Inspection Report

27 August 2026



Finaghy Dental Practice

Type of service: Independent Hospital (IH) – Dental Treatment
Address: 12 Finaghy Road South, Belfast, BT10 0DR
Telephone number: 028 9062 3559

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

Registered Provider: Finaghy Dental Practice Limited **Responsible Individual:** Mr Joseph Patrick Scullion	**Registered Manager:** Mr Joseph Patrick Scullion **Date registered:** 8 March 2012
Person in charge at the time of inspection: Mr Joseph Patrick Scullion	**Number of registered places:** Three increasing to four following this inspection
Category of care: Independent Hospital (IH) - Dental Treatment	
Brief description of how the service operates: Finaghy Dental Practice 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 three registered dental surgeries and provides general dental services, private and health service treatment and offers conscious sedation, if clinically indicated. A variation to registration application was submitted to RQIA to increase the number of dental surgeries from three to four. This is discussed further in section 5.2.11 of this report.	

2.0 Inspection summary

This was an announced inspection, undertaken by a care inspector on 27 August 2026 from 10.00 am to 1.45 pm.

It focused on the themes for the 2026/27 inspection year and assessed progress with any areas for improvement identified since the last care inspection. This inspection also sought to review the readiness of the practice for the provision of private dental care and treatment associated with the variation to registration application to increase the dental surgeries from three to four.

An RQIA estates officer reviewed the variation to registration application in regards to matters relating to the premises and has approved the variation application from an estates perspective.

There was evidence of good practice in relation to the recruitment and selection of staff; management of medical emergencies; management of conscious sedation; infection prevention and control; decontamination of reusable dental instruments; radiology and radiation safety; management of complaints and incidents; and governance arrangements.

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 inspection was facilitated by the practice manager and the assistant practice manager.

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 care and treatment?

We issued posters to the registered provider prior to the inspection inviting patients and members of the dental team to complete an electronic questionnaire.

No completed staff or patient questionnaires were received prior to the inspection.

5.0 The inspection

5.1 What action has been taken to meet any areas for improvement identified at or since last inspection?

The last inspection to Finaghy Dental Practice was undertaken on 16 August 2024; no areas for improvement were identified.

5.2 Inspection findings

5.2.1 Do recruitment and selection procedures comply with all relevant legislation?

There were recruitment and selection policies and procedures in place that adhered to legislation and best practice guidance.

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

A review of the staff register evidenced that three new staff had been recruited since the previous inspection. A review of a sample of personnel files of newly recruited staff evidenced that relevant recruitment records had been sought; reviewed and stored as required.

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 recruitment of the dental team complies with the legislation and best practice guidance to ensure suitably skilled and qualified staff work in the practice.

5.2.2 Is 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 outline mandatory training to be undertaken, in line with any professional requirements, and the training guidance provided by RQIA.

At the time of inspection, staff induction arrangements were in place; however, there was no overarching system in place to provide oversight of all training and professional development activities undertaken by staff, and individual staff training records were not consistently maintained. Advice and guidance was provided on this during the inspection. Following the inspection, it was confirmed that an overarching training record has now been implemented for all staff and required staff training has been completed. This provides oversight of staff training and professional development and supports the responsible individual in ensuring that the dental team is suitable skilled, competent and qualified.

As a result of the assurances provided and the actions taken following the inspection, it is determined that 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 is 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. A review of the medical emergency equipment identified that some additional items were required. This matter was discussed with the practice manager and following the inspection, RQIA received confirmation that these items had been obtained.

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

Managing medical emergencies is included in the induction programme and refresher training is undertaken annually.

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 the inspection, it is determined that sufficient emergency medicines and equipment are in place and the dental team are trained to manage a medical emergency as specified in the legislation, 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.

The practice manager confirmed that conscious sedation is offered if clinically indicated, using intravenous (IV) sedation. IV sedation is only provided to patients aged 18 years and over.

There was a conscious sedation policy and procedure in place that was comprehensive and reflected the legislation and best practice guidance. Review of the environment and equipment evidenced that conscious sedation is being managed in keeping with the Conscious Sedation in Dentistry, Dental Clinic Guidance, (Third Edition); Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP).

A review of records and discussion with members of dental team involved in the provision of conscious sedation demonstrated that a full patient assessment is undertaken by the dentist providing the sedation to confirm the dental treatment required and the need for sedation.

