

Perfect Smile (Acorn Dental) Partnership

Blaydon Dental Practice

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced comprehensive inspection on 10 March 2023 under section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 as part of our regulatory functions.

We planned the inspection to check whether the registered practice was meeting the legal requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated regulations.

The inspection was led by a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspector who was supported by a specialist dental advisor.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following 5 questions:

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

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our findings were:

- The dental clinic appeared clean and well-maintained.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. Appropriate medicines and life-saving equipment were available.
- Safeguarding processes were in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance. However, improvements could be made to the fixtures and fittings in the decontamination room.
- The practice had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.
- The practice had some systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff. Improvements should be made to the system, to ensure all recommendations from fire risk assessments and radiation safety reports are actioned.

Summary of findings

- Clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect. Staff took care to protect patients' privacy and personal information.
- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- The appointment system worked efficiently to respond to patients' needs.
- The frequency of appointments was agreed between the dentist and the patient, giving due regard to National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.
- There was effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Staff felt involved, supported and worked as a team.
- Staff and patients were asked for feedback about the services provided.
- Complaints were dealt with positively and efficiently.
- The practice had information governance arrangements.

Background

The provider is part of a dental group, with multiple practices. This report is about Blaydon Dental Practice. The practice is in Blaydon-on-Tyne and provides NHS and private dental care and treatment for adults and children. The practice is located adjacent to their sister practice and the dental team work between the 2 locations.

The practice is located close to local transport routes and car parking spaces are available near the practice. The practice has made reasonable adjustments to support patients with additional needs.

The dental team includes 5 dentists, 2 hygienists, 6 dental nurses, 1 trainee dental nurse, a practice manager and 4 receptionists. The practice has 4 treatment rooms.

During the inspection we spoke with 2 dentists, 1 dental nurse, 1 trainee dental nurse, the practice manager, the business manager and the group compliance manager. We looked at practice policies, procedures and other records to assess how the service is managed.

The practice is open:

Monday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 1.45pm to 6pm

Tuesday to Thursday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 1.45pm to 5.30pm

Friday from 9am to 12.30pm and from 1.45pm to 5pm

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

- Improve the practice's protocols and procedures for the use of X-ray equipment in compliance with The Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 and Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 and taking into account the guidance for Dental Practitioners on the Safe Use of X-ray Equipment.
- Improve the practice's infection control procedures and protocols taking into account the guidelines issued by the Department of Health in the Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices, and having regard to The Health and Social Care Act 2008: 'Code of Practice about the prevention and control of infections and related guidance.' In particular improve the decontamination facilities to ensure compliance with published guidance.

Summary of findings

- Take action to implement any recommendations in the practice's fire safety risk assessment and ensure ongoing fire safety management is effective.

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?	No action ✓
Are services effective?	No action ✓
Are services caring?	No action ✓
Are services responsive to people's needs?	No action ✓
Are services well-led?	No action ✓

Are services safe?

Our findings

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

Safety systems and processes, including staff recruitment, equipment and premises and radiography (X-rays)

The practice had safeguarding processes and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.

The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance, though improvements could be made to the fixtures and fittings in the decontamination room to improve compliance with nationally recognised guidance. We were told a plan was in place to update the decontamination rooms in line with this guidance.

The practice had introduced procedures to reduce the risk of Legionella, or other bacteria, developing in water systems, in line with a risk assessment. We noted improvements could be made to ensure all sentinel outlets were monitored.

The practice had policies and procedures in place to ensure clinical waste was segregated and stored appropriately in line with guidance.

The practice appeared clean and there was an effective schedule in place to ensure it was kept clean.

The practice had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff. These reflected the relevant legislation.

Clinical staff were qualified, registered with the General Dental Council and had professional indemnity cover.

The practice ensured equipment was safe to use, maintained and serviced according to manufacturers' instructions. The practice ensured the facilities were maintained in accordance with regulations.

A fire safety risk assessment was carried out in April 2022, in line with the legal requirements. Recommendations were made in the assessment report; however, there was no evidence these had all been addressed. The practice manager confirmed that a new fire risk assessment was scheduled and any recommendations would be actioned.

The practice had arrangements to ensure the safety of the X-ray equipment and we saw the required radiation protection information was available. We discussed the importance of ensuring any recommendations made following the servicing of the equipment were acted upon. We noted some recommendations had been made at the time of the last service and there was no evidence staff were aware of these or that they had been carried out.

Risks to patients

The practice had implemented systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient and staff safety. This included sharps safety, sepsis awareness and lone working.

Emergency equipment and medicines were available and checked in accordance with national guidance, with the exception of a self-inflating bag with reservoir for use on a child and 2 clear face masks for self-inflating bag. We received confirmation immediately after the inspection that these had been ordered.

Staff knew how to respond to a medical emergency and had completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year. Immediate life support training (or basic life support training plus patient assessment, airway management techniques and automated external defibrillator training) was also completed by staff providing treatment to patients under sedation.

The practice had risk assessments to minimise the risk that could be caused from substances that are hazardous to health.

Are services safe?

