

Inspection Report

17 February 2022



Johnston Dentists

Type of service: Independent Hospital (IH) – Dental Treatment

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Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

Information on legislation and standards underpinning inspections can be found on our website <https://www.rqia.org.uk/>, [The Independent Health Care Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2005](#) and [Minimum Standards for Dental Care and Treatment \(March 2011\)](#)

1.0 Service information

Organisation/Registered Providers: Johnston Dentists	Registered Manager: Mr Andrew Johnston Date registered: 3 April 2014
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mr Andrew Johnston	Number of registered places: Two
Categories of care: Independent Hospital (IH) – Dental Treatment	
Brief description of how the service operates: Johnston Dentists is registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) as an independent hospital (IH) with a dental treatment category of care. The practice has two registered dental surgeries and provides general dental services, private and health service treatment and does not offer conscious sedation.	

2.0 Inspection summary

This was an announced inspection, undertaken by a care inspector on 17 February 2022 from 10.30 am to 1.00 pm.

It focused on the themes for the 2021/22 inspection year and assessed progress with any areas for improvement identified during or since the last care inspection.

There was evidence of good practice in relation to the recruitment and selection of staff; staff training; management of medical emergencies; infection prevention and control; the practice's adherence to best practice guidance in relation to COVID-19; radiology and radiation safety; management of complaints; and governance arrangements.

One area for improvement has been made against the standards in relation to the decontamination of reusable dental instruments.

No immediate concerns were identified regarding the delivery of front line patient care.

3.0 How we inspect

RQIA is required to inspect registered services in accordance with legislation. To do this, we gather and review the information we hold about the service, examine a variety of relevant records, meet and talk with staff and management and observe practices on the day of the inspection.

The information obtained is then considered before a determination is made on whether the practice is operating in accordance with the relevant legislation and minimum standards. Examples of good practice are acknowledged and any areas for improvement are discussed with the person in charge and detailed in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

4.0 What people told us about the practice

We issued posters to the practice prior to the inspection inviting patients and staff to complete an electronic questionnaire.

Two patients submitted questionnaire responses. Both patients indicated that they felt their care was safe and effective, that they were treated with compassion and that the service was well led. Both patients also indicated that they were very satisfied with each of all areas of their care.

Three staff submitted questionnaire responses. Staff responses indicated that they felt patient care was safe, effective, that patients were treated with compassion and that the service was well led. All staff indicated that they were very satisfied with each of these areas of patient care. One staff response included an additional comment stating they consider the practice to be well managed and that staff members felt supported and valued.

5.0 The inspection

5.1 What has this practice done to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?

The last inspection to Johnston Dentists was undertaken on 24 February 2021; no areas for improvement were identified.

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 Does the practice's recruitment and selection procedures comply with all relevant legislation?

There were robust recruitment and selection policies and procedures, that adhered to legislation and best practice, that ensured suitably skilled and qualified staff work in the practice.

Mr Johnston oversees the recruitment and selection of the dental team and approves all staff appointments. Discussion with Mr Johnston confirmed that he had a clear understanding of the legislation and best practice guidance.

Dental practices are required to maintain a staff register as outlined within the regulations. It was noted that the staff list provided included information of only the current staff working in the practice. Mr Johnston was advised that the staff register is a live document that should contain specific information of all staff members who have worked in the practice since registration with RQIA. Mr Johnston stated that he had all the required information and confirmed that this would be collated and recorded in a live staff register.

It was established that one new staff member had been recruited since the previous inspection. Review of this staff member's recruitment records identified that, in the main, the required recruitment records had been sought and were retained. However, it was noted that no written references were provided and this was discussed with Mr Johnston who advised that as he knew both identified referees he had sought verbal references for the applicant instead of written references. Mr Johnston confirmed he would make a written record of the content of the verbal references and retain this in the staff member's recruitment file. It was identified that a criminal conviction declaration had not been obtained and advice and guidance was provided in this regard. On 21 March 2022 RQIA received an email from Mr Johnston confirming that a criminal conviction declaration had been completed by the staff member and was retained in the staff member's recruitment file.