A review of records confirmed that valid written consent is obtained for the provision of dental care with sedation in accordance with the above best practice guidance.

It was demonstrated that clinical records of patients who had treatment using sedation includes a detailed record of the pre-sedation assessment, the patient's written consent, the patient's visit for sedation including monitoring, the treatment procedure and the recovery of each patient.

Information was available for patients in respect of the treatment provided and aftercare arrangements and a record is maintained to verify that post-treatment instructions were given and explained to the patient and their escort, as appropriate.

The dental team involved in the provision of conscious sedation must receive appropriate practical and clinical training. A review of training records evidenced that all relevant members of the dental team had completed 12 hours of sedation related verifiable continuing professional development (CPD) training in each five year CPD cycle.

A discussion took place regarding the life support training to be undertaken by all clinical team members involved in managing patients having sedation.

Immediate Life Support (ILS) training as laid down by the Resuscitation Council (UK) must be undertaken. A review of the content of the medical emergency refresher training undertaken in March 2026 demonstrated that all the main elements of ILS training as outlined in Appendix 2 of Conscious Sedation in Dentistry, Dental Clinic Guidance, (Third Edition); Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP) were included.

The medicines used during IV sedation are classified as controlled drugs (CDs). The arrangements for the management of the CDs were reviewed. It was demonstrated that CDs are securely stored at all times and systems were in place for the ordering, administration, reconciliation (stock check) and disposal of these medicines. However, at the time of inspection, a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the management of CDs was not in place. This was discussed during the inspection and following the inspection, emailed correspondence was received confirming that this was now in place.

As a result of the actions taken following the inspection, it is determined that appropriate arrangements are now in place to enable the dental team to safely provide dental care and treatment using conscious sedation, in keeping with legislation and guidance.

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.

The IPC measures in the practice were discussed with the practice manager and the assistant practice manager. It was confirmed that IPC measures were in place in keeping with the Health and Social Care Public Health Agency guidance and Infection Prevention and Control Manual for Northern Ireland. The practice manager regularly checks DoH websites for further advisory information, guidance and alerts in this regard.

There was an overarching IPC policy and associated procedures in place. Review of these documents demonstrated that they reflected legislation and best practice guidance. The practice manager confirmed there was a nominated lead dental nurse who had responsibility for IPC and decontamination in the practice. The lead dental nurse had undertaken IPC and decontamination training in line with their continuing professional development and had retained the necessary training certificates as evidence.

During a tour of some areas of the practice, it was observed that clinical and decontamination areas were clean, tidy and uncluttered. All areas of the practice observed were 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 these audits 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 vaccination records are retained in 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.

Review of 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 (DoH).

There was 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. Records evidencing that the equipment for cleaning and sterilising instruments was inspected, validated, maintained and used in line with the manufacturers' guidance were reviewed. Review of equipment logbooks demonstrated that all required tests to check the efficiency of the machines had been undertaken.

Discussion with members of the dental team confirmed that they 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.

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

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

The arrangements regarding 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 Northern Ireland (HSENI). A review of records evidenced the practice had registered with the HSENI.

Prior to the submission of the variation to registration application the practice had three surgeries each of which has an intra-oral x-ray machine. In addition, the practice had a dual modality orthopantomogram (OPG) and cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) machine, which is located in a separate room. The equipment inventory reflected all the radiography equipment in place.

A radiation protection advisor (RPA), medical physics expert (MPE) and radiation protection supervisor (RPS) have been appointed in line with legislation.

Two dedicated radiation protection files containing the relevant local rules, employer's procedures and other additional information were retained. One file included information relating to the intra-oral x-ray machines and the second file included information relating to the combined CBCT/OPG unit. During the inspection, advice was provided in relation to reviewing the local rules for the OPG/CBCT unit to ensure that they are accurate and reflected current practice. Following the inspection, confirmation was received that the local rules had been reviewed and updated as required.

A review of the files confirmed that the Employer had entitled the dental team to undertake specific roles and responsibilities associated with radiology and ensured that these staff had completed appropriate training. The RPS oversees radiation safety within the practice and regularly reviews the radiation protection files to ensure that they are accurate and up to date.