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Patient care records were complete, legible, kept securely and complied with General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

The practice had systems for referring patients with suspected oral cancer under the national two-week wait arrangements.

Safe and appropriate use of medicines

The practice had systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines. Antimicrobial prescribing audits were carried out.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The practice had systems to review and investigate incidents and accidents. The practice had a system for receiving and acting on safety alerts.

Are services effective?

(for example, treatment is effective)

Our findings

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

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep dental professionals up to date with current evidence-based practice.

The practice offered conscious sedation for patients. The practice's systems included checks before and after treatment, emergency equipment requirements, medicines management, sedation equipment checks, and staff availability. We discussed improvements could be made to the monitoring protocol so as to give the practice manager the assurance that all recommended training was carried out, by all team members, at the appropriate interval.

The practice undertook suitable risk assessments before providing dental care in domiciliary settings such as care homes or in people's residence.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

The practice provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.

Consent to care and treatment

Staff obtained patients' consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance. They understood their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Staff described how they involved patients' relatives or carers when appropriate and made sure they had enough time to explain treatment options clearly.

Monitoring care and treatment

The practice kept detailed patient care records in line with recognised guidance.

Staff conveyed an understanding of supporting more vulnerable members of society such as patients living with dementia or adults and children with a learning disability.

We saw evidence the dentists justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits six-monthly following current guidance. We discussed improvements could be made to the auditing protocols to ensure the recommended number of X-rays were assessed and the audit contain reflective outcomes and learning opportunities where applicable.

Effective staffing

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

Newly appointed staff had a structured induction and clinical staff completed continuing professional development required for their registration with the General Dental Council.

Co-ordinating care and treatment

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

The dentists confirmed they referred patients to a range of specialists in primary and secondary care for treatment the practice did not provide.

Are services caring?

Our findings

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

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff were aware of their responsibility to respect people's diversity and human rights.

On the day of inspection, we saw patient feedback from March 2023. Of the 32 patients that responded, 100% stated they were extremely likely or likely to recommend the service to friends and family. Some of the comments stated the staff were very friendly from the minute they walked through the door. Helpful and polite, excellent service as always.

Privacy and dignity

Staff were aware of the importance of privacy and confidentiality.

Staff password protected patients' electronic care records and backed these up to secure storage. They stored paper records securely.

Involving people in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about their care and gave patients clear information to help them make informed choices about their treatment.

The practice's website and information leaflet provided patients with information about the range of treatments available at the practice.

The dentists explained the methods they used to help patients understand their treatment options. These included for example study models and X-ray images.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

Our findings

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

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs and preferences.

Staff were clear about the importance of providing emotional support to patients when delivering care.

The practice had made reasonable adjustments, including a hearing induction loop and information in large print, for patients with access requirements. Staff had carried out a disability access audit and had formulated an action plan to continually improve access for patients.

Timely access to services

The practice displayed its opening hours and provided information on their website, patient information leaflet and social media page.

Patients could access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs. The practice had an appointment system to respond to patients' needs. The frequency of appointments was agreed between the dentist and the patient, giving due regard to NICE guidelines.

The practice's website and answerphone provided telephone numbers for patients needing emergency dental treatment during the working day and when the practice was not open.

Patients who needed an urgent appointment were offered one in a timely manner. When the practice was unable to offer an urgent appointment, they worked with partner organisations to support urgent access for patients. Patients with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice responded to concerns and complaints appropriately. We saw protocols were in place to review and learn from incidents and accidents and we discussed with the practice manager that these same principals could be applied following a complaint.

Are services well-led?

Our findings

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

Leadership capacity and capability

The practice staff demonstrated a transparent and open culture in relation to people's safety.

There was strong leadership with emphasis on people's safety and continually striving to improve.

Systems and processes were embedded and staff worked together. Where improvements could be made, these were acted on promptly and the practice manager and group compliance manager assured us plans would be put in place to rectify anything outstanding.

The information and evidence presented during the inspection process was clear and well documented.

We saw the practice had effective processes to support and develop staff with additional roles and responsibilities.

Culture

Staff could show how they ensured high-quality sustainable services and demonstrated improvements over time.

Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. They were proud to work in the practice.

Staff discussed their training needs during annual appraisals. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development. Improvements could be made to the monitoring of staff training to ensure that it was up-to-date and undertaken at the required intervals, for example, in relation to sedation training.

Governance and management

Staff had clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

The practice had a governance system which included policies, protocols and procedures that were accessible to all members of staff and were reviewed on a regular basis.

Some improvements could be made to the processes for managing risks to ensure they were effective; for example, in relation to radiation protection and fire safety.

Appropriate and accurate information

Staff acted on appropriate and accurate information.

The practice had information governance arrangements and staff were aware of the importance of protecting patients' personal information.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

Staff gathered feedback from patients, the public and external partners and demonstrated a commitment to acting on feedback.

Feedback from staff was obtained through meetings, surveys, and informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on where appropriate.

Continuous improvement and innovation

Are services well-led?

The practice had systems and processes for learning, quality assurance and continuous improvement. These included audits of patient care records, disability access, radiographs, antimicrobial prescribing, and infection prevention and control.