Announced Focused Inspection Report: Independent Healthcare

Service: Unico Clinics, Glasgow
Service Provider: Unico Clinics Ltd

29 June 2021
Healthcare Improvement Scotland is committed to equality. We have assessed the inspection function for likely impact on equality protected characteristics as defined by age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (Equality Act 2010). You can request a copy of the equality impact assessment report from the Healthcare Improvement Scotland Equality and Diversity Advisor on 0141 225 6999 or email his.contactpublicinvolvement@nhs.scot

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1 A summary of our inspection

We carried out an announced inspection to Unico Clinics on Tuesday 29 June 2021. The purpose of the inspection was to make sure the service was delivering care safely to patients, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We reviewed the service’s infection prevention and control policies and procedures, and spoke with a number of staff during the inspection. This was our first inspection to this service.

The inspection team was made up of one inspector.

As part of this inspection, we did not request a self-evaluation from the service.

What we found and inspection grades awarded

For Unico Clinics, the following grades have been applied to the key quality indicators inspected.

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<th>Key quality indicators inspected</th>
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<td><strong>Domain 5 – Delivery of safe, effective, compassionate and person-centred care</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality indicator</strong></td>
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<td>5.1 - Safe delivery of care</td>
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Grades may change after this inspection due to other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to improve the service or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

More information about grading can be found on our website at: 
http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/inspecting_and_regulating_care/ihc_inspection_guidance/inspection_methodology.aspx
What action we expect Unico Clinics Ltd to take after our inspection

This inspection resulted in four recommendations. See Appendix 1 for a full list of the recommendations.

An improvement action plan has been developed by the provider and is available on the Healthcare Improvement Scotland website: www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/inspecting_and_regulating_care/independent_healthcare/find_a_provider_or_service.aspx

We would like to thank all staff at Unico Clinics, Glasgow for their assistance during the inspection.
2 What we found during our inspection

Service delivery

This section is where we report on how safe the service is.

Domain 5 – Delivery of safe, effective, compassionate and person-centred care

High performing healthcare organisations are focused on safety and learning to take forward improvements, and put in place appropriate controls to manage risks. They provide care that is respectful and responsive to people’s individual needs, preferences and values delivered through appropriate clinical and operational planning, processes and procedures.

Our findings

Quality indicator 5.1 - Safe delivery of care

Effective measures had been introduced to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 between staff and patients. The environment and patient equipment were clean. A programme of infection prevention and control audits should be implemented. National guidance should be followed for the recommended cleaning products to use.

The provider and manager ensured staff were aware of the latest guidance in relation to COVID-19. This information was shared with staff at informal catch meetings each morning. The service had an infection, prevention and control policy and a COVID-19 specific document outlining the measures used to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. We saw evidence of a COVID-19 risk assessment that had been shared with staff. It covered the risk to staff and patients and described the systems in place to reduce any risk.

The reception area had seating available for one patient and the manager told us that only one patient was treated at any one time. Plastic screens were in place on the reception desks to reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Patients received an email before their appointment outlining the changes the service had introduced and what to expect when they attended the clinic. We saw patients had a COVID-19 risk assessment carried out by telephone on the day before their appointment. We also saw they had to confirm that they had no COVID-19 symptoms as part of the patient consultation. Staff and patients were encouraged to follow national guidelines regarding testing for COVID-19.
Alcohol-based hand rub was available at the reception area and within the treatment rooms. The manager told us that patients were actively encouraged to use this when attending the clinic. Hand wash sinks with liquid soap dispensers and hand towels were also seen. We saw that appropriate PPE, including aprons, gloves and visors was available.

Although storage was limited, the clinic was tidy allowing for effective cleaning. We suggested to the service how the use of storage could be further improved. The environment was generally clean and in a good state of repair including patient equipment such as, treatment couches and laser machines.

Patient care records were in both electronic and paper format. In the care records we reviewed, we saw that consent to treatment had been obtained and aftercare provided. We discussed with the service how it would be good practice to ensure consent covered having elective treatments during the current COVID-19 pandemic, and that aftercare advice should cover general COVID-19 advice.