The appointed RPA must undertake a critical examination and acceptance test of all new x-ray equipment; thereafter the RPA must complete a quality assurance test every three years as specified within the legislation. Critical examination and acceptance test reports for the new intra-oral x-ray units in surgeries two and four and OPG/CBCT machine were undertaken during February 2026 and June 2026. Any recommendations made in these reports had been signed off as actioned.

The most recent reports generated by the RPA during December 2023 and February 2026 evidenced that the x-ray equipment in the other existing two surgeries had been examined. Advice and guidance was provided to the assistant practice manager in relation to the RPS signing and dating the RPA report to confirm that any recommendations made had been actioned. The assistant practice manager was receptive to this advice and following the inspection, RQIA received confirmation that this matter had been addressed.

A copy of the local rules was on display near each x-ray machine observed and appropriate staff had signed to confirm that they had read and understood these.

The dental team demonstrated sound knowledge of radiology and radiation safety including the local rules and associated practice.

Quality assurance systems and processes were in place to ensure that all matters relating to x-rays reflect legislation and best practice guidance. It was evidenced that all measures are taken to optimise radiation dose exposure. This included the use of rectangular collimation, x-ray audits and digital x-ray processing.

As a result of the actions taken following the inspection, it is determined that procedures are in place to ensure that appropriate x-rays are taken safely.

5.2.8 Are complaints and incidents being effectively managed?

The arrangements for the management of complaints and incidents were reviewed to ensure that they 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.

Discussion with the practice manager and assistant practice manager confirmed that an incident policy and procedure was in place which includes the reporting arrangements to RQIA. They confirmed that incidents are effectively documented and investigated in line with legislation. All relevant incidents are reported to RQIA and other relevant organisations in accordance with legislation and the RQIA Statutory Notification of Incidents and Deaths. Arrangements are in place to audit adverse incidents to identify trends and improve service provided.

The dental team was knowledgeable on how to deal with and respond to complaints and incidents in accordance with legislation, minimum standards and the DoH guidance.

Arrangements were in place to share information with the dental team about complaints and incidents including any learning outcomes, and also compliments received.

Systems were in place to ensure that complaints and incidents were being managed effectively in accordance with legislation and best practice guidance.

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 Scullion 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 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 the practice manager and the assistant practice manager.

5.2.11 Is the new dental surgery fully equipped to provide private dental care and treatment?

A review of the new surgery evidenced that it was clean, tidy, uncluttered and work surfaces were intact and easy to clean.

The flooring in the surgery was impervious and coved where it met the walls. All fittings and kicker boards of cabinetry were seen to be finished to a high standard.

Appropriate arrangements were in place in the practice for the storage and collection of general and clinical waste. Sharps boxes were safely positioned to prevent unauthorised accessed and had been signed and dated on assembly.

Dedicated hand washing basins were available with hand hygiene signage displayed. It was noted that liquid hand soap, wall mounted disposable hand towel dispensers and clinical waste bins were provided in keeping with best practice guidance.

The arrangements for PPE were reviewed and it was noted that PPE was readily available for the dental team in accordance with treatments provided.

It was confirmed that the newly installed dental chair had independent bottled water systems and that the dental unit water lines (DWULs) are appropriately managed in keeping with manufacturer's instructions.

It was confirmed that the equipment in the decontamination room is sufficient to meet the demands of the new surgery and there is a sufficient supply of reusable dental instruments to meet the demands associated with the additional surgery.

It was determined that the new dental surgery was finished to a high standard. The variation to registration application was approved from a care perspective following the inspection.

5.2.12 Is the statement of purpose in keeping with Regulation 7, Schedule 1 of The Independent Health Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005?

A statement of purpose was prepared in a recognised format which covered the key areas and themes outlined in Regulation 7, Schedule 1 of The Independent Health Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Mr Scullion is aware that the statement of purpose is considered to be a live document and should be reviewed and updated as and when necessary.

5.2.13 Is the patient guide in keeping with Regulation 8 of The Independent Health Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005?

A patient guide was prepared in a recognised format which covered the key areas and themes outlined in Regulation 8 of The Independent Health Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. Mr Scullion is aware that the patient guide is considered to be a live document and should be reviewed and updated as and when necessary.

6.0 Quality Improvement Plan/Areas for Improvement

This inspection resulted in no areas for improvement being identified. Findings of the inspection were discussed with the practice manager and assistant practice manager, as part of the inspection process and can be found in the main body of the report.



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