

Complaints handling policy

The Dental Practice

Code of practice for patient complaints

In this practice we take complaints very seriously and try to ensure that all our patients are pleased with their experience of our service. When patients complain, they are dealt with courteously and promptly so that the matter is resolved as quickly as possible. This procedure is based on these objectives.

Our aim is to react to complaints in the way in which we would want our complaint about a service to be handled. We learn from every mistake that we make and we respond to patients' concerns in a caring and sensitive way.

1. The person responsible for dealing with any complaint about the service that we provide is Caroline West, our Complaints Manager.
2. If a patient complains by telephone or in person, we will listen to their complaint and offer to refer them to the Complaints Manager immediately. If the Complaints Manager is not available at the time, we will advise the patient when they will be able to talk to the Complaints Manager and make arrangements for this to happen. The member of staff will take brief details of the complaint to pass to the Complaints Manager and provide the patient with a copy. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period or if the patient does not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with it.
3. If a patient complains in writing or by e-mail, it will be passed immediately to the Complaints Manager.
4. If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges, it will usually be referred to the dentist concerned, unless the patient does not want this to happen.
5. We will acknowledge the patient's complaint in writing and enclose a copy of this code of practice as soon as possible, normally within three working days. We will offer to discuss the complaint at a time agreed with the patient, and confirm how the patient would like to be kept informed of developments – by telephone, letters or e-mail or by face-to-face meetings. We will inform the patient about how the complaint will be handled and the likely time that the investigation will take to complete. If the patient does not wish to discuss the complaint further, we will still inform them of the expected timescale for completing the investigation.
6. We will seek to investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and within six months and, as far as reasonably practicable, we will keep the patient informed as to the progress of the investigation.
7. When we have completed our investigation, we will provide the patient with a full written report, which will include an explanation of how we considered the complaint, the conclusions reached in respect of each specific part of the complaint, details of any necessary remedial action taken and whether further action will be taken.
8. Proper and comprehensive records will be kept of any complaints received and the action we take. These records will be reviewed regularly to ensure that we take every opportunity to improve our service

9. If patients are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be referred to:

For complaints about NHS treatment:

ENGLAND:

NHS England, PO Box 16738, Redditch B97 9PT (email: England.contactus@nhs.net);
or

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower, Millbank London
SW1P 4QP (0345 015 4033 or www.ombudsman.org.uk).

For complaints about private treatment:

Dental Complaints Service, Stephenson House, 2 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon CR0
6BA (Telephone: 08456 120 540)

General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8DQ

Annual NHS complaints report

It is important that all practices keep records of complaints and are able to provide details to their primary care organisation.

Annual NHS complaints report for the financial year ending 31 March [*insert year*]¹

Name of Contractor/dentist:

NHS contract number:

Practice name:

Practice address:

Number of NHS complaints received during the year

Number of NHS complaints received during the year, which I decided were well-founded

Number of NHS complaints, which I have been informed have been referred to the Health Services Commissioner or Local Commissioner (as appropriate)

Summary of NHS complaints received²:

Signed by contractor/for and on behalf of contractor*

Print name:

Date:

¹ England: A copy of this report is to be sent to NHS England as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year

² Include subject matter of NHS complaint(s), any matters of general importance arising out of the NHS complaint(s) or the way in which they were handled and any matters or action which has been or is to be taken to improve services as a consequence of the NHS complaint(s).

* delete as appropriate