and improving the services provided for patients. For example there was a recruitment policy, health and safety policy and an infection control policy. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities within the practice.

We saw the results of the X-ray, patient dental care record and infection prevention and control audit. All action plans and learning outcomes were in place to continuously improve the procedures and reduce future risks.

There was an effective management structure in place to ensure that responsibilities of staff were clear. Staff told us they felt supported and were clear about their roles and responsibilities.

### Leadership, openness and transparency

Staff told us there was an open culture within the practice and they were encouraged and confident to raise any issues at any time. Any issues were discussed openly at staff meetings where relevant and it was evident the practice worked well as a team and dealt with any issues in a professional manner.

The practice held various staff meetings involving all staff members. There were also separate meetings for dentists and dental nurses if the need arose. If there was more urgent information to discuss with staff then an informal

staff meeting would be organised to discuss the matter. The dentist meetings involved peer review, audit results and also gave an opportunity for dentists to share any specialist knowledge with others.

All staff were aware of whom to raise any issue with and told us the practice manager and registered provider were approachable, would listen to their concerns and act appropriately. We were told there was a no blame culture at the practice and that the delivery of high quality care was part of the practice's ethos.

### Learning and improvement

The practice had quality assurance processes in place to encourage continuous improvement. The practice audited areas of their practice as part of a system of continuous improvement and learning. This included audits such as patient dental care records, X-rays and a monthly housekeeping audit.

Staff told us they were encouraged to complete training relevant to their roles to ensure essential training was completed; this included medical emergencies and basic life support, infection prevention and control and radiography.

Staff working at the practice were supported to maintain their continuous professional development as required by the General Dental Council.

The practice worked closely with local colleges offering trainee positions annually for anyone wishing to embark on a dental career.

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

The practice had systems in place to involve, seek and act upon feedback from people using the service including carrying out annual patient satisfaction surveys and a comment book in the waiting room. The satisfaction survey included questions about whether the dentist greeted them, helped them feel at ease, communicated costs and answered any questions which they had. Patient satisfaction surveys were completed for each dentist in order to aim to identify any specific areas which a dentist could improve.

The registered provider explained the practice had a good longstanding relationship with their patients. The practice was participating in the continuous NHS Friends and

## Are services well-led?

Family Test (FFT). The FFT is a feedback tool that supports the fundamental principle that people who use NHS services should have the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience. The practice also had a comment book in the waiting room.

We saw the practice held regular practice meetings which were minuted and gave everybody an opportunity to openly share information and discuss any concerns or issues which had not already been addressed during their daily interactions.