**What needs to improve**
Although patients had a risk assessment for COVID-19 completed, this was not repeated on the day of their appointment (recommendation a).

The service was not carrying out infection prevention and control audits. These audits will help the service monitor compliance with standard infection prevention and control precautions (recommendation b).

Although the environment and equipment was clean and the service could describe its process for cleaning, they did not use the recommended cleaning products that were in line with national guidance (recommendation c).

The service had a waste contract in place for sharps bins, however it did not include clinical waste, such as used PPE. Although the PPE used for the treatments delivered would be considered low risk and was currently being disposed of in the domestic waste, we recommended the service should review the waste contract so that it covered clinical waste (recommendation d).

Staff were provided with uniforms and we were told that they were aware of the guidance on how to launder these safely at home. We were also told that staff travelled to work in their uniforms using private transport. We discussed with the service that this was not in line with current guidance.

- No requirements.
**Recommendation a**
- The service should ensure COVID-19 screening assessments are repeated on the day of treatment for all patients in line with national guidance.

**Recommendation b**
- The service should carry out infection prevention and control audits. Audits should be documented and improvement actions implemented.

**Recommendation c**
- The service should follow the guidance in Health Protection Scotland’s *National Infection and Control Manual* for the recommended cleaning products to use in the higher risk areas within the service.

**Recommendation d**
- The service should review its clinical waste contract to ensure clinical waste is disposed of in a safe way.
Appendix 1 – Requirements and recommendations

The actions that Healthcare Improvement Scotland expects the independent healthcare service to take are called requirements and recommendations.

- **Requirement:** A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of an independent healthcare provider to comply with the National Health Services (Scotland) Act 1978, regulations or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of the Act, regulations, or conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are enforceable at the discretion of Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

- **Recommendation:** A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions the service should take to improve or develop the quality of the service but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement.

### Domain 5 – Delivery of safe, effective, compassionate and person-centred care

#### Recommendations

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| a | The service should ensure COVID-19 screening assessments are repeated for all patients in line with national guidance (see page 8).  

Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life. I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support. Statement 4.11 |
| b | The service should carry out infection prevention and control audits. Audits should be documented and improvement actions implemented (see page 8).  

Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life. I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support. Statement 4.19 |
| c | The service should follow the guidance in Health Protection Scotland’s National Infection and Control Manual for the recommended cleaning products to use in the higher risk areas within the service (see page 8).  

Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life. I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support. Statement 4.11 |
| d | The service should review its clinical waste contract to ensure clinical waste is disposed of in a safe way (see page 8).  

Health and Social Care Standards: My support, my life. I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support. Statement 4.11 |
Appendix 2 – About our inspections

Our quality of care approach and the quality framework allows us to provide external assurance of the quality of healthcare provided in Scotland.

Our inspectors use this approach to check independent healthcare services regularly to make sure that they are complying with necessary standards and regulations. Inspections may be announced or unannounced.

We follow a number of stages to inspect independent healthcare services.

**Before inspections**

Independent healthcare services submit an annual return and self-evaluation to us.

We review this information and produce a service risk assessment to determine the risk level of the service. This helps us to decide the focus and frequency of inspection.

**During inspections**

We use inspection tools to help us assess the service.

Inspections will be a mix of physical inspection and discussions with staff, people experiencing care and, where appropriate, carers and families.

We give feedback to the service at the end of the inspection.

**After inspections**

We publish reports for services and people experiencing care, carers and families based on what we find during inspections. Independent healthcare services use our reports to make improvements and find out what other services are doing well. Our reports are available on our website at: [www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org)

We require independent healthcare services to develop and then update an improvement action plan to address the requirements and recommendations we make.

We check progress against the improvement action plan.

More information about our approach can be found on our website: [www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/quality_of_care_approach.aspx](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/quality_of_care_approach.aspx)
Complaints

If you would like to raise a concern or complaint about an independent healthcare service, you can complain directly to us at any time. However, we do suggest you contact the service directly in the first instance.

Our contact details are:

Healthcare Improvement Scotland
Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 9EB

Telephone: 0131 623 4300

Email: his.ihcregulation@nhs.scot
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