There was evidence of job descriptions and induction checklists for the different staff roles. A review of records confirmed that if a professional qualification is a requirement of the post, a registration check is made with the appropriate professional regulatory body.

Discussion with members of the dental team confirmed they have been provided with a job description, contract of employment/agreement and received induction training when they commenced work in the practice.

The actions taken by Mr Johnston in response to the areas identified will ensure that the recruitment of the dental team complies with the legislation and best practice guidance.

5.2.2 Are the dental team appropriately trained to fulfil the duties of their role?

The dental team takes part in ongoing training to update their knowledge and skills, relevant to their role.

Policies and procedures are in place that outlines training to be undertaken, in line with any professional requirements, and the [training guidance](#) provided by RQIA.

Induction programmes relevant to roles and responsibilities had been completed when new staff joined the practice.

A record is kept of all training (including induction) and professional development activities undertaken by staff, which is overseen by Mr Johnston, to ensure that the dental team are suitably skilled and qualified.

The care and treatment of patients is being provided by a dental team that is appropriately trained to carry out their duties.

5.2.3 Is the practice fully equipped and are the dental team trained to manage medical emergencies?

The British National Formulary (BNF) and the Resuscitation Council (UK) specify the emergency medicines and medical emergency equipment that must be available to safely and effectively manage a medical emergency.

There was a medical emergency policy and procedure in place and a review of this evidenced that it was comprehensive, reflected legislation and best practice guidance. Protocols were available to guide the dental team on how to manage recognised medical emergencies.

Robust systems were in place to ensure that emergency medicines do not exceed their expiry date and are immediately available. It was noted that the Glucagon medication was stored in the fridge, however fridge temperatures had not been recorded to ensure the temperature was between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius. The storage requirements of the Glucagon medication were discussed with Mr Johnston. On 21 March 2022 RQIA received an email from Mr Johnston confirming that the Glucagon medication would be kept in the 'emergency drug kit' and that as the medication was no longer kept in the fridge, a revised expiry date had been recorded in keeping with the manufacturer's instructions

Review of the medical emergency equipment identified that there was no self-inflating bag with reservoir – child size and the oropharyngeal airways and syringes/needles (needed for the administration of Adrenaline) had exceeded their expiry dates. On 21 March 2022 RQIA received an email from Mr Johnston confirming that the oropharyngeal airways, in sizes 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4; needles and syringes for administration of Adrenaline; and the self-inflating bag with reservoir in child size had all been replaced.

Managing medical emergencies is included in the dental team induction programme and training is updated annually. The records reviewed verified that the staff last completed medical emergency refresher training during August 2020. Mr Johnston advised that due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, formal medical emergency refresher training had been delayed. Mr Johnston advised that in the interim, the dental team had undertaken in-house discussion and updates in relation to the management of a medical emergency. Mr Johnston confirmed that the dental team are to undertake formal management of medical emergency training in March 2022.

Members of the dental team were able to describe the actions they would take, in the event of a medical emergency, and were familiar with the location of medical emergency medicines and equipment.

As a result of the actions taken following this inspection, it has been confirmed that there are sufficient emergency medicines and equipment in place to manage a medical emergency in compliance with legislative requirements, professional standards and guidelines.

5.2.4 Does the dental team provide dental care and treatment using conscious sedation in line with the legislation and guidance?

Conscious sedation helps reduce anxiety, discomfort, and pain during certain procedures. This is accomplished with medications or medical gases to relax the patient.

Mr Johnston confirmed that conscious sedation is not provided.

5.2.5 Does the dental team adhere to infection prevention and control (IPC) best practice guidance?

The IPC arrangements were reviewed throughout the practice to evidence that the risk of infection transmission to patients, visitors and staff was minimised.

There was an overarching IPC policy and associated procedures in place. Review of these documents demonstrated that they were comprehensive and reflected legislative and best practice guidance in all areas. Mr Johnston confirmed there was a nominated lead who had responsibility for IPC and decontamination in the practice.

During a tour of the practice, it was observed that clinical and decontamination areas were clean, tidy and uncluttered. All areas of the practice were fully equipped to meet the needs of patients.

