

Alston Dental Practice Limited

Alston Dental Practice

Inspection report

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Overall summary

We carried out this announced focused inspection on 21 July 2022 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 adviser.

To get to the heart of patients' experiences of care and treatment, we usually ask five key questions, however due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and to reduce time spent on site, only the following three questions were asked:

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

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

Our findings were:

- The dental clinic was visibly clean and well-maintained.
- The practice had infection control procedures which reflected published guidance.
- Staff knew how to deal with medical emergencies. On the day of inspection not all emergency medicines and equipment were available as described in nationally recognised guidance. These were ordered immediately.
- The practice had systems to help them manage risk to patients and staff. Improvements could be made to the process for managing the risks associated with substances which are hazardous to health.
- Safeguarding processes were in place and staff knew their responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
- The practice had staff recruitment procedures which reflected current legislation.

Summary of findings

- The clinical staff provided patients' care and treatment in line with current guidelines. Improvements could be made to ensure radiographs are taken in line with current nationally recognised guidance.
- Patients were treated with dignity and respect and staff took care to protect their privacy and personal information.
- Staff provided preventive care and supported patients to ensure better oral health.
- There was effective leadership.
- Staff felt involved and supported and worked as a team.
- Staff and patients were asked for feedback about the services provided.
- The dental clinic had information governance arrangements.

Background

Alston Dental Practice provides NHS dental care and treatment for adults and children.

There is level access to the practice for people who use wheelchairs and those with pushchairs. Car parking spaces are available near the practice.

The dental team includes a dentist, two dental nurses and a practice manager. The practice has one treatment room.

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

The practice is open:

Thursday from 9:30am to 4:30pm

On days when the practice is closed the phone lines are re-directed to the practice manager.

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

- Take action to ensure the clinicians take into account the guidance provided by the College of General Dentistry when taking radiographs.
- 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. In particular ensuring X-ray equipment is maintained accordingly.
- Improve the practice's processes for the control and storage of substances hazardous to health identified by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, to ensure risk assessments are undertaken.
- Take action to ensure audits of infection prevention and control are undertaken at regular intervals. The practice should also ensure that, where appropriate, audits have documented learning points and the resulting improvements can be demonstrated.

Summary of findings

The five questions we ask about services and what we found

We asked the following question(s).

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

Are services safe?

Our findings

We found 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. The practice had introduced additional procedures in relation to COVID-19 in accordance with published guidance.

The practice had procedures to reduce the risk of Legionella or other bacteria developing in water systems, in line with a risk assessment.

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

We saw the practice was visibly clean and there was an effective cleaning schedule to ensure the practice was kept clean.

The practice had a recruitment policy and procedure to help them employ suitable staff and had checks in place for agency and locum staff. These reflected the relevant legislation.

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

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

A fire risk assessment was carried out in line with the legal requirements and the management of fire safety was effective.

The practice held a radiation protection folder with information relating to the safe use of X-ray equipment. We noted the routine test for the X-ray machine was due to be completed again in February 2022. This had not been done. We were later sent evidence this had been booked in to be completed.

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.

On the day of inspection, we noted that not all emergency equipment and medicines were available as described in national guidance. There was no buccal midazolam and no child sized self-inflating bag. In addition, we noted that the glucagon was not stored in a temperature-controlled environment and the expiry date adjusted accordingly. The missing items were ordered immediately.

Staff knew how to respond to a medical emergency and had completed training in emergency resuscitation and basic life support every year

The practice held a folder with material safety data sheets relating to substances that are hazardous to health. However, there were no risk assessments in place for individual substances. We were assured this would be addressed.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

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

Are services safe?

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. We noted the current system for logging NHS prescriptions would not identify if one had gone missing. We discussed this with staff who assured us a more effective system would be implemented. Antimicrobial prescribing audits were carried out.

Track record on safety, and lessons learned and improvements

The practice had implemented systems for reviewing and investigating 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. However, we noted that X-rays were not always taken in line with current nationally recognised guidance. We discussed this with the dentist who told us they would review the current guidance.

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. We noted more detail could be recorded in the dental care records with regards to the options which had been discussed with the patient prior to the start of treatment. We were assured this would be addressed.

Staff 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 dental care records in line with recognised guidance.

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

We saw evidence the dentist justified, graded and reported on the radiographs they took. The practice carried out radiography audits following current guidance and legislation.

Effective staffing

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

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

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

There was strong leadership and emphasis on continually striving to improve.

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

Culture

The practice 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 informally. They also discussed learning needs, general wellbeing and aims for future professional development.

The practice had arrangements to ensure staff training was up-to-date and reviewed at the required intervals.

Governance and management

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

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

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 these in protecting patients' personal information.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

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

The practice gathered feedback from staff through informal discussions. Staff were encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements to the service and said these were listened to and acted on.

Continuous improvement and innovation

The practice had systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

The practice had quality assurance processes to encourage learning and continuous improvement. These included audits of dental care records, disability access and radiographs. We noted an infection prevention and control audit had not been completed. We discussed this with staff who assured us that one would be completed.