

NHS Complaints Policy

In this practice we take complaints very seriously indeed and try to ensure that all 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.

Practice complaints procedure

If you have a complaint or concern about the service you have received from the dentists or any of the staff working in this practice, please let us know. We operate a practice complaints procedure as part of a NHS system for dealing with complaints. Our complaints system adheres to national criteria.

How to complain

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If your problem cannot be sorted out in this way and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know **as soon as possible** – ideally within a matter of days or at most a few weeks – because this will enable us to establish what happened more easily.

If it is not possible to do that, please let us have details of your complaint:

- Within 6 months of the incident that caused the problem, or
- Within 6 months of discovering that you have a problem, provided this is within 12 months of the incident.

Complaints should be addressed to one of the dentists. The letter will be passed on immediately to the relevant person.

Alternatively, you may ask for an appointment with the **Practice Manager** who is the complaints lead in order to discuss your concerns. They will explain the complaints procedure to you, and ensure that your concerns are dealt with promptly. It will be a great help if you can be as specific as possible about your complaint. If we cannot arrange this within a reasonable period or if you do not wish to wait to discuss the matter, arrangements will be made for someone else to deal with it.

If a complaint is about any aspect of clinical care or associated charges it will normally be referred to the dentist, unless you do not want this to happen.

What we shall do

We shall acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days, and aim to have looked into your complaint within 10 working days of the date when you raised it with us. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, or a meeting with those involved. In investigating your complaint, we shall aim to:

- Find out what happened and what went wrong
- Make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned, if you would like this.
- Make sure you receive an apology, where this is appropriate
- Identify what we can do to make sure the problem doesn't happen again.

If we are unable to investigate the complaint within ten working days we will notify you, giving reasons for the delay and a likely period within which the investigation will be completed and, if necessary, a progress report will be sent every ten days.

We will confirm the decision about the complaint in writing to the patient immediately after completing our investigation.

Proper and comprehensive reports are kept of any complaint received.

Complaining on behalf of someone else

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we have to know that you have permission to do so. A note signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are incapable (because of physical or mental illness) of providing this.

Complaining to the Health Service Ombudsman

We hope that, if you have a problem, you will use our practice complaints procedure. We believe this will provide the best chance of putting right whatever has gone wrong and an opportunity to improve our practice. But this does not affect your right to approach the health service ombudsman, if you feel you cannot raise your complaint with us **or** you are dissatisfied with the result of our investigation.

If you are not satisfied with the result of our procedure then a complaint may be made to

NHS England Primary Care Complaints,

NHS England, PO box 16738, Redditch.B97 9PT. Tel: 0300 311 2233 or
England.contactus@nhs.net

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman,

Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP; Tel: 0345 015 4033 or
www.ombudsman.org.uk

Independent Complaints Advocacy – Tel: 01273 229002

The General Dental Council, 37 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 8DQ (the dental care professionals' registration body). Tel: 020 71676000

The Dental Complaints Service Tel: 020 82530800 for complaints about private treatment.

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