The arrangements for personal protective equipment (PPE) were reviewed and it was noted that appropriate PPE was readily available for the dental team in accordance with the treatments provided.

Using the Infection Prevention Society (IPS) audit tool, IPC audits are routinely undertaken by members of the dental team to self-assess compliance with best practice guidance. The purpose of this audit is to assess compliance with key elements of IPC, relevant to dentistry, including the arrangements for environmental cleaning; the use of PPE; hand hygiene practice; and waste and sharps management. This audit also includes the decontamination of reusable dental instruments which is discussed further in the following section of this report. A review of these audits evidenced that they were completed on a six monthly basis and, where applicable, an action plan was generated to address any improvements required.

Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for clinical members of the dental team as it protects them if exposed to this virus. A system was in place to ensure that relevant members of the dental team have received this vaccination. A review of a sample of staff personnel files confirmed that vaccination history is checked during the recruitment process and retained in the staff members' personnel files.

Discussion with members of the dental team confirmed that they had received IPC training relevant to their roles and responsibilities and they demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of these procedures. Review of training records evidenced that the dental team had completed relevant IPC training and had received regular updates.

IPC arrangements evidenced that the dental team adheres to best practice guidance to minimise the risk of infection transmission to patients, visitors and staff.

5.2.6 Does the dental team meet current best practice guidance for the decontamination of reusable dental instruments?

Robust procedures and a dedicated decontamination room must be in place to minimise the risk of infection transmission to patients, visitors and staff in line with [Health Technical Memorandum 01-05: Decontamination in primary care dental practices, \(HTM 01-05\)](#), published by the Department of Health.

There were a range of policies and procedures in place for the decontamination of reusable dental instruments that were comprehensive and reflected legislation, minimum standards and best practice guidance.

There was a designated decontamination room separate from patient treatment areas and dedicated to the decontamination process. The design and layout of this room complied with best practice guidance and the equipment was sufficient to meet the requirements of the practice. The records showed the equipment for cleaning and sterilising instruments was inspected, validated, maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance. Review of equipment logbooks demonstrated that all required tests to check the efficiency of the machines had been undertaken.

Discussion with Mr Johnston and a staff member confirmed that members of the dental team had received training on the decontamination of reusable dental instruments in keeping with their role and responsibilities. They demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the decontamination process and were able to describe the equipment treated as single use and the equipment suitable for decontamination. It was identified that all dental handpieces were being manually cleaned prior to sterilisation rather than being processed in the washer disinfector prior to sterilisation. This practice was discussed with Mr Johnston and an area for improvement was made against the standards to ensure that dental handpieces that are compatible with the washer disinfector are processed using the washer disinfector, in keeping with best practice guidance.

Decontamination arrangements demonstrated that, in the main, the dental team are adhering to current best practice guidance on the decontamination of dental instruments.

5.2.7 Are arrangements in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission?

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges in respect of how dental care and treatment is planned and delivered. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission precautions must remain in place as part of the ongoing response to the pandemic.

There were COVID-19 policies and procedures in place which were reflective of best practice guidance. A review of records evidenced that appropriate risk assessments concerning staffing, clinical treatments and clinical and non-clinical areas had been completed.

The management of operations in response to the pandemic was discussed with members of the dental team. These discussions included the application of the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) operational guidance and focused on social distancing, training of staff, and enhanced cross-infection control procedures.

There is an identified COVID-19 lead and arrangements are in place to ensure the dental team are regularly reviewing COVID-19 advisory information, guidance and alerts.

COVID-19 arrangements evidenced that robust procedures are in place to ensure the practice adheres to best practice guidance and to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

5.2.8 How does the dental team ensure that appropriate radiographs (x-rays) are taken safely?

The arrangements concerning radiology and radiation safety were reviewed to ensure that appropriate safeguards were in place to protect patients, visitors and staff from the ionising radiation produced by taking an x-ray.

Dental practices are required to notify and register any equipment producing ionising radiation with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (Northern Ireland). A review of records evidenced the practice had registered with the HSE.

A radiation protection advisor (RPA), medical physics expert (MPE) and radiation protection supervisor (RPS) have been appointed in line with legislation. A dedicated radiation protection file containing the relevant local rules, employer's procedures and other additional information was retained. A review of the file confirmed that the dental team have been entitled by Mr Johnston, who is the RPS, for their relevant duties and have received training in relation to these duties. It was evidenced that all measures are taken to optimise radiation dose exposure. This included the use of rectangular collimation and x-ray audits.

Mr Johnston oversees radiation safety within the practice and regularly reviews the radiation protection file to ensure that it is accurate and up to date. Discussions with members of the dental team indicated they had good knowledge of radiology and radiation safety.

The appointed RPA must undertake critical examination and acceptance testing of all x-ray equipment within timeframes specified in legislation. The most recent report generated by the RPA evidenced that the x-ray equipment had been examined and any recommendations made had been actioned.

The equipment inventory evidenced that the practice has two surgeries, each of which has an intra-oral x-ray machine. A copy of the local rules was on display near each x-ray machine and appropriate staff had signed to confirm that they had read and understood these. The dental team demonstrated sound knowledge of the local rules and associated practice.

The x-ray equipment has been serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Quality assurance systems and processes were in place to ensure that all matters relating to x-rays reflect legislation and best practice guidance.

The radiology and radiation safety arrangements evidenced that robust procedures are in place to ensure that appropriate x-rays are taken safely.

5.2.9 How does a registered provider who is not in day to day management of the practice assure themselves of the quality of the services provided?

Where the business entity operating a dental practice is a corporate body or partnership or an individual owner who is not in day to day management of the practice, unannounced quality monitoring visits by the registered provider must be undertaken and documented every six months; as required by Regulation 26 of The Independent Health Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

Mr Johnston was in day to day management of the practice, therefore the unannounced quality monitoring visits by the registered provider are not applicable.

5.2.10 Are complaints being effectively managed?

The arrangements for the management of complaints were reviewed to ensure that complaints were being managed in keeping with legislation and best practice guidance.

The complaints policy and procedure provided clear instructions for patients and staff to follow. Patients and/or their representatives were made aware of how to make a complaint by way of the patient's guide and information on display in the practice.

Arrangements were in place to record any complaint received in a complaints register and retain all relevant records including details of any investigation undertaken, all communication with complainants, the outcome of the complaint and the complainant's level of satisfaction.

A review of records confirmed that no complaints had been received since the previous inspection.

The dental team were knowledgeable on how to deal with and respond to complaints in keeping with practice policy and procedure. Arrangements were in place to share information with the dental team about complaints, including any learning outcomes, and also compliments received.

Complaints were being managed effectively in accordance with legislation and best practice guidance.

5.3 Does the dental team have suitable arrangements in place to record equality data?

The arrangements in place in relation to the equality of opportunity for patients and the importance of staff being aware of equality legislation and recognising and responding to the diverse needs of patients was discussed with Mr Johnston and staff which demonstrated that the equality data collected was managed in line with best practice.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

One area for improvement has been identified where action is required to ensure compliance with the [Minimum Standards for Dental Care and Treatment \(March 2011\)](#)

The area for improvement and detail of the QIP were discussed as part of the inspection process. The timescale for completion commences from the date of inspection.

	Regulations	Standards
Total number of Areas for Improvement	0	1

Quality Improvement Plan	
Action required to ensure compliance with the Minimum Standards for Dental Care and Treatment (March 2011)	
Area for improvement 1 Ref: Standard 13.4 Stated: First time To be completed by: 17 February 2022	The registered person should review the procedure for the decontamination of dental handpieces to ensure that they are decontaminated in keeping with manufacturer's instructions and Professional Estates Letter (PEL) (13) 13. Compatible handpieces should be processed in the washer disinfecter. Ref: 5.2.6
	Response by registered person detailing the actions taken:

Please ensure this document is completed in full and returned via Web Portal



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A completed Quality Improvement Plan from the inspection of this service has not yet been returned.

If you have any further enquiries regarding this report please contact RQIA through the e-mail address info@rqia.org.uk